

# FIGHTING

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# TALK



## TREASON TRIAL

By HILDA WATTS

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## EYE-WITNESS REPORT ON KENYA'S CONCENTRATION CAMPS

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BOOKS

A MONTHLY JOURNAL FOR DEMOCRATS



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**COMMENT**

The command has been the mainstay of law in our land for many years. Men have been deported and exiled from the towns (for the offence even of being "surplus to the labour requirements.")

But up to now there has been the semblance of law.

The bang on the door, the deportation order, the armed escort. This is the abc of the White man's law for Black men.

But for the Strijdom government this is still not enough.

The power once held only by the Governor-General — the power to deport man or tribe without trial and without hearing — this power is now to be given to every town council throughout the land — in the name of "peace and public order."

The power once exercised by courts — the power to stay an illegal order made not in accordance with law — this power is to be cancelled. An order that claims to be a legal order shall be law. Let the victim challenge after he has been moved! Let him defend his legal right from the barren outpost of Kiemvasmaak!

The order IS law. And the policeman's uniform and the baton are its authority! Let the courts quibble over legal niceties after the warrants have been executed, after the homes have been smashed, the families divided.

This is the meaning of the Prohibition of Interdicts Bill and the latest amendments to the Urban Areas Act.

This is the law of Strijdom's South Africa. The law of the dictatorship.

• Our cover drawing of a young African miner is by Paul Hogarth.

**FROM THE SIDELINES**

By  
**JOHN GILD**

**I**F THERE are really "treason" trials to be staged, the daily press will have a thrilling "story" to handle. After his statement in Parliament, Mr. Swart will presumably have to prosecute some people for something or other. Because heavy terms of imprisonment can be meted out for the alleged political offences, the trials will be no comic opera. It is my view that certain preparations for these trials should be made in good time by those who care about free speech. Surely a fund should be started in order to collect money for the proper legal defence of alleged political offenders. A fair trial can hardly be assured unless the best lawyers available are briefed for the defence. I notice that Mr. Swart is about to get Parliament to pass a new Bill that will enable him (and not, as usual, the Judge-President of the Province) to choose the judges who will preside over the forthcoming trials.

**POLITICAL TRIALS**

**This month "FIGHTING TALK" introduces a new feature: a diary of comment by a guest contributor**

**T**ALKING of the daily press, have you noticed how anxious the English newspapers are to appease their Afrikaner readers? In Johannesburg, for instance, "The Star" leans over backwards to do this. Its daily column, labelled by an Afrikaner, has revolted many of its readers who cannot stomach the crude (and no doubt genuine) opinions, not to say prejudices, of the writer. (He touched a new low level when he condemned Trevor Huddleston's book

**THE POPULAR PRESS**

while admitting that he had not read it!). My guess is that "The Star" will not abandon this column, however annoyed readers may get. The English press is read by more Afrikaners than the number who buy the Nationalist papers. Afrikaners buy English papers for their non-political features and for the sports pages. To encourage this habit, the English editors are careful not to say anything that would anger Afrikaners if they read it on the political pages of the paper. So more and more the English dailies rely on the five supreme subjects that all journalists are trained to regard as those of unfailing popular interest. These subjects are (a) race, (b) crime, especially murder, (c) sex, (d) religion and (e) drugs. At a party the other evening I heard a group of journalists compete to find who could produce the most exciting poster. The winner combined all the five elements in this entry: Native Drug Fiend Kills Preacher's Mistress.

**T**HERE will be hell to pay in Singapore before the month is out. Having promised the island self-government, the British seem to have changed their mind at the eleventh hour. Or rather the pressure from the right wing of the Conservative Party has proved too strong for Sir Anthony Eden to resist in his shaky personal position. Half of the Tories have told him to "stop giving away the Empire." After Ceylon's sharp turn to the left, Singapore is the only big

**STRUGGLE IN SINGAPORE**

base that remains to the British armed forces in Asia. The plan to attach Singapore to the mainland Federation of Malaya broke down because the Mayalan politicians don't want to enlarge the Chinese element in their electorate, which is already 40 per cent. of the total. There will be more strikes and riots on the island because most of the people want to get rid of the British once and for all. After withdrawing from the rest of Asia (except the outpost of Hong Kong) the British can hardly rely any longer on the old excuses for staying elsewhere.

**I**N the new edition of his excellent book *India Today and Tomorrow* (Lawrence and Wishart 12/6), Mr. Palme Dutt compares India and China in order to explain the present difference between the two countries. He points out that China had a semi-colonial status before 1949 when the revolution was completed. American, French and British interests never really penetrated far beyond the coasts, extending only tentacles through trade into the interior.

**INDIA IN TRANSITION**

India, however, was a colony in every sense for two centuries until 1947. Moreover, in China the imperialist powers were themselves divided. They wanted to

(Continued on next page)



# TREASON!

By HILDA WATTS

I DREAMED we were on trial, my friends and I.

The Court was a special one. Two black-robed judges presided on a bench high above us at one end of the room. We could not see their faces. The Prosecutor, tall and thin, was also robed in black. In his hands he held a sheaf of papers, and from these he read:—

"The charge," he declared in a sepulchral voice, "is that the defendants did organise opposition to the lawful government and its policies; that they did oppose beneficial laws enacted in the interests of the people, such as the Western Areas Removal Scheme and the Bantu Education Act; that they tried to arouse other people in opposition to these laws; that they sought to discredit the benign and well-loved principles of apartheid; that they did organise, or support, or signify their approval of a gathering known as the Congress of the People, at which a document known as the 'Freedom Charter' was adopted, containing these words: **THE PEOPLE SHALL GOVERN.**"

The voice continued for a long time, listing similar charges; finally he paused, and turned towards us, pointing a trembling finger.

