

FIGGETING

TALK

Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper.

★ ★ ★

Vol. II No. 11

Price 6d.

DECEMBER, 1955

★ ★ ★

Farewell Article

by

**TREVOR
HUDDLESTON**

★ ★ ★

SHORT STORIES

by

**ALFRED HUTCHINSON
RICHARD MOORE**

★ ★ ★

MOSHESH—

**BUILDER OF THE BASUTO
NATION**



*Wishing you a happy
Xmas and peaceful
New Year 1956*

“Is There Not A Cause?”

By **TREVOR HUDDLESTON, C.R.**

In his farewell article, written specially for “Fighting Talk,”
Father Huddleston uses the story of David and Goliath to plead
for a “re-dedication to the cause of liberation.”



Wearing his Isitwalandwe award, Father Huddleston addresses the Congress of the People.

WHEN the young stripling David went down into the valley to meet Goliath, his brothers tried to dissuade him. He was too young, too immature and too reckless. Also, perhaps, he was their brother, and he would steal their thunder. His answer to their appeals was the magnificent and direct one, which stands at the head of this brief article, which is my farewell. “Is there not a cause?”

It is a sad moment at which to leave South Africa: not because things are difficult and shadows dark, but because there is a battle to fight and win: a battle which is ours for the winning, if we have the faith and courage to fight it holdly.

This Goliath of Racialism does a tremendous lot of shouting. It is because he needs to keep his own courage up. He likes to mock at the unarmed David who confronts him. It is because in his own heart there is a lurking fear. He stumbles forward in his armour, flourishing his sword. But he does not see more than a young boy in front of him; a young shepherd-boy with a sling in his hand.

Goliath never knew what hit him: and he never saw the armies of the Philistines in full flight.

Racialism, besides being stupid, is also blind.

“Is there not a cause?” I have used the story of David and Goliath, not because I think there is a complete parallel, or a perfect moral to be drawn between that battle and ours in South Africa. I have used it because I want to plead with all the conviction I have for a renewal and a rededication to the cause of liberation.

During the twelve years of my stay in South Africa, I have tried to identify myself with the Country. And that has been made easy for me by the trust and affection of so very many. It is because of that identification that I have felt free to speak and to act when so many personal liberties have been attacked by the rulers of the Country, and when, in face of that attack, White South Africa has remained complacent and apathetic.

We have seen, in the past twelve years, all the freedoms for which the second world war was fought and won, not merely attacked, but deliberately and persistently destroyed in the Union of South Africa.

The viciousness of the Pass Laws has been carried over into other spheres of legislation. It has become a crime to associate, a crime to speak, a crime to move from one place to another. You can be deported for daring to criticise authority; or you can be deprived of the right to leave the Country for the same reason. You can no longer shut your door and have privacy in your home, for you may be about to commit a crime: the police must have right of entry at any hour of the day or night. You can be punished for being outside a municipal area, and punished for being inside one. You can suffer imprisonment for your ignorance in not carrying correct documents; you can also suffer imprisonment for teaching children the ABC. And if you condemn "apartheid" as a social evil in the same category as slavery, and dare to say that it is also basically un-Christian, you are a traitor to your country and should be treated as such. "Is there not a cause?" The resistance to all this encroachment upon human rights and freedoms can be effective only in one way, and upon one condition. It must be based upon a belief in the absolute rightness of our cause. If we falter in this belief, then we fall into countless errors of judgement and innumerable traps and snares. To change the metaphor—we see Goliath as a mighty giant whose armour is impregnable: we forget the blindness that is his, and we take fright, instead of grasping more firmly the sling in our hands. What I mean is this. The "resistance movement" in South Africa has suffered greatly in times of crises from a sudden retreat from principle: a sudden decision that perhaps compromise is possible: that maybe even Dr. Verwoerd's policies have, somewhere, their advantages. Thus, in the Western Areas Removal Scheme; the Bantu Education Act; the Bantu Authorities Act—there has been ever present the subtle temptation to try and find some way of opposition which will yet not have the appearance and character of opposition. To the natural confusion of many of our people is added this most dire confusion of all: a flight from principle and a retreat to expediency.

IN THIS ISSUE

<i>Is there Not a Cause?</i> —Trevor Huddleston C.R.	2
<i>Rich Black Hair</i> —Short Story by Richard Moore	4
<i>The Man Who Died Yesterday</i> —Short Story by Alfred Hutchinson	6
<i>Moshesh—Builder of the Basuto Nation</i> —by Mosupetsi	8
<i>A Writer in People's China</i> —by Lao Sheh	10
<i>His Pen is a Sword for Free Africa</i> —M. Muller on Basil Davidson	12
<i>Books</i> —"The Ninth Wave". "Race Prejudice and Discrimination". "H Bomb Report"	14

**THE APPEAL OF THE
"KEEP FATHER HUDDLESTON IN
SOUTH AFRICA COMMITTEE"**

WITHOUT wishing to enter into speculation around the reasons for Father Huddleston's recall to Great Britain, we would like to express our very deep regret at the decision which compels him to leave this country.

Father Huddleston occupies a unique place in South Africa. He has become for us, and doubtless for many other South Africans, a symbol of outstanding Christian courage and selflessness in defence of right and justice, and in promoting the best interest of both Church and people. There is, in this country today, no European who has so successfully and boldly bridged the yawning gap of hostility and fear between white men and black, and developed on both sides of the colour line, a spirit of tolerance, respect and brotherhood between men.

For these reasons, we believe Father Huddleston is more widely loved, respected, and followed than probably any man in the land today. He has, it is true, made enemies; but not by shirking his duty or abandoning his religious beliefs, but by upholding them stoutly and consistently at great personal cost.

We have no wish to challenge the unquestionable authority of the order to which he owes—and gives his full allegiance. But a great gap will be left in our community by his departure; and it is unlikely that even the most able, devoted or gifted successor will be able generally, to fill that gap. We feel sure that, if the unique position occupied in our hearts by Father Huddleston were understood and appreciated by his superiors in Britain, they would be moved to retract their decision, and leave him here amongst us, where he would so strongly love to be, and where he is so desperately needed.

In the circumstances, therefore, we make public appeal to the Community of the Resurrection, to leave Father Huddleston to work in South Africa, for the future well-being of both Church and people. We feel sure that there are many others in this country who will echo our plea.

"Is there not a cause?" We know there is. We know, for one thing, that the conscience of the civilised world is awake to the evils of racialism as never before. We know that South Africa, out of step with every nation in the world, cannot conceivably persist in her present policies without facing economic and political disaster. But, beyond these things, and far more important, we know that our cause is based on an eternal and immutable truth: the inherent dignity and sacredness of human personality. To me, as a Christian and as a Priest of the Church, this is the essential thing: my rock and—to mix metaphors again—my guiding star.

I have seen so much of the cruelty of racialism in the bodies of hungry children and in the fear-haunted eyes of young men and women, that I will never attempt to come to terms with it. I have also seen so much of the apathy of White South Africa—Christians and non-Christian—in face of racialism, that I will never allow it to sleep if I can force it into wakefulness.

I hope and pray that Congress may rise to its responsibilities which are so great, in a way worthy of the cause it represents. It cannot do so without sacrifice and suffering, of that I am sure. It needs courage: it also needs inspiration. I believe that it will find both.

And in finding them it will discover that Goliath—Racialism—is blundering, foolish and blind. His threats are empty and his actions vain.

David will soon stand astride his headless corpse.

At least that is my great desire.

"Is there not a cause?"

Short Story

Rich Black Hair

By RICHARD MOORE

SHE hadn't noticed anyone in the office till she felt, rather than saw someone standing at the side of her desk. She looked up quickly and then down at the invoice in her hand. She noticed it was pale pink with a funny pattern in black around the border. Pale pink and black. Like the frock she wore when she sang in the City Hall. Pale pink and black. No colour was as deep as midnight black, or as delicate as pink, pale pink. She pulled herself together and looked up at the clerk standing there. An olive face, topped by a shock of rick black hair. Olive and black, or should it be pale pink and black?

"There is an error in this invoice," she said, "that's why I sent for you."

"Yes Madam."

She looked up quickly, feeling something strange in his voice. Something deep and refined. Something that made her look up quickly. He was one of the thirty odd Coloured clerks working there, people she noticed and did not notice. People she never knew existed till they crossed her path suddenly. Like coming out of a Bioscope in a strange city and not recognizing a familiar face in the crowd. She noticed his finger nails were carefully kept. She always noticed these things.

