

FIGHTING TALK

ORGAN OF THE SPRINGBOK LEGION

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No. 1.

A TRULY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

FROM the Queenstown Conference of the African National Congress has come a stirring call to the ordinary South African man and woman of every race — a call to break through the lull which has gripped the democratic opposition since the ending of the Defiance Campaign. It is a call for an Assembly of the People — all the people — where a Freedom Charter can be drafted and proclaimed.

The outline shape of the People's Assembly is still vague, still waiting to be detailed in at a joint meeting of the African National Congress, the South African Indian Congress and the Congress of Democrats, together with any other democratic bodies who are willing to participate. But already there is this: the Assembly is to be composed of representatives of the people chosen by free and equal vote; the Assembly is to be open to men and women from town and country, from all occupations and all races on a basis of full equality; the Freedom Charter is to be a living

Where tradition prohibits the meeting of black men and white save on the basis of master and servant, the Assembly brings them together as community leaders and spokesmen.

It is events such as these that make history.

If the Assembly succeeds, as it should succeed, in becoming the most widely representative gathering ever held in South Africa, it will be a landmark in the history of struggle for human rights. It will mark the turning point at which the once small, outcast band of staunch, anti-racialist South African democrats of all colours emerge as the spearhead of the overwhelming majority of the population. It will mark the first clearly and formally expressed creed of democratic belief which the majority of South Africans today counter to the bitter, racist and repressive ideology of South African fascism and its Nationalist exponents.

From such beginnings, there can be no turning back

*"What is this, the sound and rumour?
What is this that all men hear?
Like the rolling on of ocean on the eventide of fear?
Like the wind in hollow valleys when the storm is drawing near?
'TIS THE PEOPLE, MARCHING ON!"*

expression of the people's aspirations and desires as debated, voted on and crystallised in the course of the nationwide campaign for election of representatives.

The Assembly will cut like a knife across the three-hundred year tradition of South African history. Born of the new strength, maturity and confidence of the Congress movement, it will proclaim to the world and South Africa that the traditional racial exclusiveness of South African affairs is being challenged and approaches its end; that the universal ideas of brotherhood, equality and co-operation of races has flowered in the bitter, hostile South African soil, and now represents the main stream of our people's consciousness.

Where tradition reserves the right to vote to an all-white minority, the Assembly opens that right to all who wish to exercise it.

Where tradition strengthens and bolsters the inequality of citizens, the Assembly proclaims the equal stature and importance of everyone.

for the rising democratic cause, no prospects before us but victory and freedom, in our own lifetime. If the Assembly succeeds

And succeed it must, and will. To this end, every effort of which lovers of liberty and South African patriots are capable must be turned. It must and will succeed if the effort is made to rouse the hearty and ready response to the call which can be evoked from every corner of the country, from every rural district and urban suburb. To this end, Fighting Talk will, during the coming months, devote its energies. This is our New Year pledge, as it should be of every true democrat, from whatever racial group he comes.

On behalf of the Editorial Board of Fighting Talk, we offer the hand of full and unstinting co-operation to the African National Congress in the great crusade they have initiated to summon the first, truly national Assembly of the South African People.

THE EDITORS.

WHAT PRICE THE UNITED PARTY?

THE fact must be recognised that the U.P.'s future is not very promising. Its chances of survival as a big party are slight.

It has compromised on its principles so often that today no one knows what it stands for or what it will put in the place of apartheid if it is ever returned to power. It is constantly adjusting its policy to be more in tune with apartheid, and with every successive "sell-out" its supporters lose a little more of their remaining enthusiasm and the general morale of the party declines further. This has gone on for so long that the end is now in sight. The U.P. has started actively disintegrating.

There is even more to it than this. The U.P.'s attitude to the Malan Government is not simply a passive one of evading action: It has its positive side — coalition-mongering. The revolt of the rebels was a definite attempt to strike a deal with the Nationalists. They have been defeated, but that is not the end of the affair by any means. They have a considerable number of supporters who are still respected and accredited members of the Parliamentary caucus and who are hankering after some form of "re-alignment" of political forces. It would be foolish to imagine that the rebellions within the United Party are over. They have just begun.

The United Party imagines that all the compromises and "sell-outs" are not noticed by its supporters, or that if they are noticed no one really objects to them. The United Party leadership is convinced that its followers will stay behind the party whatever happens — whatever compromises are made. This is an incorrect view. The U.P. electorate are disillusioned and disheartened. The extent of their dissatisfaction with the Strauss leadership is known to anyone who has made it his business to make a few inquiries among the ordinary citizens. The blunt truth is that the United Party is already much weaker than it was during the election in April. The Liberal and Federal parties have drawn off a small number of its followers, but a much bigger number are lapsing back into the political apathy that was so prevalent before the 1948 election. If Mr. Strauss thinks that the U.P. voters are still standing behind him, he is mistaken. The U.P. is in the process of breaking up. The day of reckoning has at last arrived. The Nationalists are succeeding in their aim of destroying the United Party.

PUTTING IT OFF

Because the U.P. is a big White party, and therefore a slight curb on the Nationalists — who after all are

dependent on White votes — a number of democratically-minded South Africans have prayed for the continued existence of the party. They have accepted the wholesale abandonment of principles, although it left a bitter taste in their mouths. They have been waiting patiently for the U.P. to make a stand; and every time the U.P. fails them, they hope that tomorrow it will justify their hopes. But tomorrow never comes. And now these people, the real backbone of the United Party, the section that has given it its stamina and will to oppose, are throwing up their hands in despair and looking around for something else. One by one, they are writing off the U.P. as a dead loss.

An important test faces the United Party as soon as the next Parliamentary session begins: the Coloured vote. At the moment, the U.P. seems determined to vote against the removal of the Coloureds from the common roll, but it will undoubtedly face a revolt among those of its members who believe that the Government should now be supported on this issue. What the outcome will be no one knows — but if there is going to be a fierce clash, it is almost certain that the U.P. will waver at some stage or other. It simply has no guts left.

CLEARANCE SALE

It is comparatively easy for the U.P. to make a stand on the Coloured vote, because it has developed into a major issue with a considerable part of the White population strongly in support of the U.P.'s case. But what about all the other measures that will be brought forward by the Nationalists during the next Parliamentary session? Is the U.P. going to repeat its behaviour of the last session and capitulate on one Bill after another? One would like to believe that the U.P. is really going to oppose the Nationalists, but its whole sorry record gives one no grounds

by a Special Correspondent

whatever for holding this belief. All the signs are that the U.P. is going to continue selling out.

The essence of the trouble is that the U.P. is not prepared to put forward a policy which is markedly different from apartheid. Firstly, it fears that it will not get enough White votes for such a policy; secondly, a positive alternative to apartheid means granting certain minimum rights to the non-Whites. The U.P. is not prepared to do this. For more than five years, the U.P. has formed part of the general anti-Nat. front — so much so, that a myth has been created, the myth that the U.P., fundamentally, is a progressive party, a party which is really liberal but which conceals its liberalism in order to capture the votes of near-Nats. Nothing could be further from the truth. The U.P. is not a progressive party. It is a party of big business, with all the aims and objects that usually go with big business. It has much more in common with apartheid than with the cause of the workers or the non-Whites. Its dispute with the Nationalists is over methods: It objects to the Nationalists being so exclusive — it wants to join them and take part in the general exploitation of the workers of South Africa.

This, of course, refers to all the U.P. supporters, who have stood by through thick and thin in the struggle against the Nats. They have been disillusioned: it was inevitable. Now they must look elsewhere.

JUMBLE WANTED

Johannesburg members who can collect Jumble should contact the Office (33-0975) to arrange for its collection.