"The charge, therefore," he thundered, "is **TREASON!**"

## FROM THE SIDE LINES

(Continued)

partition China but were hampered by their own differences. This gave the Chinese national movement an opportunity for early progress. From the beginning the Chinese revolution developed along the lines of an armed struggle in which an armed revolution was confronted with armed counter-revolution. Unlike India, there was apparently nothing like a middle class exercising effective political influence. The main result of the British impact on India was the emergence of a strong middle class which has remained a considerable factor to the present day.

None the less, Mr. Dutt, tracing the course of recent events, is able to show that India's foreign policy has been driven to abandon its reliance on the West, which was still visible when the Korean war started in 1950. This process will continue as India finds that Russia and China can offer her genuine help without the strings that America and Britain always attach to their offers.

**T**HE treatment of Natives in South Africa fills one with shame and horror. I hope the day will speedily come when your race will be able to defend

## WHO WROTE THIS?

itself against the barbarities being perpetrated against it by hypocritical men who regard the black man as having been created in order that they might exploit him for their own advantage. The press and politicians for the most part keep the people of this country in ignorance of the real treatment meted out to the Natives, and not until they, the Natives, are in a position to hold their own can they expect to be treated as human beings."

I bet that you will never guess who wrote this and when. I came across the passage in a letter written just 50 years ago by Keir Hardie, the British Labour leader, to Mr. Bankole Bright. I don't know who this African, Mr. Bright was. The letter appeared in the Central African Times on August 25, 1906.

**T**HE judges banged their gavels on the bench. "State the evidence!" they cried.

The Prosecutor fumbled through his papers. "In the year 1950," he said, "the Minister for Justice, Mr. C. R. Swart, told the House of Assembly about a secret organisation among Natives, led by Communists. He did so with trepidation, because he did not want to cause panic, but the Government had been accused of over-estimating Communist acts.

"That organisation," declared the Minister, "was preparing a great coup on a date to be named. The members were trained and distributed and placed in all the most important departments of public life. On the given date, when the secret sign was given, one would be ordered to poison the water supplies. Another would cut off power and light at the power station. Others had been trained to murder people whom they wanted out of the way."

The Counsel for the Defence leapt to his feet: "Your Worships!" he cried, "I maintain that is not proper evidence! In the six years that followed, there were no arrests. Yet the coup did not take place; water supplies remained unpoisoned and power and light undisturbed. There were no political murders, in spite of great provocation; and the unspoken deeds, the very mention of which would cause a strong nation to panic, did not take place!"

The Prosecutor smiled. "It is not in the public interest to reveal the source of the information given by the Minister for Justice," he said, "but since this statement was made in Parliament by the Minister himself, it must stand."

"Proceed," said the judges.

"Two years later," went on the Prosecutor, "it was necessary to bring heavy concentrations of police to Cape Town from the Witwatersrand and other centres. When members of Parliament asked questions in the House, the Minister for Justice, Mr. C. R. Swart, declared: 'Take my word for it that, according to information and advice from the best sources I have, it was necessary to take this step, to bring a number of policemen here. What the information and the circumstances are I am not prepared to say in public. I ask you to accept that assurance from me. I have been asked why the police are armed. I will not tell you. It is for reasons I think good. I will follow my own sense and will not be chased . . . I did it only for public security.'"

"But nothing happened—nothing was ever revealed!" declared our lawyer.

"The Minister did not think it was in the public interest to reveal what might have happened," said the Prosecutor, with a smirk.

"Proceed!" cried the judges.

"Early in 1954," went on the Prosecutor, "there were serious veld fires on an unprecedented scale throughout Natal. At that time, the Minister for Justice, Mr. C. R. Swart, declared: 'The possibility could not be excluded that the present series of veld fires and other fires in the Union were related to the threats of arson received since the beginning of the year from the *Cheesa-Cheesa*. I have ordered the police to investigate whether the fires could have been caused by an organised group. I have received numerous letters from many parts of the country



in which mention is made of arson towards the Europeans.'"

Our lawyer intervened. "I protest!" he said. "Later on the police themselves declared that the fires had been caused accidentally by unusual winds, that sent seasonal veld fires blazing up into serious proportions. As for the *Chesa-Cheesa*, that mysterious organisation of strange origin faded away with the poisoned water supplies."

The Prosecutor seemed to give a laugh. "It is my duty to lay before you the evidence put in my hands by the Minister for Justice," he said, "and the Minister says it is not in the public interest to give further information on this subject."

"Proceed!" shouted the judges.

The Prosecutor continued: "Later in the same year, in June 1954, over 100 police armed with automatic weapons were forced to break into a mass anti-apartheid conference in Johannesburg, and the 1,200 delegates present rose and sang 'Nkosi Sikelele Afrika.' The Chief of the Special Branch of the C.I.D., Lt.-Col. W. C. E. Prinsloo, said investigations into an allegation of high treason were the reason for the presence of the police."

