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NOVEMBER, 1951.

Volume IX. No. 11.

ORGAN OF THE SPRINGBOK LEGION.

# BRIDGE - BUILDING

THE Legion's National Executive Committee discussed at its last meeting a proposal that the Legion should raise money in order to provide education scholarships for a number of African soldiers' dependents.

In introducing the motion Dr. Routh said he was not under the illusion that a handful of small scholarships would solve our inter-racial problems. He did not think, moreover, that sending a few African children to schools or universities would appreciably raise the general educational level of the African people.

He did think, however, that there was today an obligation on tolerant-minded people to throw as many bridges as possible across the widening gap between whites and blacks in South Africa. At a time when the blind policy of 'apartheid' is eroding our social soil and creating impassable dongas between the peoples of our country, every attempt should be made to undo that fatal work and to correct its evil consequences.

In recent weeks the Springbok Legion was responsible for a most effective piece of propaganda in the cause of racial understanding. We refer to the production of the play, "Deep are the Roots," the ultimate effect of which has been to make members of the audience regard Africans as 'human beings'. No one claims that feelings engendered in a theatre will necessarily be lasting, but one must also not under-estimate the repercussions of an emotional catharsis. Audience and players alike in this striking theatrical undertaking found themselves looking at the 'houseboy', the 'nanny', the 'milkboy', the African clerk in the office, the smartly-dressed African women out shopping or window-gazing with a new vision — and there is a new feeling, a new attitude.

And it is this attitude which it is our duty to foster — firstly in ourselves and then in others. If we believe honestly in the fundamental brotherhood of man, our common humanity, then we are less than ourselves if through cowardice or laziness we neglect an opportunity to put our beliefs into practice.

What can we do? what can you do?

Firstly, we must deliberately strive to gain an honest appraisal of our own attitudes. Are we liberal in talk and illiberal in action? Are we supinely accepting the racial myths of Hitlerism and apartheid? Do we understand and absorb the scientific findings on 'Race' put out by UNESCO? Is our attitude to an elderly black woman as courteous and considerate as to an elderly white woman? Because an African labourer is uneducated, un-Europeanised, do we unconsciously reject him as a human being? Do we stifle the memory from childhood of companionship with black children? Can we be honest in our sex attitudes?

Let us try to be honest with ourselves, always measuring our attitudes with the yardstick of our common humanity.

Secondly, our job is to translate into action the finest of our attitudes. For instance, how many people forget that their servants are human beings with feelings, anxieties, off-days, a desire to be liked and approved of? Let us face the fact that if the domestic servant in your home was your mother or wife, you would pay her much more and treat her with more consideration — even if she were no more efficient than your present servant.

Are you prepared to interfere when a white person is bullying or being rude to a black man? Will you take your place in a queue or at a shop-counter behind a Non-European? Do you invite

an Indian or an African student or trade unionist into your home to discuss topics of common interest?

Perhaps you already run a night-school for Africans: perhaps you already help a Non-European boys' or girls' club? an art centre? Perhaps you do voluntary work at one of the National War Memorial Health Foundation's Non-European Centres?

Perhaps in your Chamber of Commerce or Industry you advocate the integration of Non-Europeans into the industrial life of the country — on just terms. In your trade union, your church, your political party maybe you preach our common humanity and translate that into practical proposals for South Africa.

There are a thousand things we can do, providing we have the will. But there is one thing that many of us have to learn — and it is difficult. We have to sense the feelings of the coloured people with whom we want to work. Patronage is a favour: superiority an insult. We have to discharge from our systems that idea so easily bred into us that because we are white we are superior. As a character in 'Deep are the Roots' says, 'It is not my fault I'm a white man.' Our colour is accidental and fundamentally unimportant, neither adding to nor taking away from our personality stature. Man himself gives value to the accident of colour. Our social structure, based on the exploitation of the coloured people, has the effect of convincing us that a white man is inherently 'better' than a black man.

Our society makes it possible for us to enjoy all the benefits which accrue to us from our cheap-labour policy. That is good for the white people — but it gives us no hall-mark of inborn 'superiority'. Let us remember that and be humble.

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# YOU'RE TELLING US



## Letters to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I enclose 5/-, my sub. I hope to become a life member as soon as I can spare the ready cash. Wishing you every success. Long live the Legion! Nuts to the Nats!

Yours fraternally,

A.V.L.

Zululand.

Dear Sir,

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 15th October, 1951 and also to resign from membership of the Legion.

Yours faithfully,

D.H.B.

Germiston.

### OUR REPLY.

Dear Friend,

Why resign? It would be so much more helpful if you gave us an inkling of your reasons for wanting to resign from the Legion. If you are hard up for

cash, we'll carry you as a member until you're in funds again. If you think the fight for democracy in South Africa is no longer worth fighting, may I remind you of the period before Alamein, the period before Stalingrad. If you fear becoming vulnerable to the Nats.'s shots, because you are a member of the Legion, may I suggest you will find yourself vulnerable no matter what you do in opposition to the Nats. And I know you won't be sitting back doing nothing. No one who has been a Legionnaire for years, as you have been, could ever sit back in an armchair, when there's a job to be done.

Don't forget, Friend, we want to keep our membership figures high. You may think you're only one among thousands. You are — that's why it is important. Will you reconsider?

Yours fraternally,

CECIL WILLIAMS,

General Secretary.

## TO THE TORCH COMMANDO

12th November, 1951.