BOOK REVIEW:

The Rosenberg Letters

THE ROSENBERG LETTERS, published by Dennis Dobson, London, obtainable Pickwick Bookshop, 45, Kerk Street, Johannesburg. Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were ordinary people. History, in the shape of the current American hysterical fear of the working classes, has ensured for these two people a permanent place in mankind's memory, for it was for the betterment of mankind that this loving husband and wife made the supreme sacrifice.

The Rosenbergs were arrested and accused of espionage in 1950. They protested their innocence throughout the case, but were finally executed in 1953. The volume under review consists of a wide selection of the letters that the couple wrote to each other during the three years of their imprisonment. In addition there are a few letters written to their friend and lawyer, Emanuel Bloch. The letters have been published to establish a fund for the two Rosenberg children.

The letters are beautiful for three main reasons. They record an unsurpassable faith in human worth: they enshrine in all its beauty the love of a man for a woman and the love of a woman for a man: they are written in language which by reason of its simplicity is exalted.

The Rosenbergs had a political creed which was that their own lives had value and purpose so long as their lives were devoted to the cause of human progress. They lived and worked consciously for the day, when there shall be for all mankind, 'Peace, bread and roses'. As Julius remarks, 'The real beauty of the good life is participating in the forward movement of humanity'. How simple a creed, how profound. How glaringly it exposes the anti-humanitarianism of all governments and all individuals who place sectional interests above the interests of mankind. What a righteous and ennobling faith such a creed places in the men and women of the world. How gloriously, at the same time, it proclaims the integrity, the intelligence and self-respect of the holders. There is no room for hate and strife and humiliation, only the building of 'a monument to love and joy, to human worth.'

The Rosenbergs had so deep a love of life, their own and the lives of earth's millions, that they had to accept death rather than betray that love.

It is a peculiar experience, the read-

ing of these letters. The reader is almost embarrassed to find himself reading correspondence that was never intended for public perusal. Soon, however, we cannot help participating in the rare and beautiful love that existed between this husband and wife. These cries between two divided yet united hearts leave one humble and admiring before the enveloping, passionate, adult love that lived in these two human beings. In a world of tawdry marriages and tawdrier liaisons, the Rosenbergs have purified the ideal of married love. These letters will last for all time as great love letters.

The style of the writers is not quotable, so apt is every word, so direct and concise the language. Simple words acquire a richer meaning in the context of these letters.

At random I open the book and read:

Julie Darling.

The concerned tears rose at once as I read your letter. I am constantly tossed upon a sea of righteous wrath for all the pettiness and indignity that hems us in. Sweetheart, I draw you close into loving arms and warm you with my warmth. I feel so inadequate in the sight of your need, yet I long to believe I have had some small something to do with the extraordinary stability you have been exhibiting,

Ever your wife,

ETHEL.

While reading these letters one aches with a poignancy which at times finds relief in tears. The limitless concern and compassion of these parents for their two boys grips the emotions painfully: Julie's tenderness towards his Mother: their love and admiration for Manny Bloch: their faith in the consciences of the people of the earth —

all weave into the letters an emotional quality that is intensely moving.

One cannot read these letters without hating with a bitter, bitter hatred the individuals in the United States who brought about the electrocution: a rebellious hatred of the system which could demand, grant and condone the barbaric treatment handed to the Rosenbergs. One cannot help being convinced of the innocence of these people and being shamed that one did not do more to try and avert their fate.

It is interesting and alarming to realise from the letters that the Rosenbergs were tried once and once only. All the numerous appeals were excursions into legal academics. Never after the first trial was evidence led either for or against them. No opportunity was given to expose the contradictions in the prosecution's case, nor to rebut false evidence. The first verdict was given in an atmosphere calculated to inflame the jury against the accused and yet never again was there an opportunity to test the validity of the verdict. It revolts the reader to see how stubbornly and speciously every appeal was turned down. One wonders whether Eisenhower can ever sleep easily again.

The reader takes note, too, of the revealing and shameful attempt on the part of the American government to bargain with these two in the condemned cell. "Something can be worked out, if you will agree to co-operate," they were told. Ethel Rosenberg replied in immortal words, 'Suffice it to say that my husband and I shall die innocent before we lower ourselves to live guilty. Nobody can dictate terms to the Rosenbergs, who follow only the dictates of heart and soul, truth and conscience and the God-blessed love we bear our fellows'.

I urge every lover of humanity, every lover of great literature, every one whose spirit falters in the fight for justice and free thought to buy this book at once, to keep it always at hand for inspiration, for consolation and for a renewal of faith in mankind and our destiny.

WORLD PEACE

THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS

I SHOULD first of all like to bring the greetings of the World Council of Peace to your National Council.

It is universally recognised that the French Movement has played a vitally important role in the great campaign which we have been conducting ever since Peace was threatened anew. I cannot think of this period of keen and difficult struggle without recalling our friend, Yves Farge, who gave so much to his country and to Peace. He will always be an example and a symbol for every one of us.

The work of this National Council is fully in keeping with the important resolutions of the Budapest session of the World Council and of the Vienna meeting of its Bureau last month.

As President of the World Council, I can assure you that the activities of the French Movement are closely followed by all who are fighting for Peace throughout the world; its difficulties and its successes are shared by all and much is expected from the campaign of action which you have just decided to undertake at this National Council.

Importance is attached to the action of the French people, not simply because of the great things they have done in the past, but also because they can play a decisive role for Peace in the present situation. France can either pursue or bring to an end the war in Viet Nam, adopt or reject the Bonn Agreement and the Paris Treaty. The mere mention of these possibilities gives the measure of France's responsibility.

BLOOD-SPILLERS

It depends upon France to put an end to the wholesale slaughter and destruction in Indochina. There are some who dare to invoke the prestige, the "world vocation," the civilising mission of France as an excuse for continuing this war. To support these pretensions, the same people spill not only French blood, but also send battalions of Moroccans, Algerians and Senegalese against the people of Indochina.

In reality, it is in obedience to the orders of those with a vested interest in a "crusading" war that the blood continues to flow and the rubble to pile up. In the meantime the profiteers continue to amass their gains. And they dare to speak of the prestige of France! It is we who are more concerned with the prestige and interests of France than anyone else; that is why we demand an end to this war.

A danger with which we French

*This is a speech
delivered by
Profesor F. Joliot-Curie
President of the World
Peace Council, to the
National Council of the
French Peace Movement*

October 3rd, 1953

people are well acquainted is looming up again in the centre of Europe — I speak of German militarism. All the repeated assertions about the defensive character of the coalition in which they want Federal Germany to take part, are reduced to nought by the fact that her present masters, supported and encouraged by the U.S. Government, have already advanced territorial claims. Yet it must not be forgotten that any re-armament of Germany, whatever its form, depends upon the prior agreement of France. The French people, conscious of the danger, must have a word to say in this matter.

Let them not tell us that this re-armament will be carried out whether we like it or not, and that it is better to choose the least dangerous form, namely, the European Defence Community. I repeat, any re-armament of Germany depends upon the agreement of our country.

FRANCE LIVES

Circumstances, recent history and the treaties in force have given France the power to strike a decisive blow to halt the onrush to war. There is no excuse for her not doing so, least of all the idea of alleged impotence which they try to make the French people accept.

Who among us does not feel angered by the assertion that our country is too old, too exhausted and lacking in resources and men, any longer to play in international affairs the role she played in the past? It would be easy for me to quote from our history characteristic examples of our country's contribution to civilisation. But perhaps I would be told that these were examples taken from a past that is dead and gone.

Was the united uprising of the French people against foreign occupation an event of the distant past?