Without pausing, he went on hurriedly: "Then in February 1955, the government was forced to send 2,000 police armed with sten-guns to supervise the first removals from the Western Areas to Meadowlands. The reason for the police was given by Mr. G. R. Swart, the Minister for Justice. He stated that the police had information that volunteers of the African National Congress would use the following methods to prevent the removals: attacks with firearms; explosives in old motor tyres which would be rolled towards the police; old cars loaded with explosives which would be crashed into police cars or lorries to be used for removal; holding of demonstrations in adjacent areas to divert the attention of the police; and holding meetings in the Western Areas themselves to persuade people not to move.

"They were going to use mass pickets to try to prevent the movement of lorries; they would attack neighbouring European areas; they would attack municipal vehicles; and would blockade the new areas in Meadowlands with pickets.

"It was known that tsotsis were in possession of firearms; natives were in possession of machine-guns, pistols, home-made "pipe-guns," hand-grenades and dynamite bombs, and were being urged by agitators violently to resist removal from their homes. Also it had been established that it was the intention to set fire to certain Indian shops and other buildings."

Our lawyer was frantically waving his arms at the judges. "Your worships," he cried, "none of these things took place. There were no weapons, no disorders, no motor tyres with explosives, no attacks on European or other areas . . . who supplied the information to the Minister? Where is the evidence?"

Once more the Prosecutor laughed. "The information was supplied to the Minister by the police, and the police obtained it from their informers. Naturally, it is not in the public interest for the police to reveal the identity of their informers, nor are they prepared at this stage of the investigation to produce any material evidence. But for the protection of the public, we must accept the Minister's statement."

"Proceed!" yelled the judges.

"Only a few months later," went on the Prosecutor, "three thousand agitators from all over South Africa rose to their feet once more to sing 'Nkosi Sikelele Afrika'

as armed police surrounded the Congress of the People. While constables with fixed rifles cordoned off the conference, Special Branch men searched every delegate until late into the darkness, in their investigation of a charge of treason.

"Three months later the police were forced to raid hundreds of homes and offices throughout the Union continuing their investigations into treason, and in the course of the raid seized documents, magazines, papers and books, some of which will be produced here in Court."

He waved a paper in his hand. "Here is a copy of the document known as 'The Freedom Charter,'" he declared. "Copies were found in the homes of the accused. The document proclaims that all shall be equal before the law, and other treasonable things.

"This is a magazine known as 'Fighting Talk,'" he went on, "and here is one called 'Liberation.' Both these seditious papers, in addition to the weekly paper known as 'New Age,' openly spoke of opposition to the present government, opposed the Bantu Education Act, and spoke of our beloved Ministers with scorn and disrespect.

"Here is a sheet of signatures taken from a table in a street in Hillbrow. Some of the accused were collecting these signatures for the Freedom Charter.

"Many of the accused were interested in art and music, and some even had many musical recordings in their homes, including records of such people as the Negro singer Paul Robeson. We discovered these facts about the accused by constant police raids, by armed interference at their meetings, by phone-tapping and interference with their correspondence, by taking car numbers and visiting individuals to persuade them not to associate with the accused, and by similar means.

"The charge is therefore clear!" he cried, and as he turned towards us once again his features seemed to merge with the bony countenance of G. R. Swart. "The accused are here because they believe in equal rights for all people, because they have faith in human dignity; because they do not recognise colour barriers; because they want equal justice for people of all races in South Africa; because they want to give our rich farming lands to the African people; because they think Non-White people should be allowed to vote!" His voice was a shriek. "They are here because they conspired for the purpose of—"

Just for a moment, I thought he screamed at us TREASON! But then I realised the word was not TREASON but FREEDOM! "They are charged with believing in FREEDOM!" he cried once more.

"You said the charge was to be TREASON," shouted our lawyer above the noise.

"It's the same thing!" cried the Prosecutor. "In this country it is treason to advocate freedom!"

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**PANDEMONIUM** broke out in the Court. The Prosecutor and the two judges all seemed to merge into one, and this one person became the Minister for Justice, Mr. C. R. Swart. "Treason!" he screamed through distorted lips, pointing his trembling hand at us. And "Freedom! Freedom!" we cried, until the cry grew louder, was taken up by hundreds, and thousands, and millions outside the Court, and echoed round and round our land with strength, and passion, and triumph.

All the statements in this article attributed to Mr. C. R. Swart are direct quotations from newspaper or Hansard reports of his speeches.



**EILEEN FLETCHER** is an English Quaker who has spent 14 years in British Government posts and who worked in Kenya as a Rehabilitation Officer in the camps for men, women and children suspected

of "Mau Mau" activities. These are extracts (lack of space prevents their publication in full) of her eye-witness account published in the British pacifist journal "Peace News."

## KENYA'S CONCENTRATION CAMPS

**T**HIS is a true account of things I have seen and heard myself and of things told me by responsible officials. It is not exaggerated or written up in any way. These things are known and accepted in Kenya. Because I would not accept them it was made impossible for me to continue to work although the Government could not get anyone else in my place.

**I** WENT to Kenya in December, 1954 to work in Mau Mau Camps because I was concerned at the accounts in English papers of atrocities committed both by the Mau Mau and by certain British people in suppressing them.

I was appointed as a Rehabilitation Officer by the Kenya Government and worked in the Department of Community Development and Rehabilitation under the first and as yet the only African Minister. Shortly afterwards I was made Staff Officer in charge of Rehabilitation of Women and Girls in Mau Mau Detention Camps and Prisons throughout the Colony.

### Round-ups

**F**ROM time to time sweeps of varying sizes were carried out by Police and Troops, especially after the murder of a European or after a gang had stolen food.