Dear Sir,

At the last meeting of my National Executive Committee the following resolution was passed:

"The National Executive Committee of the Springbok Legion records its disappointment at the retreat of the War Veterans Torch Commando from their previous anti-Apartheid policy, this retreat being manifested by the exclusion of Non-European Ex-servicemen from the Alamein Day demonstrations."

In submitting the resolution to you, I have been instructed to convey the Legion's apprehension at what appears to be a retreat from the position originally taken up by the Torch Commando. While we appreciate only too well the dilemma with which the colour problem confronts you, we feel that if you go too far in sacrificing principles for votes, you may find that your policy is being determined by the people you wish to oust from power, and not by the people whose ideals you set out to represent.

The dynamic of the Commando has come from the fact that it has appeared as a new factor in the political situation, one presenting the hope that at last we were to break away from the prejudices that have dominated us in the past. The old-school politicians are attempting to persuade you to adopt the protective coloration of the established political parties and the impulse to do so must be very strong, but it is an impulse that we believe must be resisted if the Commando is to succeed in the tasks its members have set it.

Yours faithfully,

CECIL WILLIAMS, Secretary.

## Political Quiz . . .

1. How do you account for the fact that in America recently there has been a slump in 'consumer' trade, yet there is a general boom?
2. What do the letters T.V.A. stand for?
3. Who said, 'Plenty is at our doorstep, but the generous use of it languishes in very sight of the supply'?
4. Who said, 'We are proposing dollars to arm men other than our own men. We are contributing dollars rather than men'?
5. Who said, 'It takes a man and a gun to fight. The United States is providing the gun, Europe the man'?
6. What steps is the government taking to overcome the meat shortage?
7. Will this plan bring down the C.O.I.?
8. What civil liberties are infringed in the Government's implied intention to ban 'The Guardian'?
9. What is the most vital shortage in South Africa's industrial life today?
10. The theme of the Torch Commando's Alamein-Day gatherings was 'Racial Unity.' How did the Commando deny their own slogan?

## . . . and Answers

1. High cost-of-living keeps the consumers poor: a rapidly expanding armaments programme keeps up profits, capital investments and wages and keeps down unemployment.
2. Tennessee Valley Authority, the great Public Works undertaking, which by-passed private investors, much to their chagrin.
3. Roosevelt at the time of his New Deal.
4. General Marshall to the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, August 1, 1951.
5. General Eisenhower to U.S. Senators in Paris, August 12, 1951.
6. De-controlling mutton distribution and price: raising price of beef.
7. Like hell.
8. Freedom of the press: freedom of the individual to form his own opinion by reading all sides of a question: the right of a fair trial in the courts: right of appeal.
9. Man-power for expanding industries.
10. By excluding Non-Europeans from participation.

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# GOOD FILMS AND BAD

## *An Appraisal*

BY ROY COUSINS.

**WHY** do we see so few good films? The problem is largely economic. The mere mechanics of producing a full-length sound motion picture cost many thousands of pounds. Inevitably, film production and distribution have become "big business", and are in fact ranked among the world's major industries. Art is the scape-goat of business and where the only criterion of success is box-office receipts the creative artist finds himself corrupted or discarded. In these circumstances a more pertinent question might be, "Why do we see any good films at all?"

Hollywood offers the best example of commercialism. There we find that the major film-producing companies are also the distributors and exhibitors of their own products. Independent cinemas are forced to rent films in lots of varying standard months in advance of production. (This pernicious system led in the U.S.A. to the companies' recent prosecution by the Government for contravening the Sherman anti-Trust laws, but although found guilty on most counts they were not penalised and the situation remains unchanged).

Consequently a certain amount of trash is produced and for the rest popular entertainment films prevail. But popular taste does not rest on trash alone. The mass-production of films to set formulas, relying on sensational effects, vulgar publicity and the "star" system, leads to a staleness even in this uncompetitive market. The need for setting a standard of craftsmanship and finding freshness by experiment is realized. The film "Cross-fire", made at a time when box-office value of themes dealing with racial problems was uncertain, is one kind of experiment, resulting in a good film and, incidentally, in a host of bad films cashing in on a new idea.

But more important is the experiment of artists unwilling to compromise their work. Sometimes, like Flaherty, they

manage to make films outside the industry, or like Stroheim and Welles, struggle continually to keep their work intact. The production of such films as "The Grapes of Wrath", "The Long Voyage Home," "The Ox-Bow Incident" and "Citizen Kane" is not always financially rewarding but such productions advance the film industry as a whole by setting an artistic standard and by discovering new techniques.

For instance, deep-focus photography, which shows clear detail in foreground and background simultaneously, used by Welles in the controversial "Citizen Kane", was later used more logically in the very successful, "The Best Years of our Lives". For these reasons producers can still afford to take occasional risks.

In Britain there is a different set of circumstances. Films cost as much to make there as elsewhere and the crop of "prestige" films such as "Henry V" and "Hamlet" were provided by the influx of J. Arthur Rank capital towards the end of the war. But such expensive productions need larger markets than are at present available to British films to pay their way, and in recent years Rank's influence has been a stultifying one. But here, apart from the fact that the film is a popular art and must be appreciated by millions of people to justify itself, another aspect of the problem can be studied.

*It must be understood that of all the art forms the film reflects most immediately the pressures and crises of a society; cinema is constantly pre-occupied with the present. Stimulus comes from without and the history of cinema shows clearly that the stimulation of national perception*

(Continued on page 7.)

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## GOOD FILMS AND BAD

in a period of strain or rapid progress is reflected in a peak of artistic film endeavour — witness the Russian films of the first Five Year Plan.