It was only yesterday that our country made a rapid recovery after the liberation of its territory. The fact that for six years every effort has been made to break the unity of the French people, does not entitle anyone to speak of the demise or the impotence of France. Those who speak in this way, have no confidence in the people. To preserve their power and privilege, they attack the liberties and surrender the independence of their country.

The real truth is that the French people, forty million strong, live in a rich country favoured by an ideal climate. They know well how to cultivate the soil, harness nature, create industries, enrich human knowledge and create beauty.

The real truth is that our working people, our farm workers and our intellectuals are highly skilled and when they can work for Peace and for the happiness of all, and not merely to enrich a few profiteers and prepare for war, they will regain that enthusiasm for creation which makes a nation happy and useful in the world.

Those who are forever preaching resignation and who attempt to bring us into subjection, are either feeble-minded enough to believe that all French people are like them, or they are traitors to their motherland.

We must fight them with all our strength and restore confidence to those who have allowed themselves to become indifferent or sceptical.

At the present time, it is within the power of the French people to change the course of events in favour of Peace.

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And this is understood in all countries. The campaign which you are undertaking will be followed throughout the world with interest and hope. We already have the proof of this in the messages received by the Secretariat of the World Council as well as by the French Movement itself.

Should we not also see a proof of the importance of the role of France in the considerable volume of war propaganda directed at our country and in the pressure being put on our Government from abroad to force it to take a course contrary to the interests of our country and one which is often dishonourable? Would those who endeavour to use France to split the world into two hostile blocs and who are preparing to involve her deeply in their war, make so many efforts and go to so much expense if they did not feel that the agreement of France is essential to the realisation of their aims? The action which we must undertake in order to bring these plans to a dead halt in the coming months must be in line with France's potentialities — and we know these to be very great — and also commensurate with the dangers threatening our country and the whole of humanity. These are, indeed, terrible. It is high time to prevent our country from being embroiled in acts of war and aggressive coalition.

The people of France must have a healthy reaction to all this and become an insurmountable obstacle to the war which threatens. Be confident, we are not alone — the peoples of all countries, whether in the USSR, the USA, Italy, North Africa, Latin America or Scandinavia, expect much from the French people and are putting their confidence in us.

It is after having thought at length and in weighing my words, that I speak of a terrible danger. All of us here have still fresh in our minds the havoc wrought by the last war, the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, towns and their inhabitants burned by napalm in Korea and Indochina, the experiments of biological warfare in Korea, China and in Malaya.

Believe me, I assure you that the atomic and hydrogen bombs which have

been perfected and produced for some years, represent a considerably higher power of destruction. I would like to be able to break down the attitude of unbelief or resignation; unbelief which is no doubt due to a lack of real information, resignation which may be due to having become somehow used to horror.

PEACE IN OUR HANDS

If a new world war were to break out, France would be strategically the best target for these new devices. The result would be purely and simply death for the great majority of us — and by great majority is meant at least half of our population — and dire poverty for the horribly mutilated survivors, in a country without cities, without factories and without resources.

With hydrogen bombs, the power of which can be increased to a diabolical degree, it can even be foreseen that their explosion would risk making all life on our globe impossible.

This is what is meant when we talk of world war today. How can one remain indifferent to such dangers? The normal instinct of self-preservation alone should unite all human beings in an even more urgent demand for the prohibition of these monstrous weapons.

It is the grave duty of scientists to inform the public about these immense dangers. It is their duty to be in the front ranks of those who are determined to rid the world of them for ever. Scientists knew all that science has already done for the good of mankind; they also know what it could do in the future of mankind in a world restored to Peace. They no longer want it to be said: "Science is leading us to destruction by the atomic and H-bombs."

They know that science cannot be blamed . . . The guilt lies with certain men who make evil use of its results. If the scientists stand aloof they will become their accomplices. But this they refuse to do.

I ask you, on their behalf, to give us back the joy of being able to bring to the world, the inestimable blessings which science can bestow, the joy of ultimately being able to work without fear, and with a clear conscience.

THIS APARTHEID ANIMAL

★ TO AVOID CANCER ★

Dr. J. H. O. Du Plessis: When we plead for separate amenities for the non-Europeans we do not mean a policy of oppression. We simply mean the development of the non-European within their own sphere so that in that sphere and with those amenities at their disposal they will be enabled to reach the highest development in their own sphere and among their own people. But that hon. member who is a champion of the old Cape Liberal tradition (Mrs. Ballinger) wants the non-Europeans to remain a shapeless growth on the European structure. They must remain a shapeless growth clinging to the Europeans where it will always gnaw like a cancerous tumour tormenting the whole community, while our policy is that we want the Non-Europeans to develop within their own sphere and with their facilities at their disposal so that in their own sphere they can rise to the same heights as the Europeans.

Hansard, September 1953.

TO PROVIDE SERVANTS

Mr. J. H. Visse, Mayor of Pretoria and Nationalist candidate for Pretoria City has shed some light on the meaning of total apartheid. He told a meeting that total apartheid was the accepted policy of the Nationalist Party. This did not mean, however, total territorial separation of the races. It meant total separation of the races in the domestic, industrial, social and residential spheres. "We shall never send our domestic servants to the reserves. But they will not eat at the same table as we do."

News item, 11/3/1953.

TO SAVE MONEY

"The fact that Natives were allowed to drive scrapers on farm roads did not mean that the Provincial Administration was departing from its apartheid principles, Mr. J. F. du Plessis, M.E.C. said when opening the annual congress of the Free State Road Workers' Union in Bloemfontein. This was merely a temporary measure to combat the high expenditure on salaries in proportion to other aspects of road building."

News item, 1/8/53.

SCIENCE

THE ORIGIN OF THE EARTH

by URANIUS

THE history of civilization can be traced in outline through the hypotheses put forward to account for the origin of the world.

However details may differ all the theories followed one of two lines, either that the earth was created by an external power or that it evolved according to scientific laws.

The long relentless battle between Science and Religion was particularly savage in the field of astronomy and cosmology where the priests had dominated from the earliest times.

The Biblical account was universally believed until comparatively recent times. The reader will be interested to learn that John Locke who lived from 1632 to 1704 then accepted 5639 as being the number of years since the beginning of the world.

There are numerous stories, from tribal mythology all over the world, of the creation of the earth by a supernatural power or powers. We can mention a few only, part of the heritage of so-called "Western Civilization."

GENESIS

According to the Babylonians, Marduk (god of the Sun) slew Tiamat (a female monster symbolising chaos and the dark waters) and created the world out of her body. They also believed in an age of innocence when man lived on the Persian Gulf under the rule of the earth-god. But this god was disobeyed and he drowned the whole of mankind except one. The stories of the deluge described in tablets found at Nineveh are amazingly similar to the stories in the Book of Genesis.

The Greek philosophers of Ionia in the 5th and 6th Centuries B.C. tried to avoid mystical or supernatural explanations and developed a naturalistic kind of speculation. One of the most famous of them, Anaxagoras, was charged with treason for having disregarded the superstitious notions of the times and was banished for life. He held that the world started with a rotary movement of cosmic matter in the course of which the dense, moist, dark, cold and heavy things collected in the centre and formed the earth. Later on the violent whirling tore off rocks from the earth which became stars.

MYSTIQUE

Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato of

Athens in the 3rd and 4th Centuries B.C. re-introduced mysticism into philosophy and religion in astronomy.

Plato wrote:

"When the ordering of the Universe was set about, God first began by laying out by figure and number the patterns of fire and water and earth and air, which heretofore, though showing some vestiges of their structure, were altogether in such a state as might be expected when God is absent.

That he shaped them to be, as they had not been before, wholly beautiful and good, so far as might be, we must assume throughout."

The decline of Greek Science is only one aspect of the decline of Greek Society.