I was told by Dr. Gregory, Head of the Save the Children Fund in Nairobi, that during one of the early sweeps, Operation Anvil, troops went into all the African locations in Nairobi, rounded up all the African adults and took them to a Reception Camp.

No one gave a thought to the children and as long as 48 hours after, tiny babies were found in cots who had had no care, attention or food during the whole of that time. I also heard him repeat this at a meeting.

### The Reception Camp

**O**NE of my first duties was to visit a camp of about nine thousand men, women and children, mostly gathered up in sweeps but some deported from other territories simply because they belonged to the Kikuyu, Embu or Meru tribes and therefore *might* be Mau Mau. They were not convicted but detained on suspicion and kept prisoner till they could be sent to Detention Camps where they would be screened to discover if they were Mau Mau and if so to what extent they were implicated.

The officer on duty asked me which "Pens" I wanted to visit first and this word "Pen" set the scene for me. I have seen cattle markets in England, and places where animals are loaded on lorries to take them to slaughter houses, where the treatment was better than that accorded human beings in this camp — humans, moreover, who as yet were innocent, merely being detained on suspicion.

The camp consisted of old tents, and was divided into compounds holding several hundred people each, enclosed with barbed wire. The whole camp was also surrounded by barbed wire and high watch towers like a Prisoner of War Camp. As

Mau Mau is called an Emergency these Africans, held in British territory without trial, had not the rights to which they would have been entitled as Prisoners of War.

I saw them arrive jammed into cages on top of high lorries, the cages were removed and they had to jump over the high sides carrying their bundle of possessions. Some tripped, dropping the bundle which was then kicked from one Askari (armed African guards) to another, the owner in trying to rescue it being prodded back into line. I saw several men who were not moving quickly enough to please the Askaris being given great blows on naked shoulder blades with rifle butts, and when I protested the British Officers and even women officials standing by said, "Oh you don't want to feel sorry for *them*."

During a visit I paid at Christmas an Indian officer reported to me that the night before Askaris had entered the Juvenile Compound and carried out a mass beating up of the inmates including two boys under eight years-of-age. I was horrified to find that these boys aged approximately four and seven had no relatives in the camp, the father being detained elsewhere and the mother's whereabouts unknown. They had been swept up and put in this compound with 330 juveniles, some aged 17, many of whom were real toughs.

There were several such children and I took the matter up with the District Commissioner concerned and asked that they should be released and taken to the place of safety run by the Red Cross and that in future any accompanied child under eight should be sent there direct and not to a camp. He was most reluctant to agree and it was only after much discussion on my part that he agreed to it for children under seven instead of eight as I had asked.

He took me to the compound behind his office where women and children, arrested that day, were waiting to be sent to a camp and said to me, "Look at them, I am not going to have that stuff wandering about Nairobi."

### Screening

**M**AU MAU men and women in Detention Camps and Prisons in Kenya are screened and classified white, grey, or black, according to the depth of involvement in Mau Mau. (These colours have now been superseded by letters.)

The first stage in Rehabilitation is when they confess to the Rehabilitation Officer that they have been in the movement, wish to renounce it, and give him information, not only about their own crimes but about other people's. The confessions are always referred to by the Government as voluntary and emphasis is laid on this fact in the Annual Report of the Commissioner for Community Development and Rehabilitation. This voluntary aspect, however, is not borne out in conversation with the Rehabilitation Officers who do the screening. I was talking to the Commandant of one prison and mentioned that a certain Rehabilitation Officer was being posted to his prison. He replied, "Yes, and he has the reputation of being very rough when screening." Another person referring to the

same man said, "He is a member of Moral Re-Armament, but there's no MRA about him when screening."

I once visited Nairobi Gaol with a Rehabilitation Officer and saw a truck containing about twelve African lunatics, accompanied by armed guards, who were being sent to a mental hospital. They were making an appalling noise, shouting, gesticulating and grimacing. The officer, who was second in command at the gaol said he was glad to get rid of them as they had been a disturbing element in the prison for a whole year.

The Rehabilitation Officer said he was sorry they were going as he had intended putting detainees who would not confess in with them for a few days, "Now I shall have nothing to rely on but light diet and a good thrashing."

We went on to another Detention Camp and we repeated this to the Commandant there who replied, "I had a political prisoner in my charge in 1951 and put him in with the lunatics for ten days. What they did to him in those ten days was nobody's business, and at the end of that time he was not interested in politics or anything else."

### Young Girls in Prison

**THE KAMITI CAMP.** The woman officer in charge of the Women's Prison told me that a number of the female convicts were under 14 years of age and it was illegal for them to be in prison but there was nowhere else to put them. The sentences passed by the courts on women, some of them mere children, are worth noting. (Extracts from official records.)

Age 11. Taking two illegal oaths. 7 years hard labour.

Age 12. Consorting with Mau Mau. Indeterminate sentence.

Age 12. Consorting with armed persons. Indeterminate sentence.

Age 42. Has seven children aged from 15 months to 22 years. Unlawful possession of firearms and ammunition. Indeterminate sentence.

Age 16. Consorting with persons in unlawful possession of firearms and ammunition. Indeterminate sentence.

Age 16. Consorting with armed persons. Indeterminate sentence.

(Eileen Fletcher cites 16 cases in all.)

These indeterminate sentences only come up for review every four years. No rehabilitation work has been done with

any of them as it was against policy to work with the "Black" category.