"Have you been working here long?"

"No, Madam."

"Like it here?"

"Yes, Madam."

"You'll get used to the place in time," she said patronisingly, hoping that he would notice her twenty-one years.

"Yes, Madam."

"You'll correct the invoice and return it to me."

"Yes, Madam."

He turned to go and she noticed the faintest of faint smiles around his eyes. He was slender and moved with grace. All this she noticed, because she prided herself on noticing these things.

She would have to practise hard at her song for her recital. She lived for music and Jan and correcting invoices in pale pink with black-edged patterns, and Coloured Clerks with shocks of rick black hair. But that was absurd. She was white, European. It was easy to live for music and Jan and even for correcting absurdly coloured invoices, but one drew the line at Coloured Clerks with shocks of rich hair. In either case it was time he returned the invoice. With a frown she applied herself to the remaining invoices. It was useless, she could not continue till the missing invoice was returned. It would break the sequence to continue and the invoices would become hopelessly mixed up. She would wait a few minutes longer. She pushed a stray blonde hair back in place and frowned into the mirror on her desk. She was beautiful, she knew, and was fully aware of her beauty. She was now becoming impatient. She picked up the telephone.

"I want the Coloured Clerk please, who fetched an invoice from me a few minutes ago!"

Then, with a frown back at the remaining invoices. Figures and still more figures. A ridiculous pattern of figures like ants in a field of pink with a twisted black fence around them.

"The invoice, Madam."

She was called back to her senses. She did not recognise the voice, or did one recognise a voice after five minutes. She looked up slowly and saw another clerk there.

"Your invoice, Madam."

"You're not the clerk concerned." She was a trifle irritated. It was unfair. She wanted to see the clerk who had committed the error, so that she could see if he had corrected it.

"The other clerk sent me with the corrected invoice, Madam."

She felt that the organization was all wrong. The clerk had made an error, taken away the invoice, and sent another clerk back with it. Coloured clerks should be kept in their place.

"Tell him to come to me!" she said, and immediately started adding a row of figures that somehow would not add.

"Yes Madam."

She concentrated hard. She would show him her feelings were not to be trifled with. But how did feelings come into it? Well, it hurt one's feelings if clerks could delegate their friends to do their work. It showed contempt for her status as Senior Clerk. A non-recognition of her authority. She instinctively looked into the mirror and felt rather than saw that he was present. She looked him full in the face and noticed the fine cut of his features. A thick lock of hair had disengaged itself and hung over his forehead, disappearing behind an ear where he had hastily tucked it.

"You wanted me, Madam?"

"That's right," she said, "about that invoice." This was her opportunity to put him in his place. She felt his pride, his obstinacy, his sort of challenge one could call it.

"What is your name?"

"James Lawrence."

She was going to say something like you've got to do your own work, James, and not send others, or, I am Senior clerk and you should obey my orders, but she felt they were rather silly things to say, rather flat in such environment, in such a situation; "Have you been working here long?"

"You asked me that before, Madam."

She could kick herself. Best to get rid of him as soon as possible. Never mind the lecture.

"You may go, James!" she said, turning and studying her nails very carefully.

"Yes, Madam."

She concentrated on her nails but could visualize his slender form as he walked or almost glided to the door. How ridiculous to think of people gliding across the

floor. Human beings did not glide, and Coloured clerks in particular did not glide. Yet somehow James was different. That's what he said his name was. James Lawrence. There was a James in the same lecture room as herself at University, James and Jan. Jan in ebony. A darker version of Jan. It was stupid to let one's thoughts wander in such a fashion.

"By the way how old are you?" she said as she sensed that he was near the door.

"Seventeen, Madam."

A mere youngster, she thought with a shrug of her shoulders. "That's all, James," she said, playing with his name, rolling it on her tongue, tasting it.

Jenny and Jimmy and Johnny and James.

Visited London to play some games.

She thought of a Nursery Jingle. She must pull herself together and not think so stupidly.

James. What an amusing name. Yes, what a funny name. She burst out into uncontrollable giggles, but only the typewriter frowned back.

★ ★

She was impatient to be back at work the following morning, a strange thing. She wasn't really against coming to work or working with invoices. She was apathetic, usually indifferent. One had work to do and one did it. This morning she almost ran to the bus stop. She hummed a tune with such a lively air, that people turned around in the bus and stared, then smiled and returned to their "Cape Times." At work people seemed gayer. She could laugh with anyone, even the surly Coloured clerk with the ridiculous name, but what was ridiculous in James Lawrence, an ordinary, straightforward name. How silly of her to be thinking so. She could shout at the machine, at the silly desks and the ridiculous calender with a yellow pin up girl holding a bunch of green roses. She nodded at the typistes and settled down to her invoices. It would be a job getting them in their proper sequence and she had other work to do. She needed help so that she could continue with her other work, or did she need help? She picked up the telephone and phoned the chief Accountant.

"I know I haven't asked it before but I think I need help with my invoices. Please send me a clerk, any clerk, or rather send me, James Lawrence, he seems efficient."

She settled down to her other work and found there was not so much to do after all. In either case why should she overwork herself. She should take advantage of assistance. She was doing the work of two clerks. She suddenly felt very old and tired.

"I am supposed to help you, Madam."

She looked up at him and grinned. The clerk with the funny name, funny for her. Sir James, Lord James of the rich, black hair. A gliding Lord James, a knight in bronze, her knight in bronze.

"Yes, I need some assistance. These invoices are all muddled. It is strange how muddled invoices can become. Numbers and more numbers."

"Shall I take it upstairs and see to it there, Madam?"

"No!" she caught herself saying, "you may do it here, it saves time. In any case I don't mind your being here."

"I would prefer to do it upstairs."

She felt angry, frustrated. Was he challenging her. She should say, well get upstairs damn you. But that would be allowing a seventeen-year old his own way.

"I want to be your friend, James. You are polite and work well and I can be of great assistance to you. Why do you treat me so suspiciously? He said nothing but she noticed how he arched his fine brows. He couldn't possibly be Coloured. His father must have been an Indian noble, or a Persian, or something as fantastic.

"I am quite all right on my own, Madam."

Why was she saying this to a Coloured clerk, a seventeen-year old youngster, four years younger than herself? He did have beautiful hair.

"I am saying this because," she caught herself saying, "I rather like you."

"I am only supposed to do my work, Madam. I will do the invoices upstairs."

"Well do it upstairs! damn you!" She surprised herself at the intensity with which the oath came out. He turned around with no visible sign of offence and walked towards the door.

"I'm sorry, James," she said, "I am sorry for what I said, I did not mean it."

He left. She felt the world had grown very small and very cold. The Recital seemed very far away. Apologising to a seventeen-year old Coloured clerk who refused to obey her orders. She only wanted to help him. Or did she. Yes she was prepared to speak well to the Accountant about him. She tried to concentrate on the other invoices. Pink invoices with funny black borders, looking like Victorian wrought-iron gates. Black, pink, colours, colours, colours, figures, figures and more figures. And people one wanted to help, people one felt for. Feelings played no part in it, only a spark of humanity. The common touch. Wanting to help James Lawrence, because he was handsome and had beautiful hair. A kind of motherly instinct . . . at twenty-one.

"I have placed them in order, is there nothing else to do, Madam?" She was almost afraid he would send another clerk with the invoices. But what difference did it make? She only wanted to help, although she would preferably help James Lawrence.

"Were you angry when I swore at you, now, James?"

"Here are the invoices, Madam."

"You're a very handsome young man," she said.

He said nothing but waited to be dismissed.

"Are you married, James?"

"No!"

"Have you a girl friend?"

What was she asking all this for? Because she was interested in knowing his background, who he was, what he was. She was almost going to ask if his father was an Indian prince, but prevented herself from seeming absurd.

"Have you a girl friend?"

"I have work to do, Madam."

"I'm only asking."

"Yes, Madam!"

She noticed that the figures on the invoices ran up and down in an absurd way. The room felt draughty. She couldn't let him stand there interminably. She felt again like saying, get the hell out of here.

"You may go," she said.

She tried to hum her recital tune, but the sky that had been blue was now cloudy. She thought desperately of Jan, of singing, of absurd invoices, and felt completely disinterested in Coloured clerks of seventeen who had girl friends.