Until Copernicus in the Middle Ages the "Almagest" of Ptolemy was the last word in Astronomy. Ptolemy lived in Alexandria in the second century A.D. and he regarded the earth as the centre of the Universe around which sun, moon and the heavens turned in 24 hours.

In 1543 the long reign of the Ptolemaic system was ended. Copernicus offered a simple explanation for the movements of the heavenly bodies by placing the sun at the centre instead of the earth. He concluded, too, that there must be a vast space between the earth and the Stars. The Church was particularly annoyed because there was now no "abode for the blessed." Copernicus's work was declared heretical and remained on the Papal Index until 1835.

SCIENCE RISES

It was not until after the second half of the 18th Century that the belief in supernatural Creation began to retreat before the advancing front of scientific knowledge. The first developed theory on the origin of the solar system was the Nebular hypothesis of Kant the philosopher and Laplace the mathematician. According to Laplace a rotating nebula of gas which extended beyond the regions of our planets cooled and contracted. As it did so it left rings

of material which condensed into planets and the satellites and finally contracted to form the sun. This scheme has been abandoned for many reasons. In the first place no attempt was made to explain why the mass began to rotate. Then Herschel's discovery that the planet Uranus and a number of satellites rotate in the opposite direction to the general movement was a serious blow to the theory. What made the hypothesis untenable was the discovery that for the sun to have left rings at such great distances its speed of rotation, after contracting to its present size, would have been such that it should rotate in about 12 hours whereas in fact it does so in 25 days. Further James Maxwell Clark showed that a fluid ring could not coalesce into large planets but would form a belt of asteroids or planetoids.

The fact remains that this was the first attempt to prove that the solar system evolved according to natural laws.

IN THEIR COURSES

In 1916 Sir James Jeans put forward the hypothesis that gigantic tidal waves had been raised on the sun by a passing star which tore off great quantities of matter, sent them spiralling into space to condense into our planets or into smaller fragments which were swept up by larger fragments to form the planets.

Other astronomers have suggested an actual collision between two stars leading to the phenomena of a filament of gas which cooled into our solar system.

The objections to the "encounter" theories are so serious that the hypothesis can no longer be sustained today. It has been calculated that portions of Jean's "Cigar" could not possibly have rotated at a distance as great as the earth is from the sun to say nothing of the more distant planets. A basic objection is that described by Whipple in his book "Earth, Moon and Planets." "Any Star such as the sun consists of superheated gases. At a depth above which there is sufficient material to form the planets the temperature is approximately 18,000,000 degrees F.

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RADIO

THE GIGANTIC JUKE-BOX

IN the good old days, before Springbok Radio, I used to spend many happy hours criticising in the minutest detail the various programmes that were dished out to us by the S.A.B.C. My God! I didn't realise how well off we were then. At least the programmes had some sort of balance, as the "A" programme tries to maintain today, but that part of the Air that belongs to Private Enterprise would badly shake Marconi or Popov or whoever it was who discovered high frequency and invented the wireless.

The function of Radio would seem to me to be largely the same as any other entertainment medium — to provide the public with the best it has to offer but at the same time to maintain a sense of responsibility to its listeners by giving them a cultural lead, however slender. It should set a certain standard in music for example, whether it be Beethoven or Irving Berlin. It should *not* be, as Springbok Radio has become, a gigantic juke-box in which the same melancholy number is churned out to the accompaniment of the same plea for the same headache powder.

FOR CRYING OUT . . .

Let me be quite fair. I don't mind the sponsor advertising his wares during his particular quarter-hour; for the price he is paying he is entitled to it, by all means. But for the love of Mike, let him use a little finesse! Must we always have Coca-Cola with our Ibsen? Can't we listen to Benny Goodman without a helping of so-and-so's extract of lettuce?

Of course, we're seldom lucky enough to get Ibsen or Benny Goodman. More often it's that delight of shaving cream manufacturers, the Radio Thriller — that awful mishmash that is calculated, as the announcer enthusiastically promises us, to "keep you glued to your set." If it does to me it is because I'm far too demoralised by the time the play is five minutes old to switch it off.

For instance, there is a series of what must be locally-written plays called "A Journey into Fear." Every single play in this series is almost exactly the same from beginning to end. The same plot, the same dialogue and what is even worse, the same actors. I have an idea that the male and female leads are played by Bruce Anderson and Marjorie Gordon but I may be doing them an injustice.

VOICE OF HYSTERIA

There is however, a more serious

aspect to Springbok Radio. Recently, sponsors have taken to giving commentaries on world affairs in a desire, perhaps, to appear less fatuous and more original than their contemporaries. Unfortunately the same juke-box standards are applied here as in the less formal programmes. I can imagine the Radio Production Companies saying to their sponsors: "Since it's popular to be anti-Soviet in your discussions on World Affairs, let us be more anti-Soviet than anybody else . . ." With what results?

Well, the other night I had the misfortune to tune in to such a programme written and presented by someone called Gillam Hopper. Apart from being naive and self-contradictory to an astonishing degree, it was so crudely slanderous that I thought I was listening to the gravel-throated Voice of America. Here are some of the points the "commentator" made:—

The pro-Soviet Israeli Government is trying to start a war with Egypt — the Independence movements among the Arab nations are largely communist-inspired — China is ready to attack the West — Russia is about to launch a major war — but (a few seconds later) America has given her blessing to Chiang Kai-Shek's imminent invasion of the Chinese mainland — the Armistice in Korea was a *grave blunder* — and similar rubbish.

Is this what we pay our Radio Licence fees for? To be drawn into

war hysteria with the official blessing of the S.A.B.C.? I wonder how long it will be before we start stampeding from an imaginary Invasion from Mars? Bing Crosby's singing of "Home Cooking" is almost a relief after that.

I know what my readers are saying to themselves right now. "If this bloke is griping so much about the "C" programme why does he listen to it?" Let me assure you all; I don't — not any more!

THE ORIGIN OF THE EARTH

(Continued from previous page)

These tremendously hot gases would expand and escape except for the enormous pressure of the overlying layers, which are forced down by the Sun's great Surface gravity. A tidal or collisional ejection, however, would remove the pressure and enable the gasses to expand immediately, and the ejection would occur at velocities of hundreds of miles per second. Within a few minutes of their release, the gases would literally explode, long before they could cool. Hence planets cannot be formed directly out of matter that is removed catastrophically from the sun."

A number of scientists have begun to talk about the impossibility of our ever acquiring any scientific knowledge of the origin of the earth. Smart maintains that the solution of the problem lies outside the limits of science. Hoyle suggests the creation of matter from nothing. This return to mysticism and religion is symptomatic of the decay of science in capitalist society.



LETTER OF PROTEST FROM 10 PROMINENT S. AFRICANS

The Minister of Justice,
Palace of Justice,
Pretoria.

Sir,

We, the undersigned, express our sense of outrage at the arbitrary bans served on Mr. P. J. Hodgson, an ex-serviceman's leader who served in the armed forces from 1940 until 1943, when he was boarded out with a permanent war disability pension. He was on active service in the Western Desert with the famed "Desert Rats" in 1941 and 1942. Despite the disability with which the war has left him, he has devoted his post-war to the cause and the welfare of his fellow ex-volunteers. His qualities have received official recognition in his appointment in 1945 to the National Advisory Council to the Directorate of Demobilisation and, as the ex-serviceman's representative, to the Soldiers' and War Workers' Employment Board. He served on both of these bodies until their dissolution in 1948 and 1951 respectively.

This record of service to his country and his fellow volunteers speaks for itself.

Mr. Hodgson, as secretary of the Springbok Legion of ex-servicemen and Women, has to our knowledge, taken active part in the political life of this country in furtherance of the democratic and anti-fascist ideals for which our servicemen fought. These activities were neither illegal nor subversive, but his right to them was guaranteed by law and constitution.