**KISUMU.** One girl, aged 15, had been sentenced to 12 years imprisonment for taking oaths. She said she did it under pressure and at the screening centre the Chief threatened her with reprisals if she would not have sexual intercourse with him.

A number of the women in this prison had on their prison records: "Good behaviour; no evidence of Mau Mau tendencies!"

One hundred and thirty-seven were transferred from Kisumu to Kamiti. One was dead on arrival. The Commandant said there was no need for an enquiry as these things happen.

**WE** often hear the word "curfew" so familiar in BBC news from Kenya, Malaya and Cyprus, but do we realise what that means? One Community Development Officer told me of one of her villages where the people had been passing food on to the Mau Mau. A 24-hour a day curfew was imposed for a fortnight and the people not allowed out even to the latrines. Small parties under armed guard were allowed out each day to fetch water. Seventy people in this one village died of typhus during this time.

The headmistress of an African girls' school had a letter from a woman screening officer saying that a girl from her school had been arrested and sent to prison for being in Nairobi without a pass. She said "it is not doing her any good to be in prison with Mau Mau women" and urged the headmistress to get the family to pay the fine of £20. The father had been out of work for years so payment was impossible.

On enquiring the Headmistress was told that the girl's offence was that she had gone to Nairobi without a pass to ask her aunt to lend her money to pay her school fees for the coming term!

**THE SETTLERS** are trying to throw off the rule exercised by the Colonial Office and "run their own show." From the above account one can imagine the fate of the luckless Kikuyu if this happens. The defeat of the Mau Mau is largely financed with money from this country (Britain). It is our money that is being spent on these brutal and repressive measures. What are we going to do about it?

## DEFEATING THE "NATIVE" LABOUR ACT

### Unity Will Triumph

The workers, united, are more powerful than Parliament. Parliament produces laws, but the workers produce the wealth. No work, no wealth. That is the flaw in this law which thousands of workers have now clearly grasped. The Government, it is true, has great reserves of repressive powers. But the workers also have vast untapped reserves.

### The I.C. Amendment Act

The African worker is beginning to stride the industrial stage like the giant he is. Already the real leadership of

the trade union movement has passed to him. We have seen what he has done to "his" Act. Now turn to the so-called "registered" trade unions. Where do they stand with "their" Act, the Industrial Conciliation Amendment Act? Who has a good memory? Remember 18 months ago, when the "registered" unions cast out the African workers so that they could have "unity" against this measure?

I have the clearest recollection of Johanna Cornelius saying at a meeting in the Selborne Hall in about 1950: "The Nationalists can make laws, but they cannot make pants." She said it, and the African workers

have PROVED it. But in what a mire of disunity and indecision most of the "registered" unions are floundering today!

Today it is the African worker who says to his Coloured, Indian and European fellow-worker: "Take courage from me. Do not hasten to dance to the tyrant's tune. Much can happen in a year.\* Here is my hand in the cause of freedom and a decent life for ALL workers. Let us march together!"

\* a year—"mixed" registered unions have a year in which to impose apartheid and an All-White Executive upon themselves voluntarily.



# Defeating the 'Native' Labour Act

By MIKE MULLER

**T**HE Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act in its present form has been defeated. The Minister of Labour, Senator de Klerk, must either open the way to some system of collective bargaining for organised African workers, with some degree of legality of strike action, or he must inflict an even more naked slavery upon the African workers. Whatever decision he makes, whether for concession or repression, his defeat is certain and victory for the workers assured.

## The Tide Begins to Turn

The struggle of the African workers against this Act during the past six months has been a glorious event in our trade union history. The tide began to turn when the Randfontein textile workers went on strike for higher wages. Yes, De Klerk got his fines: £1,850. But the workers got their wage increase—and the boss paid £1,690 of the fines which he can get back on the never-never. On top of that he paid a penalty of £2,000 in lost production — because he did not use his chances to settle the dispute amicably.

This strike was followed by a work stoppage at another Reef textile factory because the bosses ignored the agreed machinery of settling disputes. Again the workers won, and another employer is now learning that it pays to settle disputes by peaceful negotiation with his workers.

## Who Gets Punished?

Stoppages of work have been taking place all over the country, each stoppage usually followed by the prosecution of the workers. But each prosecution has had far worse effects than the original stoppage. Failure to work half-an-hour's overtime led to a two-day halt of work while the parties explained it all to the magistrate. That happened in Uitenhage and the verdict was — not guilty! A deputation to the boss *before work* runs a few minutes into working time, and a day is spent in court while a whole factory department stands still. That happened in Roodepoort.

This silly situation, in which the medicine is far worse than the disease, has its funny side. There was a boss, and a Nationalist at that, who offered his "boys" a lift to Court provided

they put in time on his job from 7.30 a.m. to 9.30 a.m., when the Court started. Another boss, flushed with a hard-won argument with the Crown the day before the case, told the accused workers that all was settled: they sign admissions of guilt, he pays the fine: they pay back in instalments of 1/- per week out of bonuses only—no bonuses, no instalments. So far, after four days in court, 182 workers have been acquitted.

## Two Cases in Point

Recently a Sunday newspaper carried the following reports:

"The 191 Natives who appealed on Monday against the verdict and sentence imposed on them for striking illegally at the Hexriver Textile Mills Ltd. factory all reappeared at the Worcester Magistrate's Court this morning—this time as witnesses.

"They have been subpoenaed to testify for the defence in the case against four other Natives and one Native woman charged with inciting a strike.