Until 1940 British cinemas showed only rare signs of individuality, but the war brought to this field a national renaissance. A new style, uniting documentary observation with fiction, presented the services, explored the factories, revealed civilian life in wartime, all with reality and sincerity that raised the standard to unrecognisable heights.

We were given: "In Which We Serve", "The Way Ahead", "Millions

Like Us" and "Waterloo Road". This artistic peak carried over into the immediate post-war period but reaction soon set in. The ensuing dearth was due partly to economic factors within the industry and due partly to the dejected mood of the country. Contact with reality has been lost and only by grappling again with the problems and lives of ordinary people can British films break away from their literary derivatives and comic fantasies to give us again something lasting in cinema.

In France in the 1930's cinema production and distribution was loosely controlled. There was only limited capital available and a group of gifted artists

substituted style and imagination for gloss, setting a generally high standard on that plane. Unfortunately, many of these works were marred by that pessimism which reflected the country's growing decadence. (It is significant that "Les Enfants du Paradis" was made during the Nazi occupation). Since the war their handcuffing by American capital is tragically evident.

The decline of the French cinema coincided with the rise of the post-war Italian film. Starting with "Open City" and culminating in "Bicycle Thieves", neo-realism is a stylistic revolution demanded by a revolution in subject matter. The rough productions (necessitated by low finances) seem in themselves a virtue to oversea audiences satiated with Hollywood studio polish. But Italian audiences give little support to these films and there is doubt that the present high standard can be maintained on the strength of a select foreign audience.

But these "experimental" films of high artistic quality are a minute proportion of actual production and, short of a revolutionary change of our economic system, our staple diet will consist of the commercial entertainment film. We can, as pointed out earlier, look for good films in this category too. The most hopeful sign for the immediate future is in the policy of producing "B" pictures at present being carried out at M.G.M. by Doré Schary. As production manager he initiated a policy at R.K.O. Studios which gave us: "Crossfire", "They Live by Night", "The Window" and "The Set-up."

By using sincerity and intelligence in these cheaply-made, supporting films which are not required to gross huge returns to pay their way, a standard considerably higher than the studio's expensive productions was achieved. At M.G.M. this policy has yielded, amongst others, "Intruder in the Dust", "Act of Violence," "Crises" and "Mystery Street," films of considerable cinematic merit which bear none of the hall-marks of vulgarity, artifice or overstatement.

The importance of these films lies not only in themselves but in the setting of a high standard of straightforward entertainment films (which uplift that very fluid thing, public taste), in the training and free development of young writers and directors, and in opening up new fields for higher-budget films. Several of these films must be realising good profits and we are left to hope that their effect will be noticed and to grasp eagerly at the qualities they offer us.

## HIER EN DAAR

### ROMMEL WAS GEEN HELD.

OPENBARE reaksie in Engeland oor die Rommel film is 'n teken dat die Engelse volk, tenminste, nog nie die laaste oorlog en diegene wat daarvoor verantwoordelik was vergeet het nie, en dat hulle nie bereid is om soos die film poog te doen die Nazi opperbevel van alle blaam te onthef.

Sonder die aktiewe steun van die opperbevel van die Duitse Leër kon Hitler nie oorlog voer nie. Hulle is daarom geensins minder skuldig as hy en sy party nie, en om hulle nou met die mantel van helde te wil bekleë is om goedkeuring aan hulle dade te heg.



### LEE VLEISPOTTE.

Tenspyte van die menigte verklarings wat daagliks uitgereik word aangaande die vleistekort, skyn nog die regering, nog die Vleisbeheerraad, nader aan 'n oplossing te kom. Dit val dan ook te betwyfel of die huidige regering tot 'n oplossing sal kan kom, daarvoor is hulle veels te afhanklik van die stem van die Boere in so 'n mate dat hulle noodwendig dié se belange bo dié van die verbruiker in aanmerking moet neem.

Een van die grootste euwels van die vleisbemarking-stelsel in Suid-Afrika is die sogenaamde vee spekulant. Hierdie here besit gewoonlik groot stukke grond waar slagvee wat op die goedkoopste mark aangekoop is, en aangehou word totdat hulle weer op die duurste mark van die hand gesit kan word.

'n Verwagte styging in die prys van slagvee het dan ook as gevolg dat vir 'n tydperk altans slagvee heeltemal onthou kan word van die mark.

Onder normale omstandighede is dit gladnie uitgesluit dat hierdie persone die mark kan laat daal en styg na willekeur.

Die enigste manier waarop hierdie euwel die hoof gebied kan word is om 'n stelsel te skep wat dit vir die kleiner Boer makliker maak om hulle vee te bemark.

Die publiek verwag dat die Raad wat in Pretoria die een vergadering na die ander hou, hulle aandag aan sake soos hierdie sal skenk.



### VERKWISTE ENERGIE.

Die Verenigde Party en die Arbeids-party het albei duisende ponde spandeer om mekaar in die Johannesburgse Munisipale Verkiesing te beveg, om nie eens te praat van die verkwisting van Organisasie-kragte nie. Dit is seker die mees onrealistiese optrede aan die kant van die twee partye wat 'n mens jouself kan voorstel. En dit alles terwyl die Nasionaliste toegelaat is om nie minder as sewe kieswyke te verower, drie waarvan onbestrede was.