Short Story

The Man Who Died Yesterday

By ALFRED HUTCHINSON

HE stared at his image out of blood-shot eyes. His face was drawn and his usually neatly brushed woolly hair stood like a clump of bushes. The late afternoon sun spilled and trembled in the room. "Ag, jy's net 'n kaffer!" Just a kaffer. The anguish of the morning pressed upon him like the coils of a mighty python crushing and mangling his soul. The barbs in the White man's voice ripped and tore at him again. A bitter, wicked, hopeless mirth welled in him.

"Peter Meyer—Where did you get that name?" The young official's eye had glazed contemptuously. He had called his friend: "Meyer — meet *Mr. Meyer!*" He squirmed at the memory.

Seven days in which to choose his tribe. What would he become—a Zulu, Xhosa, Mosotho . . . The black mirth rose in waves of helplessness. He would become a Zulu. Dark and sombre-throated, spears flashing . . . gasping and dying, the hand clutching the muzzle of the gun that had smitten him. He looked at the pencil in his hand.

It fascinated him. He twirled it. It suddenly became a spinning thing of fate—the gun that had smitten him. Because of it, Peter Meyer—Coloured—had died and a new person, Peter Meyer—Native (tribe to be chosen)—had been born. A mad desire to go through it again gripped him. He pushed the pencil into his hair. The mirth, black and rabid was bubbling like frenzied tomtoms. He bent his head. It stuck . . . Seven days to choose his tribe.

Peter Meyer's head throbbed. A sense of unreality clung to him. There was madness in the world and in himself, he thought, a madness that had begun with the morning when he, Peters and Fraser, had been stopped by an African constable and asked for their passes. The policeman had been faintly amused by their shock and bewilderment. The ride in the pick-up van; the long queue of Coloured men at the pass office . . . "Jy's net 'n kaffer!" . . . The card saying that he was a Native . . . Seven days to choose his tribe. Peter Meyer shook his head and turned away from the mirror. The room danced madly.

Children's voices in the street. A prick of fear. Soon Madge and Vernon would be home. From the stoep, the houses denounced him, pointed him out of the township. His eye fell on the desolation of Shantytown. He panicked and looked at the sky. Mrs. Brown passed silently by. Had she not seen him? A black wall, tall, impregnable, hopeless, rose before his eyes. Did she know; did she know that Peter Meyer had been killed by a pencil? and Babsy. The thought of his wife filled him with sudden grief. How would she take it? She flashed in his mind—fair, tall, and poised.

The voice of the singer sweeping upwards, sweeping them into silence. He must tell his wife, tell her in the wake of song. "Bokkie," he said chuckling hoarsely, "the pencil stuck!" The knife pointing at his hair.

"What pencil, Daddy?"

Mad scorpions in his soul, twisting venom tails upon themselves. Better self-hurt, self-destruction. He died at his own hands. "So." The pencil in Madge's hair. Bend your head. You see, you're a Native, too, just like your Daddy! The hoarse, rasping laugh.

"Peter, why must you do that?" A quiet reproach in the wake of song.

Sorry, Bokkie. Sorry. Sorry. A new path over the children's heads . . . Bantu Education, a new life . . . Sorry, Madge. Sorry Vernon. It's not my fault—blame it on the pencil. The demons of mirth, of foul, foul laughter. A Zulu . . . dark-throated in seven days.

Crescent moon. You and I are brothers but when you wax full we are strangers. When you hand, a slice of moon, as you are—part in the dark, with the demons of night, we're brothers. I'm sorry, Bokkie. I'm sorry, Madge . . . Vernon. The future of the crescent moon is dark—a slice. Sandwiched in night and light.

A pencil would never stick in such hair. Peter Meyer looked at the man sitting opposite him in Tant Sanna's shebeen. He was a sturdy, flaxen-haired Coloured man. Peter Meyer's anguish was crying for utterance, for release.

"Meyer, Mister—Peter Meyer . . . Cabinet-maker. Jackson . . . How d'ye do, Mr. Jackson . . ." Quiet chap. Drinking in a shebeen—Tant Sanna's. A pencil would never stick in such hair. Sorry, Bokkie. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry to be dark-skinned and woolly-haired? Sorry for all this. We never knew. The warm glow of brandy spilling penitence, inconsequential, lavish. Sorry for everything.

"The Government's mad, Mister. Stark mad. I tell you this damn country is going to the dogs! Yes, to the dogs . . ." The stranger listening attentively. The terror and the bewilderment squeezing out, distorted, painful—rankling. "And I told him, Mister: "Don't you dare lay your dirty fingers on me!" Yes, just so! I told him in English . . ." The uncomprehending look in the stranger's eyes. "Honest to God—as my name's Peter Meyer!" The uncomprehending look still in the stranger's eyes.

Pencil in hair. Profile. Marks on neck. Fingers kneading, thumping, probing deep into the caverns of ancestry. Pass office anthropologists verifying their theories. The great round-up of Africans that had slipped into the Coloured ranks. Coloured re-classification. Back with the Africans. Back to their own people, their own customs . . . Back to their own burdens! Panic. Fear.

Anger. Brothers classified differently. Families broken. The great probe . . .

Peter Meyer filling the glass angrily. Cold anger in his head. The stranger looking at him with twinkling eyes. "And I told him: 'To hell with your god-damn pass!' Right in his face. Just like that!" Who was this fellow any way? Why did he sit there and not say a word? Was he tolerating him, he Peter Meyer . . . Just because a pencil would never stick in such hair. If he thought he was a White man, then why didn't he drink in the White man's bars? The desperation riding and overwhelming him. "I told him: 'take your pass! I'll never carry it! Stick it . . . I fought in the war while cowards remained behind!' I said it . . . On my honour, as my name's Peter Meyer . . ." Where did you get that name from. From the dust-bin; from the mud, the mire, the urinary . . . "I told him! I told him!" The screech of a hurt soul. The rattle of glasses as the fist hits the table.

Tant Sanna peeping into the sitting-room. "Right, Sanna. I won't drink here again. I'm moving . . . Babsy, Madge, Vernon. We're going to live among the Natives." Tottering and standing, pointing where the desolation of the shacks lie. "The pencil would not go through my hair . . . I'll be a Zulu . . ."

Drunkenness crashing upon itself. Peter Meyer sitting down. Head in his hands. Sorry Tant Sanna. Sorry. Sorry. Laying his head on the table sobbing sobs that fail.

"Sorry to hear it. They are doing a sin." From the mouths of shebeen queens . . . not infants.

"My wife, my home, my children . . . All gone." The lifting of hands above. Complete. Gone. The soul sobbing. The eyes dry. "Look. Here's the card. I'm dead to my wife, my children . . . I'm a Native . . ." The terrors of African life closing on him. Whole legions of miseries . . . pass, permits, flying squads, riot squads . . .

"Mister, I was born a Coloured. My grandfather was a White man . . . I've lived like one . . . Now, this to me . . . My children . . ." Dumb supplication in the eyes.

"It's always been like this with the Africans . . ."

"But we are Coloureds . . ."

"No difference . . ."

A communist with hair that a pencil would not stick in. Peter Meyer, beware of communists. "Mister Blackson . . . I've never mixed with politics . . ." Caution. Beware. Looking furtively round the room.

"And now politics are mixing us!" The scorn and contempt in the stranger's voice. "Did you fight in the war, Mr. Meyer?"

Did Koza know? Did Koza know that Peter Meyer—Coloured—was dead? Did he know that he had joined his race. What was this Bantu Education? . . . He'd ask, but how?

"It's no good moaning about it . . ."

Immense pathos. Hurt wring hurt. "Mister Blackson, you don't understand . . ." Unprotesting grass, watered upon. "Mister, they . . . they pissed on me. They messed on me . . . everything of mine . . . everything . . ." Messed on Babsy, on Madge, on Vernon. Messed on everything.

"Yes, they did . . . They would . . . It's a messy business . . ."

"But you . . . you will never know what it's been . . ."

"You mean with hair like mine? A complexion like mine . . . Why, I might . . . I almost certainly will . . . I have suffered for you . . ."

"Thank you stranger . . . But I'm sorry." Sorry. Sorry, Babsy. Sorry, Vernon. Sorry, Madge. Sorry for the job I cannot keep.

Staggering in the light of the crescent moon. The houses pointing him out. Ignoring them. I'm sorry, Bokkie. I'm sorry. Sorry stranger. I'm sorry crescent moon, my brother. Seven days to choose. I'm sorry I died yesterday. Perhaps I will live again.

WIN NEW READERS!