"When the third witness was half way through his evidence, the magistrate said: 'I have written 30 pages and I have not a word of evidence against the accused. I do not wish to make it difficult, but the proceedings are becoming very lengthy.'

(Sunday Times, 20/5/56)

"A three-hour strike in a Benoni factory last December is still paralysing the factory—even though the dispute behind the strike has long been settled.

"The factory is being brought to a standstill now because the Crown insists on prosecuting the 365 Natives alleged to have taken part in the strike.

"After discharging 182 of the Natives last week, Benoni's magistrate, Mr. J. J. Louw, suggested a fortnight's postponement of the hearing because:

"Not only is the mill in which the accused work being affected, but also the whole factory. The workers, if this case goes on, will also be affected and lose three days' pay in a week.'

"The resumed hearing will now start on May 28, because, said Mr. Louw, the factory, with its chain production system, should not be brought to a standstill and should be given a chance to recover from the loss of production caused through the workers being in court."

(Sunday Express, 20/5/56)

Three years and/or £500 fine: that is the maximum penalty for striking. But take the case of the workers at a Reef mining timber factory. They were fined £5 each. They did not have the money and went to jail. On the next working day the boss was there, with transport laid on, to fetch them out again. In Roodepoort a batch of textile workers were sentenced each to a £10 fine or one month in jail, £7/10/0 or three weeks suspended. The workers did not have the remaining £2/10/0. While they were very cheerfully marching off to jail, policemen were suggesting to the defence attorney that an appeal be noted to get the factory out of trouble. The employer spent a weekend searching the township for experienced workers, even approaching workers previously dismissed by him for alleged stealing. He did not get one. On Monday morning he was at the jail with the fine money. A week later another batch of workers from the same factory appeared before the same magistrate on the same charge. *This time the whole sentence was suspended!*

## Mentz Stirs Strife

According to De Klerk's own figures, there were 22 strikes of African workers in 1953, 33 in 1954 and 72 in 1955, 56 of them in the last six months of the year. Faced with the failure of the Act, Mr. S. D. Mentz, Chairman of the Central "Native" Labour Board, has set out to tour the country to lecture to employers. In Bloemfontein he said that African workers were children. Is there any quicker way to cause trouble than by telling adults that they are children, and treating them as such? In Cape Town he "warned employers against negotiating wage agreements with native trade unions." But surely Mr. Mentz, who has a wide experience of industrial relations, and who has himself assisted "Native trade unions" to negotiate agreements, knows that this is an invitation to industrial unrest? **IT IS THE GOVERNMENT, FOR WHOM MENTZ IS MERELY THE SPOKESMAN, WHICH IS INCITING INDUSTRIAL STRIFE AND STRIKES.**

Contrast with the vain threats of this commercial traveller in strike-breaking the proud slogan coined by the African textile workers: **NEGOTIATION IS BETTER THAN STRIKES!** (Continued on previous page)



# Looking at People . . .

L. Bernstein describes a day with Paul Hogarth

WHENEVER I see artists set up their easels and stools in the open air and begin to sketch, I am always struck by the passers-by who gather. Their eyes dart up and down from canvas to scene and back again; their heads nod sagely if the artist's trees look noticeably like trees, and his cows like cows. There seems to be a self-consciousness that they stand in the presence of a mysterious but important knack before which homage is necessary. But somehow they are always as remote, as untouched by the creative struggles of the artist, as are the crowds who hang over fences at city building sites, watching with fascination the precise, uncanny dexterity of a mechanical excavator.

I have never yet seen these on-lookers respond to the artist's work as though it had meaning for them, or to look beyond the manual skill to the significance of what the artist is trying to say. Not, that is, until I spent a day taxiing Paul Hogarth round Johannesburg, and watching him at work in the midst of crowds. It is impossible not to feel the breath of excitement that enters into a crowd that watches Paul at work. Not that there is anything extraordinary in the man's appearance. Paul Hogarth at the age of thirty-eight is one of Britain's top-ranking graphic artists and illustrators; but you would pass him by unnoticed in the street, unless you noticed the contrast between his almost backveld baggy khaki pants, open-neck shirt and windbreaker and his rather British air of mildness, pinkish complexion and wisp-fine hair.

And yet Paul draws a crowd when he works; and keeps them there, studying, considering, looking at themselves again in the new light his pencil has opened to them and their ways of life. I saw him at work at the back of the Wemmer Beer Hall, sketching the open-air hairdressing being done on soap-boxes ranged along the railway line. In a few moments he was hemmed in by the crowd, struggling constantly to clear a passage through which he could see the scene he was sketching. When he works he seems not to hear the talk that hums about him. Perhaps the language was too strange, that polyglot Johannesburg street-corner talk, compounded of Zulu, Sotho with words of English, Afrikaans and American slang slipped in casually without change of intona-



A Manchester slum.

tion. Outside a beer hall, tongues wag freely. There was no lack of straight and pungent criticism; "His barber is not full enough of wind for such a pompous donkey!" "He has seen the black sheep being sheared, but where is the White man's train-line?" Gradually, even to them who were so familiar with the regular Saturday scene, Paul's pencil began to reveal something they had never seen, or perhaps had long forgotten. The talk began to shift, from the cleverness of the White artist, to the meaning of the scene; the talk began to get more pointed, more bitter. "Only black sheep are sheared by a railway line." "Black-man's hair gets trampled in the dirt; but in the White man's shops they sweep it up to fill pillows." At last the press got too thick. Paul packed up his things to move on. As he did so, a youth, perhaps eighteen, who had been standing there, watching listening all the time, moved off a few yards, and then — as though suddenly reaching the courage to say what had been growing up in him, turned and shouted. "What you come here from England for?" he spat out. "Pictures you take to England. But my people stay here! Like this!" He waved with a sweeping arm at dusty women sitting selling roasted mealies in the gutter, at the queues and the staggering drinkers, at the spivs enticing simple miners to bet on three-card tricks at ten shillings a throw.