Saamspanning van Organisasie kragte en 'n eweredige verdeling van die wyke waarin die Nasionaliste kandidate gestel het was tog seker die voor die handliggende ding om te doen, en kon lei tot 'n heeltemal ander verdeling van Party sterkte in die Stadsraad.

# WHY I AM

"YOU'RE looking cheerful," Macdonald said as I walked in.

"I am," was my reply. "And why are you so gloomy, may I ask?"

"Of course I am gloomy. Two of my best friends are leaving for Rhodesia next week. They say they've had enough of the Union. The Malan Government has got them down. They're going to a country that has no Nationalists."

"I wish I could tell them a few things before they run away," I said warmly. "If people must run away from the Nationalists, they'd better not take any false ideas with them. Rhodesia is the land of the free and the home of the brave makes me smile. Rhodesia consists of two towns about the size of East London, both of them less alive intellectually than East London. The country is now over-

By

JAMES LAWTON,  
a Contributor.

run by immigrants, refugees from British socialism. They have reinforced the belief of the older white inhabitants that anyone who admits he once read the *Manchester Guardian* is a dangerous man. Seriously, though, a fellow was deported when they discovered that he wanted to do some harmless research on African trade unions."

"At least there are no Nationalists there," Macdonald said grumpily.

"As a matter of fact, there are some," I started, getting really wound up. "And what is more they have recently formed a new political party. However, there are some things you ought to tell your fair-haired friends, before they run away, about our South African Nationalists."

Tell them from me, that they need not be so scared of Malan. They are overrating his strength. The Nats. are by no means entrenched, and they know it. Of course, at the moment they hold the trump cards and so they can seem

many points. But the luck of the game can change. Malan has perhaps already overplayed his hand. His defensible and shabby actions have aroused many people who were previously indifferent to politics. All sorts of ordinary, decent folk now realize what the Nats. really stand for and these people mean to move heaven and earth to get the Nats. out of office at the next election.

"That is the meaning of the public's response to the Torch Commands. There has been a revolution of feeling, a surge of emotion which may yet sweep the Nationalists out of office. Mind you, I don't say it will, but I do say that it might. In other words, we have still a good, fighting chance of restoring a democratic government to South Africa. That is why it is wrong to run away.

"But even if our side lost the next election, that would not be the end of everything. It is all nonsense to suppose that the next election will be the last one, or some people say in panic. As long as there is a strong opposition in the country, the Government knows it can't do as it pleases. And there is persistent opposition to this Government."

"True, this opposition is not always as forceful as it should be, mainly because it is without forceful leaders. But the ferment of criticism continues to stir action of one kind or another. And all the time, younger and older men are thinking out the problems of political strategy that face our side, and discussing new methods of propaganda, and learning, as they go along, how to be effective in public life. Sooner or later, new and better leaders will emerge."

"You make me feel more hopeful when you talk like that," Macdonald remarked. "Go on; tell me some more."

"Well, I will. Even if we don't throw Malan and Co. out in the next year or two, their whole position could quickly change. It could change because South African politics can be deeply influenced by world events and so-day events abroad are moving much faster than events in the Union. Let me explain what I mean. On questions of race relations, Malan has already shown that he cannot

afford to ignore world opinion. It has given him a real headache from time to time, and he is still worried about how to cope with it. Certainly, he has been restrained to some extent by the fact that the world is watching his racialism with critical eyes.

"Now the same thing is true of Malan's other pernicious policies. Take Communism. The Nationalists have been encouraged to pass oppressive laws and to persecute communists and to try and smear anyone who is an outspoken liberal because the prevailing winds of opinion in the world are blowing in their favour. Every petty politician can carry favour with the press anywhere by attacking progressive people and calling them communists.

"But it won't always be like that. There are two main possibilities in the world situation. The cold war between

# ... AN

the United States and Soviet Union is growing hotter. War may start next April. If it comes, it will engulf us all, as you know. A third world war, much more disastrous in its toll of human lives than the last, is horrible to think about. But it's an ill wind that blows no good so someone, as the old saying has it. Dr. Malan could not maintain himself in office and take part in a world war and at the same time continue to impose his shameful policies on this country. Probably he would try to bring about a coalition.

"But whatever happened, the Nationalists would have to relax their grip and their British and American allies would see it that they did so. Like Franco in Spain, Malan is only useful as an ally if his Government can be whitewashed to some extent so as to take part in a world parade without causing the onlookers to shudder.

"Consider the alternative possibility. It does not seem likely, but peace may break out next year. Churchill is bold enough to try and engineer some kind of agreement with Stalin. It could happen. The British Conservatives know that



THE KNOCK-OUTS COMING

a third world war, complete with atomic bombs falling not on Washington but on London, would put an end to British power in the world. Win or lose, Britain would sink to the level of a third-rate country. Churchill recognizes this better than we do. So he may well exert himself to get the cold war transformed into a warm peace.

"In that case, the politicians and the daily press would at once explain to us that there really is room in the wide world for capitalism and communism to live peacefully side by side, at least for the next fifty years. The New York stock exchange would have to bear up under such a blow. And so would Dr. Malan. He would have to find another line of talk. Once the red menace and the black peril are exhausted, he must

search for a horse of another colour. It won't be easy, and a general election might catch him bending.

"So you see, whatever happens in the great world, the Nationalists will have a hard job keeping in line with changing times. True, they are tough and ruthless. So were Hitler and his Nazis. They were also cleverer and far more powerful than the Nationalists and yet, from beginning to end, they lasted only twelve years. That's worth remembering now in Malan's fourth year.