"FIGHTING TALK" needs a wider audience, and we need your help to win one. The New Year is approaching, and the time for New Year Resolutions. Make a pledge to win new readers for "FIGHTING TALK".

FREE COPIES

As part of a 1956 Drive for New Readers, we will send a free copy of a past issue, together with a subscription form, to names and addresses of prospective subscribers sent in by readers. Fill in the form below (additional names may be written on an extra sheet of paper, if necessary) and follow up the free copies by making sure your friends subscribe.

Please send a free copy of a past issue of "Fighting Talk" to:—

Name

Address

SUBSCRIPTION RATES UP

The *Fighting Talk* Board announces that from January, 1956, the annual subscription of the magazine will be increased to 7/6. During December subscriptions will still be 5/- for the year. Why not take advantage of the old subscription rate during December to make your friends a New Year gift of a *Fighting Talk* subscription?

"FIGHTING TALK" CALENDARS

Fighting Talk Calendars, in two colours, carrying photographs of the Congress of the People and of Father Huddleston, Chief Luthuli and Dr. Dadoo are on sale at 2/6 each. Write to P.O. Box 1355, Johannesburg.

FAREWELL, JOCK!



[I]t had to come some time. That much we knew, but each year, as National Conference came around, we held thumbs and hoped that Jock would still be National Chairman. This time he has dug in his heels. He announced to Conference that he would not accept nomination for the National Executive Committee.

No one has earned a rest so thoroughly as Jock and yet there is no one whom we would rather keep slogging away in our midst.

Jock Isacowitz has for almost ten years been the outstanding personality in ex-service affairs. There are some who may have had more honours thrust upon them, some who may have cornered more of the limelight, but not one of them, it can be asserted, wielded so powerful an influence as Jock. That comes, of course, from the fact that Jock was national chairman of the Springbok Legion, which by its breadth of vision and militancy of action set the pace, in the field of ex-service affairs.

You will remember that, fresh from University studies, Jock found himself in uniform in East Africa, where he and others started pondering on the fate of ex-servicemen AFTER the war was done. He realised that, if there were to be no forgotten men, there had to be no forgotten politicians. On that basis

he proclaimed the need for a new-type, modern ex-servicemen's organisation, which would concern itself with the welfare problems of ex-soldier-rehabilitation and at the same time, partly out of self-interest and self-justification, partly out of a consciousness of the political necessity, would carry over into civvy street the struggle for democracy and its related ideals, which underlay the actual military struggle then raging.

It is now old history how the men in East Africa met up with men with similar thoughts in the Western Desert and at home in Kaffirskraal, and how they formed THE SPRINGBOK LEGION, not dreaming for a moment of the obstacles they were to encounter and the victimisation in the U.D.F.: not dreaming for a moment of the glorious response from service people and civilians alike. They did not dream that the day would come when the Legion would be a political force in the country, so vital a force that the opponents of the Union's war effort would one day find it necessary to stigmatise the Legion as their most dangerous non-party foe.

Throughout the intervening years Jock has guided the Legion's destinies as its national chairman. His contribution to the Springbok Legion cannot be measured. His influence in moulding Legion policies and activities has always been immense and few can rival him for logical, purposeful thinking. His example and inspiration to other Legionnaires is readily recognised. His influence on other ex-service organisations must not be overlooked and there can be hardly a single ex-volunteer in the country, European and Non-European, who has not at some time in some way benefited materially from Jock Isacowitz's participation in ex-service affairs.

Three pictures of Jock stand out in my mind. The Government sent Jock and Sir William Campbell of the B.E.S.L. up north in 1945 to talk 'amalgamation' to the boys. Jock had always refused a commission, so caused some difficulties in various messes, since though a V.I.P., he was only a sergeant-major. For that reason about eight of us were gathered in a private room in the Minerva Hotel in Rome and Jock told us the truth of the Helwan Riots and then talked to us of amalgamation with

enough. Inter-tribal feuds, he realised, would bring only starvation and misery without solving any of the root-causes of disagreement.

He set about establishing peace in Basutoland—not the false “peace” won by conquest, but a more lasting arrangement secured by extending a hand of friendship to other tribes. Gradually, the fighting lessened, as many tribes repaired to his capital at Thaba Bosigu, there to seek his shelter. Although large numbers of Zulus came, the majority were Bechuana, and the character of the nascent nation from the start showed strong traces of Bechuana culture especially in its language, which became known as Sesuto.

A progressive administration headed by a pitso, or council of chiefs, controlled the affairs of the community and the people prospered. Justice was administered by a highly developed Leghotla, or supreme court.

If peace meant plenty, the converse was also true, for an abundance of food and cattle for all was the surest guarantee against strife. When word came to Moshesh that Missionaries had entered the country and were teaching people new techniques in production and social organisation, he immediately sent them a gift of cattle with an invitation to come and educate his people.

But where the missionaries penetrated, other White men were bound to follow, and it was not long before the British Government at the Cape, and the Trekkers “discovered” Basutoland, and cast covetous eyes on its fertile, rolling plains, and its fine cattle.

JUST as the Basuto eagerly welcomed the missionaries, so did they welcome the white-skinned men and women in tented wagons who began to settle on their lands in the late 1830's. Contemptuously and to the bewilderment of the Basuto, the welcome was flung back in their teeth.

The interlopers treated their hosts as subject people; they encroached with impunity on tribal lands, killed the dispossessed owners, stole cattle and murdered the herd boys. Once again the spectre of an overcrowded and war-ridden Basutoland began to stalk Moshesh, and as the invasion mounted he wrote a letter to Stockenstrom, protesting that the Boers “go journey after journey to shoot Bushmen and kidnap children.”

As he considered the Boers still to be British subjects Moshesh also complained to the Cape Colony that the Trekkers were “acting as Judges and Executioners.” But the British paid no heed. Although they were by no means uninterested, they waited to see which way the wind was blowing. A year later they climbed down from the fence, as, in the words of one writer, they “saw an opportunity to exploit the country through a representative at Moshesh's court,” and concluded a treaty of alliance with the Basuto (the Napier Treaty, 1842).

Moshesh in undertaking “to be the faithful friend and ally of the Colony” saw the pact as a weighty deterrent to disturbers of the peace. His high hopes disintegrated, when shortly after the Treaty the British betrayed their ally by not supporting the Basuto against a Boer-Baralong assault.

Nevertheless Moshesh continued to regard friendship with the British as an important means of preserving peace, and, working to this end, concluded a treaty with Maitland in 1845. In 1848, Sir Harry Smith proclaimed the “Sovereignty of the Queen of England throughout the territories over which her Majesty's sub-

jects have spread themselves,” obtaining Moshesh's consent by promising a check on White encroachment.

The practical effect of this measure provided a clue to British strategy: it dispossessed the Basuto of the land which had already been appropriated by the Boers, and, by robbing Peter to pay Paul, weakened the one and placated the other. British diplomacy clearly aimed to establish a “balance of power.”

Like all balances of power it was a precarious arrangement, for the policy of playing off the ends against the middle, was bound to breed conflict. Emboldened by Britain's evident partiality, the trigger-happy and land hungry Boers continued their creeping invasion; and to secure the neutralisation of Moshesh, the Resident Commissioner, Warden, insidiously added fuel to the feuds between Moshesh and anti-Basuto tribes.

By now a pattern of British policy was emerging from the welter of confusing strategies and broken promises. As one of the French missionaries at Thaba Bosigu Caselis said, the duplicity of the British “had led the natives to suspect the Government of a disposition to divide and rule . . . Natural rights, past grievances, past benefits, past engagements and treaties . . . have been discarded and overlooked.”

In 1849, after Warden had encouraged Sikonyela to attack Moshesh over a cattle dispute, Moshesh bitterly accused him of fanning tribal conflicts, “while my people were sleeping the sleep your words have made to come over them.”

On hearing this charge, the British attitude froze, and the following month the Governor of the Cape advised Warden: “Unless Moshesh humble himself, he must be humbled.”

It was easier said than done.

In July 1851, Moshesh resoundingly crushed the British at Viervoet, and the following year a single Basuto division routed Cathcart's 2,000 armed and mounted redcoats at Berea.

General Cathcart gratefully accepted Moshesh's offer of peace which followed on the heels of his fleeing army, and wrote to Moshesh: “Great Chief Moshesh . . . Will you tell your people that I admire the great courage which they showed in the battle yesterday.” To his superiors he reported that he had formed a “sincere respect and regard” for Moshesh, “whom I found not only the most enlightened but the most upright chief in South Africa.”