I think Paul would have appreciated the remark, but he hadn't understood the language. Perhaps he would have argued with the man, told him something of what he told me afterwards of how pictures can move people to social action. But certainly I think he would have felt that even

that unfinished, unsatisfactory sketch had been worth while. For it had helped to make a young man look with new eyes on the life about him, and had started an idea moving in his mind which will, one day, help to make Johannesburg a better place to live in. This it seems to me, is what Paul aims to do with his talents.

As we moved on from the Beer Hall, he told me how he had planned to do a book about the life and people of Africa, combining his pictures with comment and written observations by Doris Lessing. But Doris had been stopped and turned back at Jan Smuts airport, declared an "undesirable immigrant." Perhaps the book will still appear, but without the written section on South Africa; already in his two days in the country, Paul had been gathering material, sketches made underground of African miners handling pneumatic drills in cramped stopes, and sketches inside the overcrowded, foetid compounds on the surface. But if not a book, then at least an exhibition, at which the ordinary people of Britain could learn something of the lives and the peoples of Africa as seen through the eyes of Paul Hogarth. He told me of an exhibition then touring the towns and villages of Britain, called "Looking at People," at which he, Carel Weight and Sculptor Betty Wray were telling the people of Britain something of the life, the work and the leisure of ordinary people "both sides of the iron curtain" as he put it. Through such exhibitions, people learn not just to look at others, but to look again at themselves, their surroundings and their life, to learn something of importance about themselves, to start thinking about change.



"Politics?" I asked him. "Not Politics," he said. "Art." He talked about the traditions of the great artists, Goya, Daumier and others, who had challenged and exposed injustice where they found it, not with the slogans of stump orators or the programmes of politicians, but with their pencils and their brushes. He spoke of the Chinese artists, who had developed their woodcuts for pasting up in public, rousing the people against Chiang's tyranny even in the days when the written word was censored almost out of existence. Paul's art is his reaction to injustice, his answer to it, his weapon against it, wielded with all the vigour he can muster. I knew something of his meaning, for I had seen some of the powerful and bitter drawings with which he had assailed dictatorship in Greece and Spain, and won allies and protagonists for the indomitable people and their fight for justice. I had seen also, some of the inspiring and challenging drawings he had done of the reconstruction of life and people which he has seen in recent years in China, Poland and the Soviet Union. "I think the truth about justice and injustice must be told," he said. "Especially about your country and your people. In pictures, not just in words."

I watched him tell some of that truth. We came to the Harlem cinema, where they had a special double feature programme — Africans only admitted. "Smugglers Island" and "Sign of the Pagan." It was Saturday afternoon, and there was a tremendous pushing crowd, trying to get in as soon as the earlier crowd came out. Hemmed in by a thousand people, Paul captured every aspect of it—the overcrowded squalor of this momentary escape from reality; the endless patience and the strength of a people,



A Rumanian peasant woman.

armouring them against the cultural warfare of Hollywood; the humour and the pride challenging the whole of the segregationist influences trying to pull them down, degrade them and crush their spirit. I thought it was the best picture he did in this country.

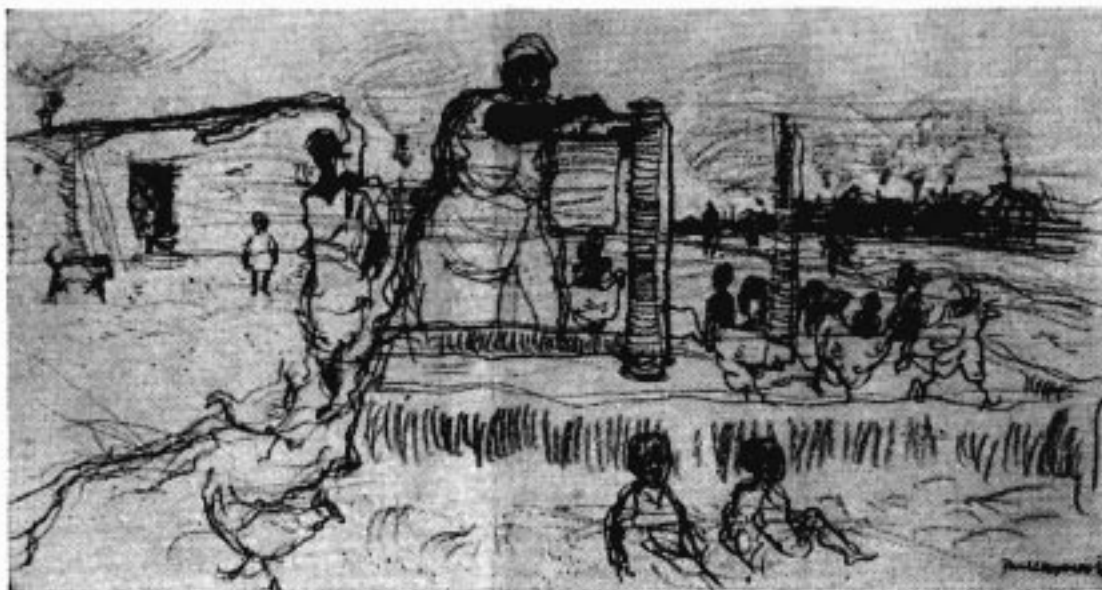
Paul is less articulate with words than with pictures "There is a staggering ignorance amongst the Whites I've met about the way Africans live and think and feel," he said just before he left. I thought of a picture he had done of a mine shift-boss, and I thought how much better his pencil told that story than his tongue. "There are things I've seen here that I've never seen, not even in Greece, not even in Spain." At Mai-Mai he had blundered into a mass pass and poll-tax raid. In Pretoria he had seen Africans with their hands held above their heads, being batoned into a patrol-wagon by White and Black policemen. "But the people!" he said with admiration. "What fortitude and strength. Absolutely no fear.