"Yes, the world is changing rapidly, even if those who read only *The Star* or *Die Burger* don't realize the fact. That is why I remain cheerful in these grim

Readers of "Fighting Talk" are invited to comment on the sentiments expressed in this article.

days. The times we live in are in fact favourable to optimism. The old economic system, with all its inequality and injustice, is on its way out and a new and better one will surely take its place. You can see signs of that all the world over.

"The bad old days are gone of empire-building and of superior white men looking it over the rest. Asia has woken up and is asserting her rightful claims to equality with Europe. What happened in Asia yesterday will happen in Africa to-morrow. Racial freedom and human enlightenment are marching forward and nothing will stop advances.

"Clear-headed people in every country are reading these signs aright, and they rejoice at the decline of ancient traditions which have been the source of so much human misery. This does not mean that Utopia is at hand. Far from it. But the social forces at work in the world render inevitable radical changes in the life of mankind. I tell you, the certainties of the future are on our side."

"Those are mighty fine words," Macdonald said as I took a deep breath. "I must try and remember a few of them to quote to my friends before they run away to negotiate in the backwaters of Rhodesia. What fools they'll feel if they miss all the fun and fireworks that you say are just around the corner."

# ... OPTIMIST



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# BRITAIN AND ITS POLITICS

(Last month, Thelma Routh wrote of her impressions of life in London. Now Guy Routh adds a note on British politics).

LAST month, Thelma recklessly let me in for the difficult task of adding a political assessment to her "housewife's eye view" of things in Britain. Political trends are notoriously difficult to foretell in the short run, in Britain as much as other countries, but it is none the less true that I had a ring-side view of British politics for most of the time we were there, and even popped into the ring myself, now and then. To lay my credentials on the table, I negotiated on behalf of the employees of one of the biggest employers in the country; I sat on the Executive Committee of the Union of Democratic Control with a number of Labour M.P.'s and publicists; I wrote for a number of journals, attended a number of conferences and addressed a number of week-end schools. In passing, I must mention that being on the Legion N.E.C. is first-rate schooling for these activities. A few years on that distinguished body are calculated to give anybody the sort of insight into political processes that is invaluable overseas.

The strongest impression that I have brought back is of the great complexity of the British political organism. In South Africa, we are used to the idea of two bodiless heads confronting each other (the U.P. and the Nats.) which once every five years take on vague and ill-defined bodies, which disappear again as soon as the election is over. In Britain it is quite different. The political organism has shoots and roots everywhere; there are thousands of organisations, or branches of organisations, which join together millions of people throughout the country in weekly or monthly meetings, at which a great variety of subjects are studied, thought-over and discussed. And a society is not worthy of the name unless it has an annual conference at which are assembled delegates from branches all over the country, and at which are discussed not only the immediate problems of the members, but also the affairs of the nation and of the world. This applies not only to trade unions and to the big political parties, but also to professional bodies from dentists to brush salesmen and societies for promoting or opposing almost everything in the world — societies to convert Jews to Christianity and Christians to Judaism, to combat blood sports and to support them, to encourage the beating of children, to conduct a "children's revolution" and to provide drinking-troughs for horses.

All this leads one to conclude that people in Britain have a strong sense of social responsibility, that, even though in many cases misguided, they feel the urge to improve society and their fellow-men and will often go to great lengths

to improve themselves. In the trade union branches, for instance, hundreds of thousands of union members meet month by month to discuss a wide variety of subjects; each branch will have a committee that meets once a week or oftener and will, in the course of a year, send delegates to several dozen special conferences convened by some organisation or group of organisations, besides having regular delegates to the local trades council which will meet once a month. Delegates are required to listen carefully to proceedings, make notes and report back to the branch in detail, while those who hear their reports go back to the workshop floor and discuss matters with their fellow-workers.

Outstanding in this complex is the work of the Workers' Educational Association, to whose classes several million people go each year to study a comprehensive selection of subjects. The National Council of Labour Colleges, the Co-Operative Educational organisations and various societies are continually holding week-end, day or summer schools in different parts of the country. Here delegates will be sent from affiliated organisations to study some particular subject, usually with a political slant. They will listen to experts, ask questions, discuss and then "report back". I lectured many such groups on the subject of South Africa and found generally that they were better informed about South Africa than most South Africans.

Now this brings me to my first conclusion — that the political structure of Britain is remarkably stable. On the one side, is a mass of people who have made

up their minds to vote Labour; on the other side, is a mass who have decided to vote Tory, and it is not easy to jockey either side into changing its mind. It is true that a majority of the people "keep out of politics" except on polling day; they devote an exorbitant amount of time to filling in football pool coupons and listening to the radio (now television). None the less, they have passed the buck to people who are unusually well-informed and are prepared to follow them when the time comes. In the Labour Movement, there will be two or three people on the shop floor representing the different trends between which the rank and file have to choose, and the latter will hear the former arguing the case out and will then decide according to their own lights.

In the main, the wage earners are convinced that the Labour Party is their best bet, while the middle and lower-middle classes believe in the superior power of the Tories. The workers often chafed under the Cripps-Gaitskell yoke, but continued to support it because they saw as the only alternative one designed by the Conservatives. At the same time, the elections of the executive of the Labour Party at its October conference are an overwhelming proof of the demand of the politically-conscious Labourites for a more militant and left-wing policy than that that the Labour cabinet produced.