But the lesson had been driven home, and the British now executed one of their characteristic volte faces. Unilaterally they abrogated the Napier Treaty, by deciding to renounce sovereignty over the Orange Free State and Basutoland.

Nor was this the end of British duplicity. In order to provide the Boers with land on which to found a republic, they handed over a large portion of Basuto territory (Bloemfontein Convention, 1854). If one recalls that the lands of Moshesh extended to where Bloemfontein is today, the extent of this robbery is patent. Moreover, according to the Smithfield Treaty, 1855, the Basuto henceforth required a pass to enter their former lands, while the Boers were permitted to follow cattle spoor into Basutoland as they pleased.

The withdrawal of the British gave a green light signal to the Boers that no holds would be barred in future. With considerable anxiety for the peace of his people, Moshesh braced himself for the tense days ahead.

(To be concluded in the next issue)

LAO SHEH describes

THE WORK OF A WRITER IN PEOPLE'S CHINA

● One of China's outstanding novelists, Lao Sheh is the author of "Rickshaw Boy"; "The Drum Singers"; "The Yellow Storm", and the play "The Dragon Beard Ditch", for which he was honoured with the title "People's Artist" by the Peking Municipal Government.

IT'S no easy job—I can assure you—to pack into an article two or three thousand words long my reflections on all I've experienced, learned and gained in these five years since the founding of our Republic. So how about indulging in a simple chat, a talk about things that are fresh in my mind? This may not result in a well-constructed essay, but perhaps in this informal way I can convey to you better some of the thoughts nearest my heart. After all, it's sincerity and truth that count most, not fine writing.

In these five years, I've written quite a lot—chiefly stage plays and short popular pieces. I know I'm not a specially good playwright. Why then have I gone on trying? As I understand it, a play should let people see on the stage other people just as much alive as themselves. Its impact should be direct, so that it constantly moves and influences its audience. Let the people educate the people: that's the point of a good play. A play will get the quickest response if it takes full account of its audience. I love our new society with all my heart; I've been eager to tell others what I've understood, so that they may share my understanding and love the new society as ardently as I do. Political fervour fires creative desire—that is the inner urge that prompts me to write. I have to write, whether I can write well or not.

I have only to keep my eyes open, and all the new buildings and changes going on around me crowds in and moves me deeply. The more I

see, the more I'm moved. There's no gainsaying the evidence of one's eyes: facts speak louder than words. I love the new society, because in it people are free and happy; the rotten past is done with for good; the streets are clean and tidy; and there is startling progress everywhere. So isn't it natural that I should feel excited and happy, loving the new people and things. I know that the new society is good, very good, and a hundred times better than the old society. So I simply must write. It's unbearable to keep all the things that make you happy to yourself!

Would it be right to say that I have no difficulties in writing? Of course not! I have plenty.

But, as I've seen in the past five years, overcoming difficulties and not yielding to them is the very essence of the new spirit and conduct of our people. As I've said, progress is being made with startling speed. Why? Because workers, peasants, soldiers, technicians professors—all who have a job to do—don't shrink from difficulties. It's a spirit that can move mountains and drain seas. Isn't it a miraculous achievement that under present technical conditions such vast schemes as the Chingkiang Flood Division Basin, the Kuanting Reservoir, the Chengtu-Chungking Railway and the like should have been completed ahead of time?

We writers must learn from the people who show this titanic energy. What others do, a writer can do too. Although what I know is still superficial, I can learn. If my first manuscript fails to fill the bill, I listen to suggestions and revise it. If enthusiasm means anything, it means dogged determination to subdue difficulties. If you turn tail the moment you run into trouble, what sort of enthusiasm is that?

It is possible some one will ask: "When a veteran writer has to start to learn and to accept criticism, doesn't it lower his prestige?" No, it does not. In my opinion to take delight in learning, to be ready to accept criticism are honourable, not degrading, they are marks of courage,

not weakness. In our new society the quality of man is shown by his efforts to keep abreast of events and absorb new knowledge and experience. If I refused to move with the times, and with a sneer put down my pen, I should lose not only my dignity, but also my life as a creative writer.

Now, perhaps my readers will understand why I have spent so much time producing these short, popular pieces. I've aimed, in little stories, to bring home to the people the importance of hygiene, to explain the Marriage Law and the foolishness of superstition.

There is nothing unbecoming to a writer about pieces that are small unpretentious and popular; the point is that they should reach the people to good effect. For example, I wrote in a hurry a not too good operetta called "Willow Well." While the Marriage Law was being publicised all over the country, it was staged in many places in various local styles. Naturally I don't know how much positive effect it had, but I know it must have had some. There is some satisfaction in that—to know that my little piece found its way to the people and that I'd found a way of serving them. That's as far as I'll go: I still don't consider my little operetta to be very good.

In this connection I ought to mention that when I set my hand to creative work, large or small, I always get every consideration and all the help I need from the government.

In the grim Kuomintang days, I lived perpetually as it were in a wilderness. Nobody paid any attention to me or cared if I was working or not, or whether I was dead or alive. They showed no hesitation in banning books and arresting their authors.

Today, when I want to write something, I can get all the documents and reference materials I need, temporary assistants, travelling facilities to visit places of interest and suggestions from the authorities.

When the People's Art Theatre was rehearsing my play "Spring Flower, Autumn Fruit," the mayor and two vice-mayors came to the rehearsals

two or three times, although they were extremely busy. We discussed how the contents as well as the form of the play could be improved. After the run of my play "Dragon Beard Ditch," the Mayor of Peking, acting on a proposal from the people of the capital, presented me with a certificate of merit. The Communist Party and the Government hold literature in high esteem. So do the people. How, then, can a writer remain unmoved and idle? I've written for thirty years, but it's only in the last five that I've taken the rightful place of a writer in society.

I'm respected and encouraged and materially well looked after and rewarded. I have a guaranteed income from my writings, and royalties on my published books. Unlike pre-liberation days when I had to worry about a livelihood, I now have money to spare. I have been able to buy several precious little paintings of our great old painter Chi Pai-shih and some small vases and bowls of the Kangshi and Chienling periods. Though slightly cracked, they are still charming and vivid in colour. So in my little house I have fascinating paintings and beautiful porcelain to feast my eyes on. In my little courtyard I have various kinds of flowers—those which are not too much bother to take care of. I have trouble with my leg and can't stand too much physical exercise. Planting and watering flowers is just the right sort of recreation for me. I no longer live in a wilderness!

I work all the year round. I refuse to rest until illness overtakes me. I've written quite a lot, but I still feel it's not enough. How many new people and things can be written about! The activities of our workers, peasants, soldiers are always an un-failing source of inspiration. Every factory, every village and every army unit is treasure trove; precious stones and rarities of all kinds can be unearthed anywhere.

Try to write about the workers, peasants and soldiers: that injunction has opened up a new world to writers, and what a rich and beautiful world! Again, to write for workers, peasants and soldiers: that is a new, honourable task for writers.

I'm almost ashamed now to read what I wrote before liberation—mostly faint, colourless personal impressions that don't amount to much. At first glance they seem to give a kaleidoscopic view, to have covered the whole gamut of life; but upon

closer examination, how trivial and inconsequential they seem. At that time, I didn't know what ought to be written, nor to whom my writings should be addressed, so I fussed over those few faint impressions.

Now when I take up my pen I've got a definite and clear-cut purpose. To fulfil it, I have to go into the thick of life. Does the writer lose something when he works in this way? No, he has everything to gain. He cannot write freely without taking something genuine from life.

Before liberation, I was always worrying about the subject matter of my writings. Even if there had been no censorship—that vicious system of curbing free thought—I would still have worried.

Today, I can go out and observe life freely. Only when you live a life that is rich and full can you write proficiently. If I were to close my eyes to reality and concoct something fantastic out of my imagination, it would be a sheer waste of time; I would not be making good use of my freedom. People don't want to read empty, unintelligible abstractions. They read for education and recreation. What they want are works that show them how to lead a happier and more beautiful life!

In order to produce works which not only reach a high artistic level but also reflect the outlook of our time, I have taken an enthusiastic part in studies organised among Peking literary circles—both political and vocational. Soviet theory on art and literary work has helped me immensely and led to a better understanding of the creative method of socialist realism.