The bans now arbitrarily served upon him prohibit his attendance at any gathering whatsoever for a period of two years, and proscribe him from membership or participation in the activities of a large number of legitimate organisations.

In the light of Mr. Hodgson's record of service to South Africa and to South African ex-servicemen, we cannot but view these bans as an act of retaliation meted out by a Government Party whose members persistently opposed South African participation in the second World War, threatened vengeance on the "red Sea" who served in it, and opposed its ideals of democracy.

The banning of Mr. Hodgson deprives him of his occupation and by its nature further limits his possibilities of alternative employment which are already severely restricted by his war disability.

We urge the immediate lifting of the bans on Mr. Hodgson, and the restoration of his elementary democratic right to meet with other people and to take part in organisations within the established code of South African law.

Signed: MR. A. HEFFLE, M.P.
MR. L. LOVELL, M.P.
MR. H. DAVIDOFF, M.P.
MISS A. SCHEEPERS.
MISS J. CORNELIUS.
MISS DULCIE HARTWELL.
Rev. Father TREVOR HUDDLESTON.
MR. D. COUZYN.
MR. P. A. BEYLEVELD.
MRS. J. MacPHERSON.

WORLD-WIDE PROTESTS AT LEGION BANS

HODGSON'S ANSWER TO SWART'S BANNING NOTICE

102, Roseacre,
30, Cooper Street,
Cynldene,
Johannesburg.
5th December, 1953.

The Minister of Justice,
Palace of Justice,
Pretoria.

Sir,

Your notices to me now come into effect and as a consequence of them, I shall be a political outlaw — one of the "Legion of the Banned."

The fact that you have banned me is in itself an indictment of you and your Government. We can be judged only by our deeds. The record of these deeds speaks for itself. It is what we have done and not what you or anybody else chooses to imagine we have tried to do that will count. What were these deeds?

We have worked to organise the people for the maintenance of world peace. Organised them in defence of their democratic rights. Organised them for the betterment of their living standards and working conditions. Organised them against injustice and oppression. There exists not one iota of evidence that we have done anything other than this. When you victimise us you proclaim to the people and to

the world that you want war! That you want fascism! That you want to depress the living standards and working conditions of the workers! That you are for injustice and oppression!

The bans you have imposed on me have a very real effect on my personal life. I have a wife and four children to support. You have taken from me my means of maintaining them. I have a war disability that limits my possibilities of alternative employment. Your bans, by their nature, further restrict the possibilities open to me to a degree where it may be impossible for me to find employment. Never-the-less, I would rather be in this position than be in that of the present Minister of Justice.

You are trying to silence at one and the same time the cries of the victims of your oppression and injustice and the conscience of the world. You will not succeed.

There is no doubt in my mind, not in the minds of millions of South Africans, that the attacks on our democratic civil and political rights, and the banning of our leaders, is an attempt by your Government to rob us of our power to resist you. It is an attempt to deprive us of the formidable strength we possess as organised people. An attempt to crush the organisations



Jack Hodgson, whom Swart has banned.

through which our common aspirations for democracy, peace and freedom from tyranny and exploitation find expression.

Many of us know that all this but precedes an onslaught by the interests you represent on the already depressed living standards of the common people. The sharpening economic and political crisis in the Western World required it of you if you are to maintain the profitability of your social system.

We know too, that it is but a step from the political liquidation of the people's leaders to their physical annihilation and that, if you are permitted so to do by any temporary weakness of the people's opposition, you will not scruple at this. The path your Government has chosen inevitably leads to this and to even greater crimes against humanity.

Yet despite anything you can do, you will not succeed in your attempts to hold back the tide of progress now surging through the world. The people you have banned are the product of tyranny, injustice, oppression and exploitation. The more you resort to injustice, victimisation and brutality to maintain the oppression and exploitation of the people the greater will grow the numbers of those like us, until the day comes when you will have to answer to the aroused millions of your fellow South Africans, white and non-white.

Signed:
P. J. HODGSON.

SUPPORT FROM BRITAIN AND AMERICA

THE EX-SERVICE MOVEMENT FOR
PEACE, YORKSHIRE AREA
COMMITTEE:

C/o "The Berkeley,"
St. Mary's, York.

8th November, 1953.

Dear Comrade,

It is with some disgust that we learn of the action of your Mr. C. R. Swart who has seen fit to order you to resign from your honoured position of National Chairman of the Springbok Legion in your country; this is a gross violation of democratic rights, and as such calls for protest from us, coupled with an assurance of our support.

Be assured we are with you in your fight "against the powers of darkness" every inch of the way.

Yours, in the struggle for peace,
CYRIL E. KING
(National Committee Member).

Mr. Cecil Williams,
C/o Springbok Legion,
5, Somerset House,
Fox St., Johannesburg, S.A.

Saturday, November 14, 1953.
Springbok Legion,
Geelsteren:

I have written an airmail letter to the South African Minister of Justice, Mr. C. R. Swart, urging him to restore full Democratic Rights to your national chairman, Mr. Cecil Williams. I shall write to the South African Embassy in Washington, D.C., U.S.A. and also to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in New York City, U.S.A.

We who believe in Democracy, Peace, and Civil Rights must work together, even though we live in different parts of the world. I wish you good luck in your fight against tyranny.

Sincerely,
ED CONNERS.

Ed Conners,
2013, Washburne Ave.,
Chicago 8, Illinois, U.S.A.

“OFF WITH THEIR HEADS!”

“The Queen had only one way of settling all difficulties, great or small. ‘Off with his head!’ she said, without even looking round. ‘I’ll fetch the executioner myself,’ said the King eagerly, and he hurried off.”
— From *‘Alice in Wonderland.’*

IN his early days, it is recorded, Charles Robert Swart aspired to be an actor. Hollywood apparently found, after a short experience of his histrionics, that the film industry could survive without him; it is taking South Africans a long time to make the same discovery for themselves.

But down the years, something of the Hollywood background remains. Not just the distinctive aura of ham; but also the rigid ‘type-casting’ which has dogged his political career as Captain Bligh of the *Bounty* has dogged Charles Laughton’s acting career.

History fails to record the exact occasion on which Mr. Swart decided he was the Queen of Hearts type. By the time he became a cabinet minister, long and arduous study and rehearsal had moulded him firmly in the part he now plays naturally and daily. He has only one way of settling all difficulties, great or small.

There was Communism. ‘Off with their heads!’ he said without even looking round. Supreme Court Judges — ‘Off with their heads!’ Coloured voters. ‘Off with their heads!’ Defiance Campaigners — ‘Off with their heads!’ Only once did the pattern change, when the difficulty was caused by the prevalence of house-breaking. ‘Off with their hides!’ he snapped; but as one of his fellow M.P.’s said later: ‘He talks funny with his teeth out.’

The snap, undiscussed and undiscussable order to the executioner, the peremptory and indiscriminate handing out of bans has had its effects. The Queen of Hearts, it is true, has had a thrombosis, but it is not of that we speak. More important is the widespread attempt to understudy and emulate, which the great actor’s sweeping political successes have inspired.

Consider the case of the Customs Officials, who spend a good part of every week opening parcels of books and magazines, reading them (or so we are lead to believe) whether they be in Russian, Hungarian, Chinese or English, and then shout for the executioner. ‘Off with their screeds’, snaps Dr. Donges, without looking round. £1,000 or five years, if you possess a copy of

Erskine Caldwell, *Pravda*, the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, or the collected short stories of Albert Maltz.