And that brings us to another interesting thing — the manner in which a few of the mammoth trade unions dominate British labour institutions. Both on the Trades Union Congress and in the Labour Party, the vote is swayed by a few unions dominated by the personalities of less than half-a-dozen men. On a card-vote, the vote of the Transport and General Workers' Union, with 1½ million members, and the Municipal and General Workers' Union, with 800,000, is usually decisive. In the not too distant future, the trade unionists of Britain will have to solve the problem of how to democratise some of these big unions so that the leadership gives more sensitive expression to the feelings of the membership.

(Continued on page 13.)

## BOOK REVIEW

## SCOTTSBORO BOY

By HAYWOOD PATTERSON

ON March 25th, 1931 a group of white boys picked a fight with a group of negro boys, as they hoboed their way on a freight train across the state of Alabama, U.S.A. The white boys were forced off the train. Out of revenge, it would appear, the white boys reported to the railway officials that the negro boys had raped two white female hoboes on the train. At the next station nine negroes were arrested and accused of raping the two white women.

Thus began the notorious *Scottsboro Case* . . . in 1931.

Twenty years after no ethical finality has been reached. In 1937 four of the Negroes were freed. Between 1944 and 1947 four of the remaining five convicts were let out on parole, though three of them have been taken in again as parole violators. In 1948 Haywood Patterson, never pardoned, never paroled, escaped from prison and is still at large. One of the boys is still in prison and there is a warrant out for the arrest of another.

It is an unbelievable story of miscarriage of justice only because the accused had black skins.

The book under review, however, does not recount the series of trials, mis-trials and re-trials the nine boys went through. This book, written by Haywood Patterson, recounts in astonishing detail the life of a Negro prisoner in the prisons of Alabama — one of the glorious states of the glorious United States of America.

It is an almost incredible tale.

Written in the uneducated, earthy slang of a man who never went to school, who before imprisonment was unemployed and who, since imprisonment, has lived seven or ten years with the sediment of southern society, black and white, convict and gaoler, the pages of this book tell dramatically the brutal, degrading, perverted mode of life in the state prisons.

Physical savagery is handed out by wardens with the same brutish satisfaction as Hitler's psychotic guards enjoyed. Whips, rifle butts, clubs, hosepipes are all here. Physical cruelty degenerates into mental sadism — victimisation of an individual without cause, confinement to the 'doghouse' without cause, the dirtiest slave-jobs in the fields, in the mill, in the canning-factory.

Patterson reveals the callous treatment of the doctors he came across, who allowed sick convicts to go out to work in the fields and to their death. Death in the prisons is a matter of slight concern to the authorities, according to the writer. If a convict dies from the neglect of a disease or illness, if he is beat-

en to death, if he is shot 'while attempting to escape', if he is knifed by another if he is knifed by another convict, the matter is hushed up and there is never an enquiry.

The writer frankly exposes the sexual abnormalities that become the normalities of prison life, the 'wolves' and the 'gal-boys', the jealousy-to-death that springs up in the rotten prison atmosphere.

Patterson recounts the innumerable rackets that the wardens and the state authorities are engaged in, from selling banned articles to the prisoners to marketing the prison-farm produce on behalf of private firms. The prisoners, too, run their own rackets, some of them honest, as for example the 'shop' that Patterson runs under the noses of the guards. Dope is brought in and peddled, prison linen is bartered with outsiders, knives are fashioned and sold inside, wild animals caught in the fields are brought in and sold for food — the only eatable meat the men see, except for maggotty-flesh that sickens at sight.

Haywood Patterson in the course of his writing reveals himself to the reader. I formed an impression that Patterson was not a 'good nigger' — and yet he is a man with his own kind of integrity. He is black and through his prison years he has developed a strong pride in his own people, a race-loyalty, which — illogical in the long run as it may be — springs from the persecution, the intolerance, the contempt that the white people have for the black. In any case, whatever Patterson is today, whatever social failings there may be, his character is the product of his society, the unnatural, bestial, immoral life of the gaols designed and administered by the noble whites of Alabama.

Penal reform throughout the world has a long way to go, but in the southern states of America perhaps it has furthest to go. Or would I amend that last statement if an African convict in one of our gaols were to write his story?

(Obtainable: Pickwick Bookshop, Kerk Street, Johannesburg).

## Legion Statement on "Guardian"

THE National Executive Committee of the Springbok Legion records its strongest protest against the intention of the Government to suppress the *Guardian* Newspaper. We challenge the Government to go to the Electorate NOW with the many legislative measures it has introduced purporting to fight communism but which in effect deprive the individual of his democratic rights.

The Legion has always been in the forefront of the struggle to preserve and extend the principles and practices of democracy in South Africa. It has consistently taken its stand in defence of these notwithstanding the nature of the attack and the source whence it has come.

As Ex-service men and women who fought in a world war for the maintenance of these principles it is our privilege and obligation, no less than that of any other section of the community, to defend them now that they are jeopardised by the Government's implied intention to ban the "*Guardian*."

Not only is this proposed action an attack on the freedom of the press but it is an attack on the freedom of the individual — his right to hear all sides and to formulate opinions for himself on the basis of what he reads. It is an attempt on the part of the Government to control the thinking of the individual. In addition the method by which this is to be done is in itself a violation of democratic practice. It is an abrogation of the rule of law and the right of the accused to a fair trial in the courts of the land with the protection of the procedures of accepted legal practice.

We challenge the Government to go to the Electorate now, either in a General Election or by means of a referendum such as was carried out in Australia.

## British Politics . . .

(Continued from page 11.)