Besides making myself acquainted

with actual life and taking part in writing and studying, I help in the editorial work of the popular literary periodical — *Shuo-shuo Chang-chang* (Story-telling and Ballad-singing). In editing this periodical, I come into contact with many problems connected with folk literature and have thus enriched my knowledge of the tradition of folk literature and the development of national literary style. I gain both knowledge and pleasure from my practical work, and I have come to know the joy of "voluntary and conscientious labour."

My knowledge of classical literature proves useful in the effort to solve the problem of preserving the traditions of our national literature. I have explained to young friends on the editorial board of *Shu-shuo Chang-chang* and elsewhere the merits of our classical literature, and, according to my lights, how they can best learn from and make use of that legacy.

Chairman Mao has given us a splendid maxim "Let all the flowers bloom together; cultivate the new and discard that which has outlived its time." Our creations should neither be confined to the old styles, nor ruthlessly severed from our historical heritage. They should combine a socialist-realist content with a great variety of forms.

Well, I have written as many words as were required of me, but I haven't related a tenth of my life and work within these five years and all the pleasure and experience I have derived. But if something which has to come from the depth of my heart has reached yours, then I shall not care much if my article is rather ill-constructed.

THIS SOUTH AFRICA!

... "Mr. Averant (for the Crown):
"The accused are charged with painting the town red with subversive things and I feel their acts almost constitute a danger to the Senate . . . Both men acted in a most reprehensible manner. On the walls of the Houses of Parliament they painted 'We Blacks Ain't in Yet!' I ask the court to take a serious view and if they want to get in to put them inside . . ."

"The Friend," Bloemfontein, 22.11.55.
(Sent in by C.B.)

ESTCOURT, Thursday.—Mrs. S. M. van Niekerk, United Party M.P. for Drakensberg, said at a "report-back" meeting in Estcourt last night that the Government are making greater promises to the Natives every day, giving them their own policemen, magistrates and industries.

The Government, she said, are putting the Natives on an equal status with the White races.

"Where will the economy come in if you take away our labour class?"—Sapa. (Sent in by J.K.)

- *Fighting Talk* offers 5/- prizes for the best examples of "This South Africa!" Indicate the source of your quotation or extract, and sign your name and address. Entries for the January issue must reach P.O. Box 1355, Johannesburg, by Dec. 18.

HIS PEN IS

A SWORD FOR FREE AFRICA

By M. MULLER

MANY men have come from Europe to Africa. They have made discoveries and drawn maps. They brought the flags and the traders of their homelands. At the head of armed forces they have subjugated the African peoples and seized their territories. Others discovered Africa's wealth and sold it to the great capitalist companies of Europe and America. Others came as students and went back to their universities to train colonial administrators who would rule Africa. There was Cao and Barth and Clapperton and Livingstone; Goldie and Lugard; Lord Hailey and Monica Wilson; and very many more.

Lately there has come a new kind of traveller—the man who comes to write about Africa, its peoples and its problems. Some write bad things about the Africans: they are backward and lazy, they cannot learn, they have no initiative. They write about the blessings of colonial rule and the wicked and stupid people who rebel against it. But there is one man who stands above all others, who has travelled in every part of Black Africa, and who has made his able pen a weapon in the cause of a free Africa. His name is Basil Davidson.

The Colonial Debate

What is written about Africa overseas is important. The struggle against imperialism and its particular manifestation in colonialism is centring more and more on Africa. There is a great public debate going on in the imperialist countries about the value of colonies to the peoples of the imperialist powers, on the rights and wrongs of imperialist exploitation, on the rights of former colonial peoples to take their places as equals among the nations of the world. And this debate is not going so well for the imperial governments and for the capitalist combines which operate in the so-called "under-developed" (i.e. colonial and semi-colonial) countries. A massive publicity campaign is being waged in the press, on the radio, to justify imperialism, to cloak its true nature. To spread the truth, to ex-
 rialism, is a genuine contri-
 the struggle of the colonial
 This is the contribution which

Basil Davidson is in fact making.

Apart from his articles, his work on Africa is represented by three books. "*Report on Southern Africa*" deals with South Africa, the Rhodesias and the Protectorates and was published in 1952. "*The New West Africa*", edited by him and dealing with the problems of the self-governing colonies of the Gold Coast and Nigeria, appeared in 1953. The most recent, "*The African Awakening*", dealing with the Congo and Angola, appeared this year and is causing a great gnashing of teeth among the apologists for colonialism.

The Side of the People

Davidson is easy to read. That not even his most venomous critics can deny. The "*New Statesman and Nation*" calls "*African Awakening*" a "most readable book" and then says of Davidson that "he pushes his theme to the verge of recklessness", that the future he holds out to the African as a member of a modern society "savours of irresponsibility." Recklessness, irresponsibility—these words have long been used by the cautiously neutral against he who has taken sides, the side of progress and of the people. Or again, "*The Economist*"—Davidson's "is not a fair picture of Africa," it is an "unkind" picture, he looks at Africa through pink glasses, but he has "a racy style and genuine power to entertain . . . this book can be read with enjoyment . . ." Why? "...if only for the proof it offers that the Colonial Office is often right."

So, lest someone thinks that he is a hack writer turning out Colonial Office brochures, over to Davidson:

"But can we afford to liberate our colonies? Under the economic relations of capitalism, the answer will be no . . . From a wider point of view, however, we cannot afford *not* to liberate our colonies. Just as the continuance of capitalism in Britain has meant appalling waste in human energy and human life, so imperialism . . . has meant that the few have grown rich while the many have grown poor . . . But the lesson we have now to meditate . . . is that we cannot liberate the colonies, we cannot 'develop the backward areas', we cannot have any sort of honest 'partnership', so long as the economic relations between Britain and the colonies . . . are capitalist relations. For so long as the basis for economic

relations with our colonies remains capitalist, so long shall we hold firmly to every method of strengthening the Sterling Area even when such methods mean the receipt of direct subsidies . . . from colonial peoples much more gravely impoverished than we are. *This is another way of saying that we cannot afford to liberate our colonies so long as we are wedded, through alliance in one form of warfare or another, with the greatest capitalist nation of all, with the United States of America.*" (Our emphasis). ("*The New West Africa*" p. 174).

Profits and Policies

There is in Davidson's work a continual awareness that colonialism, race prejudice and discrimination does not arise from the evil that is in men, but that they are products of capitalism. The great capitalist undertakings are always there: their profits, their policies, the men who manage them:

"In the years before 1926 the Union Minière had housed its migrant workers—men taken from their villages by bribery, trickery or outright pressure—in big bachelors-only compounds on the model of the Transvaal mines: indeed, it was the Johannesburg Chamber of Mines which supplied the 'expert adviser' who designed these compounds and 'explained' how they ought to be filled and kept full. It was natural that the Johannesburg companies should render this service to the Union Minière because the Union Minière, within the highly concentrated framework of ownership provided by the Société Générale de Belgique and its related companies, was partly owned by British and South African capital. (Since the end of the Second World War, as a condition of granting "Marshall Aid" to the British Labour Government, American interests have also secured a significant share via the British holding company, Tanganyika Concessions . . .)

"After 1926, as we have seen, Dr. Moutouille (whose spade-shaped beard is only less in magnificence than the pictures show King Leopold's was) began to alter this . . . In 1925, the year before Moutouille introduced his policy of stabilised labour, the Union Minière had 13,849 workers accompanied by 2,507 wives with no more than 779 children . . . In 1952 the Union Minière had 18,464 workers; but now there were 14,647 wives and no fewer than 28,000 children: almost exactly *two children for each wife . . .*"

"A writer in the *Journal of Business of the University of Chicago* has lately offered in statistical form a splendidly clear illustration of the truth that 'poor colonial countries' have generally produced the capital they require for their

own primary development. He finds that the thirteen most profitable rubber plantations in Malaya and Ceylon (established from forty to forty-five years ago) have paid average annual dividends during their lifetimes that range between 23 per cent. and 64 per cent.

"Such profits pale before the astronomical takings in Africa. Through fifteen years, the Ferreira Estate (South Africa) has yielded an annual average dividend of 278 per cent. . . . the Premier Diamond Company . . . 367 per cent. for 23 years . . . the Ashanti Goldfields Corporation an annual average of 58 per cent. for 51 years . . ."

And did you know that in our own Namaqualand "the American copper interests now working the O'Okiep mine . . . have managed to raise their dividend from a mere 10 per cent. in 1945-46 to 460 per cent. in 1951-52?"