There are some who pity the poor customs man who reads it all. They miss the whole point of it. ‘The Queen’s argument was, that if something wasn’t done about it in less than no time, she’d have everybody executed, all round.’ There’s no time to read. If it is in the luggage of a Congress leader, or addressed to a trade-union official, ban it in less than no time, or you’ll be executed yourself.

If there is anyone worth pitying in the country it must be Dr. Danie Craven.

“‘What have you been doing here?’ ‘May it please your Majesty,’ said Two, in a very humble tone, going down on one knee as he spoke, ‘we were trying . . .’ ‘I see!’ said the Queen, who had meanwhile been examining the roses. ‘Off with their heads!’ and the procession moved on.”

Craven had been trying. But cruel fate in the jerseys of London Counties and the Wallabies had dogged his unhappy footsteps. He could almost feel the hot breath of the Queen of Hearts (to say nothing of Paul Irwin and the *Sunday Times*) on his neck, when fate dealt out the hardest blow. Professional Rugby was coming to South Africa. ‘The Government must ban it!’ said Dr. Craven. ‘I’ll fetch the executioner myself’ said King Craven eagerly, and he hurried off.

And there’s the case of Mr. Alan Melville, banned from the Ellis Park Pavilion for a letter he wrote to the Press four years before.

“‘Hush! Hush!’ said the Rabbit in a low hurried tone. He looked anxiously over his shoulder as he spoke, and then raised himself upon tiptoe, put his mouth close to her ear, and whispered ‘She’s under sentence of execution.’

‘What for?’ said Alice.

‘Did you say ‘What a pity!’?’ the Rabbit asked.

‘No I didn’t,’ said Alice: ‘I don’t

think it’s at all a pity. I said: ‘What for?’”

‘She boxed the Queen’s ears . . .’ the Rabbit began. Alice gave a little scream of laughter.”

But tears might be more appropriate.

THEATRE

“JOURNEY’S END”

In November the Regent Players presented R. C. Sheriff’s drama of World War I at the Library Theatre. The opening night was in aid of Legion Funds, and one other evening in aid of the M.O.T.H.S.

There was a general feeling beforehand that “Journey’s End” was “dated,” — that its social and psychological attitudes were outmoded. Cecil Williams’s production dispelled that misapprehension. It presents an authentic picture of middle-class Englishmen of the period undergoing the strain of trench-warfare. Far from well-constructed, the play is nevertheless tremendously gripping, as one absorbing episode follow another.

The humour provided by Mason the cockney batman and the stolid, unimaginative Lieutenant Trotter is essential as a relief to the tense scenes, and this production was fortunate to have two actors who were perfectly cast. Warren Sands and Maurice Horwitz were a delight in these roles. Pat Trevor, as Stanhope, had the most difficult role, and his compelling performance sealed the success of the production. It is difficult to imagine a face more perfect for the part than his, and accustomed as we are to the fine performances that Cecil Williams succeeds in drawing from young actors, this performance was a revelation. Brian Bell as Raleigh, acted really well, but his personality was not quite what was required for the part. Arnold Quin did a very fine job as the cowardly Hibbert, although on the opening night he did not quite bring off his big scene. Michael Thompson’s Osborne was almost perfect, his final scene with Stanhope providing one of the play’s finest moments. The supporting parts were excellently cast. Peter Latham’s Hardy, and Monty Berman’s Colonel hitting just the right notes.

Cecil Williams’s gift for getting polished performances from unexperienced amateurs must be unique. Once again he has presented a skilful production that reaches a standard far above the usual.

PEST CONTROL**THE RABBIT IN AUSTRALIA**By *EDWARD ROUX*

(Adapted from an Article by Dal Stivens, circulated by Unesco).

It is recalled that the first settlers at Botany Bay in 1788 congratulated themselves that of a number of rabbits taken on board in England; five had survived the sea voyage. In 1859 a man in Victoria was fined £10 for shooting a rabbit, the property of another. But the rabbits multiplied enormously and soon became a national problem. Attempts at what is called biological control were made. Stoats, weasels and foxes, the natural enemies of the rabbit in Europe were introduced into Australia. But these carnivores found the Australian farmers' chickens more to their liking than the rabbits, which continued to multiply at an alarming rate.

It may be wondered why the rabbit has not become a plague in South Africa. There have been and still are many opportunities for domestic rabbits to run wild in this country. It is not a question of climate, for many parts of South Africa have climates similar to those of Australia. Probably our large population of jackals, muishonds and other small carnivores has protected us from the rabbit.

FENCING-IN

To return to Australia, so-called rabbit-proof fences were built in an effort to control the pest. Queensland built 1,677 miles of fence, but the rabbits got past. West Australians thought they were immune because of the intervening Great Australian Desert, but the rabbit came over and the Westerners started building fences. The longest fence in the world, 1,193 miles long from south to north, was built right across Australia. But the rabbits got through. Some say they were through before the fence was completed. Other fences were built, parallel and at right angles to the first. They did not stop the rabbits.

It is impossible to say exactly what the rabbits have been costing Australia. They destroy pasture and crops and cause soil erosion. It was estimated in 1950 that rabbits were eating as much vegetation as do forty million sheep and that rabbits were costing the country at least £50 million in control measures. Experiments showed that a farm of 400 acres which carried 100 sheep maintained 500 sheep after it was cleared of rabbits.

GERM-WAR

The picture is a grim one, but Australia may solve her rabbit problem in the next few years using a biological weapon. The weapon is not a carnivore but a virus, an ultra-microscopic

organism which causes a disease of rabbits, known as myxomatosis. The disease was first discovered in America among the local rabbits which are of a different species from those found in Australia, the latter being of European stock. The disease was introduced into experimental rabbit warrens in Australia, at first without much effect. Then it was discovered that the virus could be transmitted from rabbit to rabbit by various kinds of Australian mosquitoes. Accordingly mosquitoes were infected and let loose on the rabbits.

The disease spread with a speed so great that it almost equalled the speed at which the rabbits had originally spread over Australia. A recent estimate in Victoria indicates that 90 per cent of the rabbits have died in that state and similar reports have come from other parts of the country. Wool experts consider that the value of Australia's wool-clip will be increased by £20 million annually.

NOT PLAIN SAILING

However there is a possible snag in all this. Readers may remember how in Denmark almost all the flies in the country were destroyed by the extensive use of DDT. A few immune flies survived and these produced in a few years a new immune race of flies which threatened to restore the fly population. In South Africa similarly after years of compulsory cattle dipping we have developed an arsenic-resistant tick.

Already in Australia rabbits have been found which are apparently immune to myxomatosis. These individuals may, through their immune descendants, repopulate the country with rabbits. That is at any rate a distinct possibility. The Australians are therefore making an all out effort to exterminate the rabbits as rapidly as possible, using all known means such as trapping, poisoning, fumigating and

shooting aided by the mosquitoes and the virus disease. Their efforts will be watched with interest by scientists and others during the next few years.

In the meantime the virus has entered Europe and presented the Europeans with exactly the opposite sort of problem. They wish of course to keep their rabbits, which are a valuable source of food and in no sense a plague of unwanted creatures. The disease is apparently only a serious danger to the European (and Australian) species of rabbit. It exists only in a mild form among American rabbits. From this point of view the immune types which have turned up in Australia may prove extremely useful in Europe. We may witness soon a reversal of the 1788 episode, a cargo of five rabbits leaving Australia for England.

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S.A.C.O.D. NEWS**COUNCILLOR KLIPIN
BEATS A RETREAT**

The most effective way of fighting against the Western Areas Removal Scheme is to apply pressure on the U.P. to adopt a positive attitude against the Government policy. This is an urgent task, particularly in Johannesburg, because the Government will find a mass of practical obstacles which they will not be able to overcome if the Johannesburg Municipal Council refuses to co-operate with them.