In general, class feeling in Britain is still very strong — I mean the feeling that "a gentleman" is the natural superior of the working man, and it is this that persuades many workers to vote Tory despite the fact that they have been benefited by the Labour regime. Indeed, there are several million workers who must vote Tory at every general election. Again, it is partly this feeling that keeps many workers out of the trade unions (plus a disinclination to part with the weekly tanner in subs.). There are probably no industries in Britain that are 100 per cent. organised, while of a labour force of about 20 million, only about 12 million belong to unions.

Another factor that makes British workers more conservative than those of the Continent is the fact that they really do enjoy a much higher standard of living, as a result of the very low standard of living of the Asiatics and Africans who inhabit the colonial empire and whose products produce most of the dollars of the Sterling area. And that gives us a foresight of the future. With the disintegration of the colonial empire and the industrialisation of the backward areas, Britain is losing the monopoly which she has enjoyed there for so long. With trade with Eastern Europe and China virtually paralysed, British industrialists and bankers will feel ever more keenly the competition of their American, German and Japanese counterparts and it is inevitable, in these circumstances, that British standards of living will fall and that the workers will be driven to seek more radical remedies for their problems.

Meanwhile, Mr. Churchill has the gloomy prospect of leading the country either into depression or war, a choice that will be decided not in London but in Washington. In either event, class antagonisms will undoubtedly be aggravated, the Labour movement will be forced to the left and the Conservatives to the right, with results that I shall not attempt to predict but which will, in any event, be highly interesting. Political forces in Britain appear to develop slowly, but these slow movements are generated by forces of tremendous power which, finally, will be quite ruthless in the way they deal with one another.

## ODDS AND ENDS

VIC EDDY

### DISASTROUS MONTH.

THE month of October has been an unfortunate one for Labour in England and here in South Africa. Neither the defeat of the Labour Party at the hands of the Tories in England nor the complete rout of its local counterpart in the Johannesburg Municipal elections was wholly unexpected, yet the results are very depressing indeed.

The thing is that in this modern world the ever-increasing tendency is for people to pick sides, and the party that is sitting on the fence or is in the middle of the road hasn't an earthly chance. Not only is the moderate not an inspiring political specimen, but he is becoming more and more undesirable to the voters of the twentieth century.

The reason for this is not hard to find. An individual or party who persists in acting like a referee, who takes a little from the "haves" and gives a little to the "have nots", will infuriate both sides, who will feel the justice of their claims is being slighted. The Labour Party would do well to remember that people pay to see the combatants, not the referee!

### LET HIM BELONG.

At the El Alamein demonstration a few weeks ago, I was speaking to an ex-S.A.A.F. buddy of mine, who told me that although he had been active in the Torch Commando in Pietersburg, he had, since coming to Johannesburg, stopped taking an active interest in that organisation, because, as he put it, "there are enough people here without me."

I think the leaders of the Torch Commando should take careful cognisance of such an attitude, because it represents a big organisational question-mark. All members of the Torch Commando, or any other body for that matter, should always be made to feel that they belong, not by a few clarion calls at a time of crisis but by being given an active job to do, even if it is only to lick stamps. Each rank and file member should regard himself as a link in the chain, other-

wise (especially in the case of the W.V.T.C.), the sentiments which caused him to join in the first place will evaporate and he will drift out. And it will be doubly difficult to win him back a second time.

### THE BAN-NER.

When Shakespeare (or Bacon if you feel that way) said "Man, proud man, dressed in a little brief authority, plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven as makes the angels weep", he must have been thinking of people like Mr. C. R. Swart.

As Minister of Justice, Mr. Swart must have found time hanging heavy on his hands, since the soul-satisfying days of the Session, so he has decided to go on a banning spree.

The "Guardian" newspaper has been notified that a secret three-man commission, hand-picked by the Minister, has seen no reason why it should not be banned. It is now up to this paper, which has been in existence for about fifteen years, to show reason why it should not be banned.

This case, which for lawyers may present nice legal arguments during those long winter evenings, carries for you and me just a most unpalatable savour of oppression. Yes, the angels may weep at the fantastic antics of Minister Swart and his colleagues, but it is up to us, the people, to make their brief authority briefer.



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## LETTER ON PEACE

Cape Town.

Dear Sir,

I've read your articles and leaflet about the Five Power Pact. In general I'm in favour of any move which will serve to strengthen peace and weaken the chances of war. I don't mind whether peace-moves come from the Russian or our side. For that reason I am inclined to support the Petition to the S.A. Government to use its influence to bring about a meeting of the Big Five with a view to the signing of a Pact of Peace.

But I have this query. Does not this campaign have the effect of by-passing the United Nations? Surely U.N. is the organisation through which a Pact of Peace should be brought about? I thought the Legion wanted to strengthen the prestige and effectiveness of the U.N. What's your answer?

Yours faithfully,

H. McN.

East London.

### OUR REPLY.

Dear Friend,

Thank you for asking so pertinent a question. The World Peace Council has adopted the device of the petition in favour of a Five Power Peace Pact with the primary purpose of ensuring peace and with the very important secondary purpose of strengthening the U.N.

They fear that, just as happened with the League of Nations disastrously, the United Nations is being split into opposing Big Power blocs. For instance, Britain can command a number of votes

— not on the soundness of the proposal in hand, but because of extraneous and irrelevant considerations, such as financial tie-ups, trade agreements, etc., Russia can command a number of votes, America can command a number of votes, which means that U.N. does not honestly reflect the genuine wishes of fifty odd independent nations, let alone the wishes of the peoples of the world.