His perception of the economic forces that made for differentiation in policy emerges:

"The small local investor and employer . . . in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, as in the Congo, sees the future only in terms of permanent White supremacy on the spot. The big investor, on the contrary, can allow himself to make many concessions so long as the inviolability of exported profit remains assured. Political concessions to the Gold Coast and Nigeria have not interfered, for example, with the profits of Unilever (whose interests include the United Africa Company), which were about £25 millions in 1952. One could argue that the desperate plight of Kenya today flows partly from there being no great investment ventures there: practically all European employers in Kenya are small local investors—emotionally as well as economically interested in 'keeping the Natives down', and consequently incapable of seeing beyond the end of their noses.

But above all it is the people of Africa, good, bad and plain ordinary people, whom Davidson brings to life.

'We sent out a bulldozer to one of our projects not long ago,' recalled the prince. 'When I went there I found it was standing ready assembled, although the resident European engineer was away on business elsewhere. Who'd put it together? George had put it together—a nice fat African who couldn't even speak French properly. But he'd looked at the illustrations, studied the plans, and fitted the parts together. Now, George gets 8,000 francs a month and the European engineer gets 25,000. George doesn't want to work under the European engineer any longer, and I don't blame him.'

There are the Congo African bars, where—

"... there is gaiety and light and noise, dancing and jiving, the making and taking of sentimental vows. There is the drinking of innumerable bottles of Simba, thoughtfully provided by a European brewery established in the city."

And suddenly, you meet the young African sculptor and his work:

"In Leopoldville, in 1953, the best local art prize was won by Benjamin Mensah, aged twenty six, with a monumental group called *Slavery* . . . His *Slavery* is one more reflection of the African awakening. In these two slaves who struggle under the weight of their chains, there is more than the passion of suffering and accusation. Mensah has managed to convey not only the carrying of chains but also, subtly, obscurely, the breaking of chains: not only slavery, but also freedom."

But it is not only for confirmation of what we know and for the trivialities of life amusingly described that we can turn to Davidson. Little notice has so far been given to the gropings of Strydom towards a new foreign policy for the apostles of *baaskap* in relation to the African continent. With the striving for leadership in a

common front of all European powers and settler groups, we are familiar. But there is also talk of "friendly co-existence" with the emerging independent black states in Africa. This theme appeared in a recent speech by Strydom. It has for some time now been plugged by his weekly "*Dagbreek en Sondagnuus*".

The Nats are aware that future developments in Africa are not going to be kept in compartments by the boundaries drawn at the Congress of Berlin in 1884. We have even greater need to be conscious of this: to develop contacts and fraternal relations with the working class and liberation movements of other territories. At least we must get to know their problems. The easiest way for the individual to make his start, is to turn to Davidson's books.

(Continued from page 15)

RACIALISM IN AMERICA

In an article on Negro labour R. C. Weaver shows how the economic position of the American Negro has actually *deteriorated* since the days of slavery. In those days the Negroes in the south had practically a monopoly of skilled jobs (just like the slaves at the Cape) but to-day they have been confined in the main to the most menial jobs by an effective colour bar. Thus the average earnings of Negroes are hardly half those of Whites. In addition, Negro workers are always the first to suffer in times of crisis. Gains made by Negro workers in times of labour scarcity generally disappear in times of crisis.

Other Groups Too

The Jewish people have not been spared their share of American racism. It is still not sufficiently widely known that almost every institution of higher education in the United States has a quota system for persons of Jewish descent, and that there is at present very strong agitation for the introduction of a quota system into the professions. A large proportion of American hotels are not open to Jews.

In an excellent article, D. W. Petegorsky, head of the American Jewish Congress, describes the position of American Jewry very clearly:

"The security of the Jews, as of all other groups, is inseparably bound up with the strength of the democratic system. To the degree to which a democracy is incomplete, that democracy is unsafe and insecure. And an unsafe and insecure democracy is

potentially the gravest threat to the Jews—or any other group—in America." One can only wish that certain South African Jewish leaders might show a similar clarity of vision.

The book falls down in one vital respect. It fails to give a clear account of the reasons for racial discrimination and hence is unable to say what conditions must be fulfilled if racial discrimination is to be ended. All we find are some shoddy psychological speculations, according to which it all started because the American Verwoerds had such unhappy childhoods!

It is only in the contributions by du Bois and by Petegorsky that we find an inkling of a valid analysis of the problem. And here the reader may well ponder over the following propositions, expressed with crystal clarity by the latter contributor:

"There can . . . be no *fair* employment before there is *full* employment. *Fair* educational practices will not be securely established until there are *full* educational facilities for everyone. Discrimination in housing will not be abolished until there are full housing facilities . . . The fight to achieve full employment, full education and full housing is therefore a fundamental aspect of the struggle to end racism and discrimination in all its forms." These words apply as much in South Africa as they do in America.

M. DICKSON

"*Race Prejudice and Discrimination*"; edited by A. M. Rose. (Publishers: Alfred Knopf, New York.)

BOOKS

The Ninth Wave

IT is always difficult to assess a book by Ilya Ehrenburg. None of the normal standards seem to apply. Those who look for polished style and the immaculate choice of word and phrase will find little to please them in "The Ninth Wave." Those who look for penetrating, detailed portrayal of character will, in the main, not find it here. And yet Ehrenburg has written a good book, a very good book, which manages to rise above the defects of its style and its characterisation because of the tremendous, gripping drama of its story.

"The Ninth Wave" is the story of our time, of the post-war world and post-war people; it is the story of the conflict between the plotters of cold war and the partisans of peace; it is the story of socialist reconstruction and of the advance of communism, side by side with and challenging German rearmament and the resurgence of fascism. It is a story of real people, like those we have come to know from our own lives, from our own society and from the columns of our own newspapers. A great age of human achievement and of change is at hand; and Ehrenburg has captured its spirit so compellingly, that, at the end of some nine hundred pages, one feels the work is unfinished. And so it is; just as incomplete as the tremendous surge of progress and of change is incomplete in the world in which we live.

Perhaps it is harsh to criticise the lack of polish of the writing. The fault may well lie with the translators, and not the author. But in a work of this stature, this weakness can be overlooked. There are weaknesses of character, but some stand out sharply from the rest; and significantly, they are, almost without exception, those who have not been merely "continued" from Ehrenburg's earlier work, "The Storm," but have been drawn anew for this book. There is Sablon, the French journalist, whose personal integrity draws him painfully from his confusion towards a clear, outspoken attack on the planners of a new world war. There is McHorne, the clumsy American pawn of the anti-Soviet freebooters, the comic-book conditioned "fall-guy" who ends a victim of his own stupidity in a Korean prison camp. There is

Richter, the German architect, whose efforts to restore the ghost of Hitlerism end in the resurrection of the Wehrmacht High Command and his own destruction. There is Professor Shebarshin, the Soviet delegate to the Warsaw Peace Congress, the man inspired by the unbounded sweep of reconstruction which socialism has unleashed, and the happiness it portends for his fellow men he loves so well. These, and many more. They are people living the life of the people of today, entering into all its tragedies and wastes, as well as all its heroism and inspiring progress.

"The Ninth Wave" would be a great book if those many people of its pages also entered convincingly into the love and heartbreaks of men and women of our time. But it is here that Ehrenburg's talent deserts him. In his recent novel "The Thaw," he struck out at the "spiritual poverty" of the Soviet writers in their portrayal of the personal relationships of Soviet men and women. Yet something of that "spiritual poverty" has crept into

the pages of "The Ninth Wave." His Soviet men and women languish with unhappy loves, when only a slight thaw would serve to unite them in happiness. The love of man for wife beats strongly through their minds, but seldom manages to break through the icy barrier of reserve in which he wraps their words and actions. The French heroine, Mado, inspiring leader of a peoples' struggle, suffers an icy and totally unconvincing tragic love for a long dead lover. Only amongst the decadent and promiscuous married couples—mainly American—who live in an atmosphere of coupled indifference and hostility, does Ehrenburg manage to strike a ring of truth.

And because of this, it falls short of what it could have been. And yet there has not been another in the bookshops for many years that could stand side by side on equal level with it.

L.B.

"The Ninth Wave", by Ilya Ehrenburg. Published by Lawrence and Wishart. Price 12/6.

H-BOMB HORRORS

MUCH has been said recently on the effects on human health of atomic and hydrogen bomb explosions. For this reason alone this publication, issued by the World Congress of Doctors held in Japan in June of this year, must be welcomed. The Commission members make the point that they are members of a profession whose duty it is to defend the public health against any threats to it which can be prevented. They have carried out this duty most effectively by placing on record details of research by Japanese scientists over the last ten years, as well as their own observations of the dastardly effects of atomic radiation on human health.