The application of pressure on the City Council is easy and effective. We can take a lesson from the Bellevue Branch of the S.A. C.O.D. I will give a detailed account of how this Branch worked, because I think that groups of people living in other areas in Johannesburg can adopt a similar campaign. A postcard was printed (these are still available at the S.A.C.O.D. office), which was addressed to Councillor A. J. Klipin, the Yeoville representative on the Johannesburg City Council. It read "As a resident in your ward I wish to register my protest against the manner in which the Johannesburg City Council is treating the urgent motion of Councillor A. J. Cutten regarding the Western Areas Removal Scheme.

I call upon you to support his view that the mass memorial of the entire population of the Western Areas Township is unnecessary; that such slum conditions as exist there can be dealt with by the Council by rehousing the overcrowded tenant population and restoring the townships to healthy and sanitary living, and by strict application of the Municipal Public Health Bye-Laws.

Yours faithfully,

Issued by the S.A.C.O.D.

It was intended that these be signed by a large number of Yeoville residents. The Council was to meet within 10 days of the publication of these postcards to discuss Councillor Cutten's motion. It was decided therefore to canvass a sample of the population. Eighty per cent. of the residents of three blocks of flats signed the postcards and the next step was to send a deputation with these cards to meet Councillor Klipin and press him to support Cutten's views.

Now Councillor Klipin is one of those Councillors who is afraid (for very good reason) to meet his constituents. A short conversation over the telephone convinced him that he had better not refuse to meet the deputation. He made an appointment but failed to keep it. The deputation immediately went to the Rand Daily Mail where a full account of Councillor Klipin's evasions was reported. He was challenged to hold a public meeting where his constituents could hear his views. This challenge he accepted. A U.P. meeting at St. Aidan's Hall in Yeoville was well publicised. The C.O.D. distributed a leaflet, "60,000 Wanderers" setting out the facts to the residents. Yeoville residents looked forward to this meeting. Mr. Klipin at a meeting was an event none wished to miss. A large crowd was expected. The residents of Yeoville were overwhelming in opposition to Klipin and his U.P. policy on the removal scheme. Klipin knew that he could not win their support. Again he beat a retreat. The meeting was called off.

The Yeoville Branch of the C.O.D. has now worked out a plan to force Klipin to a meeting. In Yeoville the issue is almost a climax. Klipin will be forced either to support Cutten or to stand down for a better man at the next Municipal election.

Municipal Councillors are easy to work on. Telephone calls, letters, postcards and Western Native Areas Local Protest Committees will soon shake them out of their apathy. Plan your campaign so that it has an effective conclusion. Remember that councillors are elected to the Municipality and though they may disagree with, they are bound to take note of, their voters' views. Voters in Johannesburg do not support the City Council's attitude to the Removal Scheme. It is up to members of the C.O.D. to harness the views of the residents of their areas and to give them an effective medium of expression.

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**S.A.C.O.D extends
seasonal greetings to
it's members and
supporters
everywhere**

THE PRESS.

The Alabama *Journal*, editorially rapping stock market "peace jitters":

"It is a tragic reflection upon us that our national economy should tremble and become uncertain at the prospect of peace, and that it should prosper and boom when war is in progress . . . As Russia's new rulers have shown a disposition to bring peace back in the world, our security prices have been falling. With each report from Moscow or Peking or Seoul of advances made in understanding . . . stock market prices have tumbled."

The *Journal*, describing this as immoral and unnecessary, adds: "We can do a thousand good and pleasant things in a peaceful world with the billions of dollars we now spend for war."

HIGH SCHOOLERS.

The 9th Annual Congress of New York City High Schools, sponsored by Hunter College, passed a resolution urging the U.S. to act within 90 days to arrange a meeting with Soviet Premier Malenkov. The call for an Eisenhower Malenkov peace confab was adopted without a single dissenting voice by the 72 delegates from 18 schools.

MORE TRADE UNIONS

Hugo Ernst, President of the 400,000 strong Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders Union (AFL), advised the world's diplomats and statesmen to take a tip from working people. Ernst wrote in the Union's official paper:

"The working people of the earth, working people like ourselves, know that if the diplomats and statesmen would only listen to us we could teach them something about the arts of negotiation . . . More than ever before what is needed now is the bargaining table where the nations can sit . . . What is needed is some of the same give and take which serves so often in labour relations to reduce the tensions and create the conditions in which settlement of differences is possible."

ECONOMICS

WHO IS TO BLAME?

DR. N. D.'s recent outburst against the Stock Market manipulations of "certain gold mining houses" brought a nice, old-fashioned homely atmosphere to the current political scene. One's mind went back to the good old days of His Majesty's Loyal Opposition — as the present Government then were — when talk of nationalising the Gold Industry was everyday conversation and not a political blunder to be rudely repudiated by fearful Cabinet Ministers with their ears on the pulse of Throgmorton Street!

Dr. D.'s tirade, it will be remembered, was induced by the present low state of the share market. He contended that there was no sound economic reason for the depression in Hollard Street, what with the high promise of profitable Uranium production on the Rand and the advanced stage of development of the O.F.S. Goldfields and that the depression had been deliberately engineered by "certain mining houses" in order to discredit the present Government.

NO NAIVETTE

Now, while we hold no brief for the Gold Mining Groups — they can, and very often do "bear" the market for completely unethical reasons — it is very difficult to find much substance in Dr. D.'s charge on this occasion. If it could be shown that a "bear" market is, at the moment in the interests of the Gold Mining Industry, then the arguments of the Doctor might be well-founded. However it is hard to believe that this is the case, unless the industry considers that an air of depression over the Rand may induce a change of heart in the Americans as far as a revaluation of Gold is concerned. But really to believe this the Chamber of Mines would have had to have acquired a naive normally quite absent from their natures.

On the other hand, there are many sound reasons for believing that the present condition of the stock market is a pretty fair reflection of Economic conditions in South Africa at this juncture and that these conditions reflect the position in the Western World as a whole. Wall Street, for example, has fallen substantially from the peak levels of the Korean War and is finding it extremely difficult to maintain even its present level. The British Stock Market has, in the past six months, been enjoying a purely local revival, resulting from the scrapping of numerous price and other economic controls, which at

the time of writing, seems to have come to an end.

The level of share prices at any particular time is determined by the demands and supply of shares, and the present low price levels reflect a lack of demand. Now, demand for shares is of two kinds. There is general, public demand and what is generally referred to as "professional support." It can be stated as a generalisation that without the latter kind of demand no stock exchange boom is possible. By "professional support" one means support by the mining companies themselves, by large financial institutions, by discount houses and Investment Companies which exist by the interest derived from shares and the profits made out of their purchase and sale.

These great financial houses do not speculate haphazardly. They employ men, — statisticians, economists, engineers, — whose full time job it is to assess the value of a security, to try to work out the probable trend of costs, prices, dividends and so on, and so on, and to determine therefrom probable fluctuations in share prices. It is of course their purpose to buy cheap and to sell dear to realise maximum profits. This buying and selling has a result in periodical fluctuations in the prices of individual shares. If it is done on a very large scale it may affect the price levels of all allied securities.

BOOM AND BUST.

Thus, the Erfdeel boom caused a general interest in all other O.F.S. shares and their subsequent crash caused a weakening of Free State shares in general. But it would be a tremendous achievement for such speculative activity to cause a general rise or fall in *all* shares, mining, industrial and financial. Such an achievement presupposes, in the first place, a widespread conspiracy to bull or bear the worker *against* the general economic



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6th December 1953.

The Secretary,
Springbok Legion,
P.O. Box 4088,
Johannesburg.