For instance, if it were not for this splitting into blocs, U.N. could certainly not have failed to agree to a disarmament plan, to an Atomic Energy Control Plan. What's more important, they would have been able to PREVENT the outbreak of war in Korea. This unhappy bloc-system, therefore, stultifies the main purpose of U.N. and stifles the will of the people for peace.

Another point: again because of bloc-voting — though not so solid on this question — U.N. still recognises the exposed, corrupt and finished Chiang Kai Shek régime and refuses to recognise the new government of 480,000,000 Chinese people. If China was regarded during the war as one of the Big Five, then a Peace Pact without her today would be pointless. Since, however, U.N. does not recognise the new China, the Peace Petition must organise outside of it.

It is believed that, if a Pact for Peace was signed by the Big Five, its immediate effect would be to restore U.N. to its former authority. We would rapidly see all sorts of splendid decisions being agreed to in the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Yours fraternally,

EDITOR.

### Film Review

The film industry in Britain is in urgent need of writers and directors who know their jobs and can make films forcefully, concisely and entertainingly. "White Corridors", made by a young British director, Pat Jackson, is a heartening indication that we do not have to rely on the occasional films of Thorold Dickenson and Carol Read for these qualities.

The film covers a few eventful days in the lives of some of the patients and staff of an English provincial hospital. Events revolve in particular round Dr. Marriner, a research pathologist working on a new serum, and his relationship with Dr. Sophie Dean, and the case of a child, Tommy Briggs. Slightly less prominent are several characters, including the irresponsible young house surgeon; his father, a surgeon himself, who breaks down in the middle of an operation due to shock at his son's negligence; the young probation nurse who is having difficulty in adapting herself to hospital life; and the staff nurse who has been jilted by the young surgeon.

Several other characters are brought into sharp focus and it is inevitable that the film becomes a little episodic — indeed its whole construction accepts this form of narration. All the more praise to Pat Jackson for achieving such clarity and polish. His cutting is quite miraculous — none of the many scenes is left a second too long, but each achieves the maximum in detail and dramatic effect. Performances throughout are excellent. Let us hope that Jackson's style and technical ability will now be given more worthy material.

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## PERSONALIA

**GUY ROUTH** is a slow speaker . . . well, fairly slow, but the speed of his speech is in inverse ratio to the celerity and lucidity of his thinking. He usually manages to see the reason behind the reason, the motive behind the motive, the contradiction behind the contradiction . . . very valuable in debate and analysis, a little disconcerting for us slower thinkers!

Born on the West Rand in 1916, Guy graduated with a B. Com. degree at Wits. University. He served throughout the war and was an early member of the Legion. After demobilisation, he was elected to the National Executive Committee of the Legion and was for a long time the chairman of the Publicity Committee. Three years ago he went to England and whilst there was the Legion's Representative. In that capacity he attended Ex-service International Conferences in Paris during 1948 and 1950.

In London Dr. Routh was the Head of the Research Department of a big Civil Service Union. He was appointed to a Departmental Committee on Post Office Statistics. When he takes to writing — as he does for a number of maga-



zines — he chooses the field of economics. In this field he is regarded as an expert on Cost-of-Living Indexes. In fact, he was partly responsible for the appointment of a committee to revise the British Retail Price Index.

Guy studied economics at the London School of Economics, where he received his doctorate of philosophy.

Confidentially Guy also sings and acts — perhaps his finest performance on the stage was when, in a Bernard Shaw make-up and beard, he played opposite Gwen Ffrangcon Davies in Shaw's "Major Barbara." He is the father of two bouncing boys and a girl — the latter, one assumes, doesn't bounce. He finds time to do some gardening and housework. After three years in England he is — according to his wife, Thelma — really quite good at housework — for a man!

Guy's message to Legionnaires is: Coming back to South Africa after three years in the heartening hurly-burly of British politics, it is easy to give way to a mood of depression — not only because of Nationalist politics, but also because we ordinary South Africans who have decent feelings of justice and humanity in our hearts are so timid and inarticulate. But I came back to the Legion and am grateful for its existence. The Legion is one of the very few forces in the country that prevent one from giving way to despair.

Our duty is clear: to work for the Legion and make the inherent rightness of its policies be felt throughout the country.

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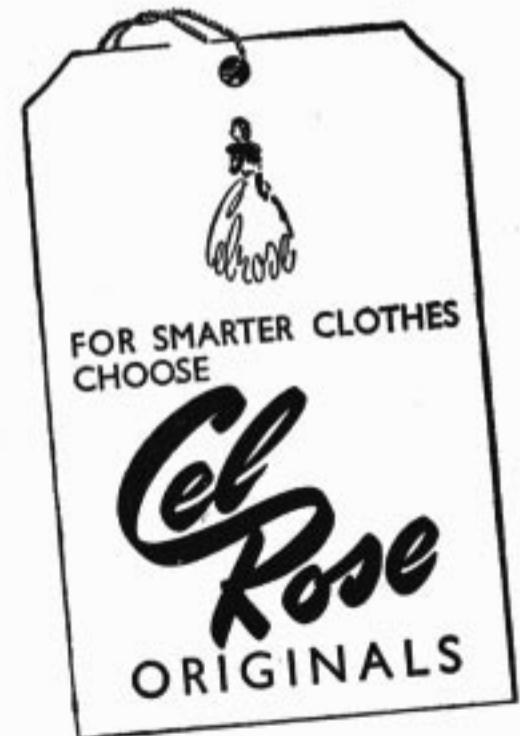
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