Among those on the Commission there is one South African—Prof. G. W. Gale, one-time Secretary of Health and Chief Health Officer for the Union. Others on the Commission come from France, Germany, Chile, Czechoslovakia, Soviet Union, China, England and Belgium.

The effects of the explosions over Hiroshima and Nagasaki are still not over and the Commission members

themselves, almost ten years after the A-Bomb explosions, saw a patient dying of radiation sickness in the Hiroshima Red Cross Hospital.

Most of the deaths from radiation (and this pamphlet deals mainly with this result of atomic explosions), occurred within six weeks of the bombing and included rescue workers who were affected by radioactivity induced in buildings. Those who didn't die suffered for years from vomiting, diarrhoea, eye troubles and other symptoms. Impotence and sterility in both sexes was usual, pregnant women frequently miscarried, premature and still births were common, and there were malformations among children born alive.

Investigation in the genetic field is still far from complete with only one generation and this has brought fear and anxiety among the surviving bombed population, both for themselves and for their descendants.

The report deals also with the Japanese fishing boat which was contaminated by the fall-out of radioactive dust from the atmosphere. The

RACIALISM IN AMERICA

VICTIMS of the recent propaganda offensive on race relations in the U.S. would find "Race Prejudice and Discrimination" interesting reading. They would be faced by a collection of extracts from the writings of prominent American experts which reveal a somewhat different picture of race relations in the U.S. than the professional American propagandists paint.

Not that any of the contributors to this volume could be dismissed as "subversive" in outlook. They are all highly respectable American citizens whose attitude is anything but revolutionary. Nevertheless, they reveal aspects of modern American racialism that should earn the contempt of all decent people for those, who, like our Mr. Alan Paton, act as its apologists.

In the first place, some of the contributors to this book make it quite clear what value we have to place on such events as Mr. Adlai Stevenson's recent anti-apartheid statement, or the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling against segregation in education. In a highly

boat was 80 miles outside the calculated danger zone, which indicates that the range of such explosions is unpredictable.

Experiments with dust from the boat produced acute radiation sickness in animals and genetic effects in plants. The Pacific Ocean was widely contaminated, radioactive rain fell and an official survey by the Japanese Government showed that fish caught in the Pacific Ocean from Japan to New Guinea and from Formosa to near Hawaii, were contaminated with radioactive material. For eight months a considerable proportion of the fish landed in Japan was condemned as unfit for human consumption. Moreover, the radioactivity of the rain caused contamination of many kinds of crops in Japan, including tea, maize and garden vegetables.

As far as civil defence and rescue work is concerned, an H-Bomb would result in the death of millions in the central area of the explosion (assuming it were to fall over a large city), and at the periphery there would be hundreds of thousands of injured. As Hiroshima proved with the smaller, "old-fashioned" A-Bomb, debris blocked the roads, water supplies were seriously disrupted, the electricity supply was cut off and telephone communication was im-

revealing and authoritative article by Prof. Adolf A. Berle, a former Assistant Secretary of State and high policy advisor, the motives of American policy on these issues are laid bare.

Screen for War

Berle's main thesis is that certain anti-racialist gestures by the U.S. authorities are necessary from time to time for purely *military* reasons, i.e., to strengthen the American Government's hand in the Cold War. He points out that a very large number of the military bases (which America maintains all over the world for purposes of intimidation) lie on the territory of Non-White people, in Asia, South and Central America and Africa. "At once it becomes clear," says Berle, "that the racial attitude of the commanders, officers and personnel on the American base is an important military item." Afraid that the American bases may be suffocated by the wall of hate surrounding them, Berle stressed the necessity of putting up the 'theory' that they have the function of defending the people in

possible because of the destruction of overhead wires. In Hiroshima all but one of the hospitals was destroyed and 70 out of 170 doctors in the town were killed. Thousands of people must have died through lack of medical aid. Imagine then the large force of medical and auxiliary personnel required for rescue work after the larger and more deadly H-Bomb. Relief would simply not be available!

In its conclusions the report recommends that the study of the effects of radiation among survivors should continue and that periodic international conferences should continue to evaluate the results.

Their final appeal is that the use of atomic energy shall be confined to peaceful constructive purposes for the benefit of all the peoples of the earth. The energy let loose by atomic fission can be used to make the lives of all of us easier and more pleasant. But if the destructive quality of atomic energy is to be further exploited, then the whole world and civilisation as we know it to-day is threatened with annihilation.

Preliminary report of the International Medical Commission on the effects on human health of atomic and hydrogen bomb explosions.

SONIA BUNTING

whose territory they are situated. But this "theory" will hardly make many converts among people who are informed about the crude racialistic practices common in America. Hence the need for a smoke-screen of widely publicized statements and paper reforms to encourage a belief in the democratic intentions of the American authorities.

Such measures are not in the least activated by any *genuine* democratic sentiments on the part of the American rulers; they are simply meant to be vast publicity stunts designed to "sell" America to the Non-White world. Needless to say, the vicious racialistic practices, so common in the U.S., remain largely unaffected by these democratic fanfares.

The Negroes have been *legally* entitled to vote in the southern states of America for many years, just as they are now legally entitled to non-segregated education. No less a contributor than Ralph J. Bunche, former mediator in the Arab-Israeli war and Director of the U.N. Trusteeship Division, makes clear the methods by which the overwhelming majority of Negroes have been consistently prevented from exercising their legal franchise rights. By means of the poll tax, "White" primaries, obstacles to voters' registration and other methods the Negroes' legal right to vote has remained a dead letter. But the American government could enforce this right at any time, if it had any genuine interest in establishing democracy in its own country. No doubt non-segregated education will be circumvented by similar methods.

Negro Claims

One of the most moving pieces of evidence of the Negro people's struggle against American oppression is contained in an extract from "A Statement on the Denial of Human Rights to Minorities in the Case of Citizens of Negro Descent in the United States." This document was presented to the U.N. Secretariat in 1947 by Dr. du Bois and other prominent leaders of the Negro people.

U.S. government pressure on its satellites in the United Nations kept the Negro protest off the agenda, but it could not remove the impression made by the publication of this protest all over the world. "It is not Russia that threatens the United States so much as Mississippi," state the Negro leaders; "internal injustice done to one's brothers is far more dangerous than the aggression of strangers from

(Continued on page 13)

Ruth Reed
OF FIFTH AVENUE

**STEWART'S
REXALL PHARMACY**

S. Joffe, M.P.S.
CHEMIST & DRUGGIST
PHOTOGRAPHIC SUPPLIES

280a, Louis Botha Avenue,
ORANGE GROVE
Phone 45-6243/4

Bedroom Suites by
**ANGLO UNION
FURNITURE
Manufacturers Ltd.**

Stocked by
LEADING FURNITURE
STORES

**Trump Clothing
Manufacturers**
(PTY.) LTD.

1 Central Road - Fordsburg
Phone 34-4529

Makers of
TREETS TROUSERS
and
ACROBAT SUITS

Standard Furnishing

(Pty.) Ltd.

30d, 30e, Voortrekker Street
and 35a, Prince's Avenue,
BENONI

For The Best In Furniture

FINEST VALUE IN PIPES

DR. MACNAB

FILTER

SELECTED
BRIAR



**COMMERCIAL
PRINTING Co. (Pty.) Ltd.**

New Era Buildings, Johannesburg
(Cor. Loveday & De Villiers Streets)
Phone 23-7571 P.O. Box 1543

Printers of this Journal

General Printing - Magazine - Bulletin
Newspaper and Advertisement Display
Work.

Juno Furnishing Co.

64 KNOX STREET
Phone 51-1106 GERMISTON

For A Square Deal

Contact Us

AGENTS

wanted to sell

"Fighting Talk"

on commission

Write to P.O. Box 1355

*Perfect Writing
Instruments*



*Your friend
for life!*

BARRIS BROS.

WHOLESALE MERCHANTS AND
DIRECT IMPORTERS

120 Victoria Street Germiston
P.O. Box 146. Phones 51-1281; 51-3589

**BANTU HOUSE
RESTAURANT**

- for Hot Meals
- Refreshments
- Pleasant Company

4a PRITCHARD STREET
(Next door to the Star Office)

**ORDER A
"FIGHTING TALK"
1956 CALENDAR**

at 2/6 each

from P.O. Box 1355,
Johannesburg