Sir:—

I have just come across my carbon copy of my letter to you dated 20th June 1953; I cannot trace that I received a reply to it. I am now writing to you to ask that you remove my name-and-address from your mail list.

The copies of FIGHTING TALK and the various circular-letters you have sent me in the past have all been carefully read by me and they have all simply confirmed me in my opinion that the officials and committee members of your Legion, and apparently those of the Congress of Democrats, are all quite ignorant of exactly what you mean when you talk and write about democracy.

When some months ago Mr. Beyleveld took me to a small meeting in Parkview, I was astonished to find that none of the small group of some six or eight people, self-styled democrats, had apparently ever heard of the "recall", the "Initiative" (and the "referendum," as used in the United States of America. Only Mr. Julius Lewin apparently had heard of Proportional Representation, and his knowledge appeared to be confined to the list system of continental Europe.

A lot of people laugh at the United States propensity for electing all sorts of officials, from Presidents down to dog-catchers, but few if any of these easily amused people seem to realize that the voters in the United States retain in their own hands the very powerful "recall" weapon. For example: if South Africa had a constitution similar to those of most States in North America, the so-called "rebels" of the United Party — Messrs. Barlow, Bekker, Waring, et al., — would now be facing bye-elections, in spite of the fact that they had been elected for five-year terms.

Mr. Julius Lewin bleated that Pro-

portional Representation could be used only where voting took place for parties rather than individuals and further stated that it was not used in English-speaking countries. This ignorance was only a little more startling than the even greater ignorance of the others who had evidently never heard of it at all.

The enemies of true democracy are not only those — such as Communists, Fascists, and Nazis — who are openly against it; its enemies are also those who call themselves democrats but in fact know nothing about democracy.

A big plank in the so-called democratic programme of your Legion and its allies is the universal vote — a vote for every adult. As I attempted to point out at the small meeting I mentioned in my third paragraph in this letter, a 'universal' vote might well mean nothing, if votes could be loaded in one constituency as compared with another, and if, even without loading, constituencies could be gerry-mandered so as to render numerous votes useless.

At the present time, the votes of more than 50% of the registered voters are useless, even without very much loading and without very obvious gerry-mandering.

Where you pipe-dreamers fail is in your practical approach. The outright enemies of democracy do not come straight out at the start in favour of a dictatorship; they ask for this little bit, and then that little bit, and so on, and finally wind up with the lot. (Actually the Nationalist Party leaders are making the same mistake, attacking everybody and everything at once.)

When your Legion comes down to earth and makes practical proposals from the ground up, instead of building castles in the air without foundations, you may get more support.

Yours faithfully,
HARRY LEVETT.
Newlands Hotel,
177, Main Road,
Newlands,
Johannesburg,

6th December, 1953.

Dear Mr. Levett,

Your letter resolves itself as far as we can make out, to one assertion, viz. that unless you have an adequate knowledge of constitutional government both in America and in Europe, you cannot be a true democrat. We are afraid we must reject such an arrogant assumption on your part. Incidentally, we must also reject the vast amount of rudeness contained in your letter.

Quite frankly, Mr. Levett, your impressive knowledge of Proportional Representation does not make you, ipso facto, a good and true democrat. The form of representation that an individual country adopts has no bearing on the state of her democracy, except of course in fascist countries, where no representation exists at all. Otherwise, it is quite conceivable that a country with very limited democracy, such as South Africa, will adopt the British form of representation, whereas a country such as Israel, which extends full democratic rights to all its citizens, can and has adopted the Continental list system of Proportional Representation.

It is entirely up to the people themselves to decide what form of representation they wish to adopt. The first and by far the most important task is to win full democratic rights for all adults, irrespective of sex or colour, and you cannot evade the responsibility of that task by speaking so glibly of constitutions and constitutional forms of government.

—Editor, "Fighting Talk."

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WHO IS TO BLAME?

(Continued from page 13)

current — a near impossibility. In the second place it would require concerted buying or selling on a colossal scale such as can follow only upon sudden changes in the general economic setup of a country. Such a change followed devaluation in 1949. This devaluation caused a sudden upswing not only in gold shares, but in all others as well, for it was considered that the increased profitability of the mining industry would result in a general increase in economic activity throughout the country.

However, speculation apart, the prices of shares — or, if you prefer, the demand for shares — is determined by one's assessment of the essential soundness or otherwise from a profit-making point of view — of the company issuing them. If the profitability of capitalist enterprise is assured, share prices will be high — if it is in doubt then no amount of "bulling" will be able to maintain the share market index at an artificially high level. About all it could do would be to hold prices for a short while slightly above their "real" levels, but they will soon sink back again.

BAROMETER

At the present time, all economic influences make for a low share price index. These are:

The fall in the price of gold on the free gold market, which has completely wiped out the premium over the official price.

The fantastically high capital costs involved in bringing up the Free State Gold Mines to the production stage and the rather indifferent results of their early production activity.

The general shortage of capital.

The uncertain political atmosphere which is certainly not the outcome of a Chamber of Mines boycott of the present Government. On the contrary, there is good reason to believe that the Chamber has been moving heaven and earth to persuade the U.P. to reach a *modus vivendi* with the Nats as quickly as possible *precisely because* they hope that such a peace-making might put some life into an otherwise dead market.

The flat refusal of the American

Treasury to even consider a higher price for gold.

Fears of the investor that the African people may soon demand a just share in the economic and political life of the country. These fears are induced not only by the Native policy of the Nat. Government but also by the continent-wide stirring of the African people as witnessed by events in Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, etc. The fact is that Africa is fast ceasing to be the happy hunting ground of im-

perialism.

World tension in general and the rearmament programme in particular which are primarily responsible for the shortage of capital mentioned in the third paragraph.

It seems likely — to sum up — that the days of Stock Exchange Booms are over. The economic structure of which the S.E. is part is cracking badly, and Dr. D.'s outburst can be regarded only as an attempt to blind himself and others to this primary economic fact.

THERE ARE TWO AMERICAS

It becomes increasingly evident that there really are two Americas.

One is the America of the big brass, big business and big stick, the know-nothings and anti-thought patrol. The other is the America of the people.

At the recent American Legion convention the brass rode high, ramming down the throats of the membership a fire-eating resolution calling for use of atomic bombs in Korea if peace talks fail.

This is not what we should hear from a meeting of veterans who have been through the muck of war. It is completely in line with the Dulles threat to pull out of peace talks after 90 days should they displease him. Syngman Rhee and Chiang-Kai-shek would like nothing better, and McCarthy is itching to go it alone in the face of rising domestic and international opposition to U.S. belligerency.

But there are other voices: Churchill calling for talks with Malenkov. Attlee and Nehru blasting U.S. policy in the Far East and calling for recognition of New China. Canada's Pearson refusing to accept any scheme for the unifying of Keorea (under Rhee) by force.

NEW INVESTMENTS.

And, home from a world tour, Adlai Stevenson was apparently a wiser man. He had heard the voice abroad and at home. He now knew that all the plain people of the world demanded Peace. And he urged the U.S. to enter negotiations, saying, "The door to the conference room is the door to Peace. Let it never be said that America was reluctant to enter."

Legion brass may split bullets, but ordinary vets and GI's say: Better a year of talk than a day of killing. They want peace talks, not threats. They want peace talks at the highest level, not bristling monologues at the lowest level.

Vets and GI's, who do the fighting, are tired of protecting investments abroad. They demand investments at home, to provide a better life.

It narrow down to this question: Which way for America, H-bomb threats or peace talks? For our part, we will continue joining our voices with those of the America-of-the-people for the only human course: Big Power Peace Talks Now.

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Unless otherwise stated, J. Podbrey, 5 Somerset House, Fox Street, Johannesburg, is responsible for all political matter in this issue.