At Mai-Mai," he said, "they just stood and looked, with dignity and pride and contempt for the police and everything they stand for. The police felt their scorn; they looked foolish, almost conquered, themselves."

"And that's what it has been like everywhere I've been," he said. "The people—the African people—they've got pride, and patience and humour. They've got confidence. That's the thing. They give me a feeling of confidence in the future that I've seldom felt anywhere before." That story too, of the people and their courage, their pride, their struggles for dignity and right is told better in the pictures he has taken back than in the words he left behind. Not the story as a politician sees it. Hogarth has artist's eyes; he reacts to what he sees as an artist. "I tell an artist's story of South Africa, not a politician's," is how he puts it.

Nothing illustrates better how well he tells that story than the picture he has done of a scene I have seen a dozen times. It is a picture of Church Square, Pretoria, seen from behind the statue of Paul Kruger. The grim, sombre, brooding figure of Kruger looms overpoweringly and threateningly above the facade of the Palace of Justice. It is a commonplace scene, but drawn in a new way, that gives it new meaning. Here in the administrative capital of the country, he has caught a glimpse of the grim, authoritarian boer republic which is bearing down and threatening to crush the law and justice into dust. It is not just a trick of perspective which gives such meaning to the work. Hogarth is something more than just another illustrator with a knack. He is an artist with an understanding of ordinary men and women, a fellow's feeling for the lives they lead, the struggles they undertake and the sacrifices they make. His inspiration is drawn from their daily lives; and his pencil is a weapon which he has pressed into service to help them liberate their lives from tyranny and injustice. His drawings speak not just with sympathy for men, but with understanding of them, and of the things that shape their lives, and of the change they long for.

Something of that realisation struck one of the men who gathered round to watch him work at the Beer Hall. He studied Paul at work for a long time. And then he said something I can not forget. "That boss," he said admiringly, tapping his brow significantly, "That boss," he said. "He's got psycho!"



A communal water tap in The Orlando Shelters, Johannesburg.



# Opera in Peking

By CECIL WILLIAMS

THERE is a loud noise offstage as if several people are fighting in the kitchen with no utensil barred. The curtain rises and a gorgeously dressed man, glaring horribly, advances step by step to the footlights. From his handsome headdress stand up two pheasant-feathers. His finger rises, till finally he sticks the ends of the feathers in his mouth and stamps his feet aggressively. Suddenly he gives forth vocally and evidently vindictiveness is all out. After a while he mildly goes off . . . and the opera has begun.

Bewilderment increases as a beautiful girl comes daintily on with minute steps: her costume is exquisite: her make-up exaggerated: her hand movements incredibly graceful. She sings. Her voice is high, nasal. It swoops up an arpeggio and suggests distress. The long sleeves on her gown ripple magically. She goes off . . . the opera is developing.

A young man, looking very like the beautiful girl, comes downstage. He sings to us in a falsetto voice, exactly like the heroine's. Later many men come on twirling pieces of cardboard with a pattern of circles and curves on them. Still later, seventeen young men with pokerfaces and black costumes fling themselves, in the twinkling of an eye, into the air and perform a series of acrobatic turns, which, frankly, are not to be believed. And so the opera proceeds, unexpectedness following unexpectedness: incomprehensible passions flare up: there is a flight across the skies and a final reconciliation—to renewed hostilities in the kitchen.

The audience shows unrestrained approval. I feel bruised and tormented, but within me there is a tenacious determination to see more of this baffling, beautiful, exotic art. So during a five-week stay in China last summer I saw nineteen operas. I became an addict.

Now the most important thing about Chinese opera is that it is an esoteric art. You must study the conventions and symbols, become familiar with the strange music and, preferably, get an idea of the plots. Then you will find yourself sliding into a realm of sheer enchantment.

Chinese opera, like the drama of all lands, had its origins in superstitious rites, religious observances and court and military ceremonies. Already, more than 2,000 years ago, there was a theatrical tradition in China, which called forth a puritan's strictures. By the eighth century an emperor was setting up a drama training college and, so in love was he with one of the court singers, that he conducted the orchestra when she performed.

When the Mongols overran China in the fourteenth century, they banned women from the stage on the grounds that they sapped the vitality and integrity of rulers. (This ban continued till the Sun-Yat-Sen revolution of 1911). Court writers produced plays without end, originals and adaptations from the wealth of China's mediaeval novels, so that the repertoire today is endless. In earlier centuries a single performance might last for hours and hours. Today a company will present only scenes from the very long operas and rarely does a performance last more than three to three and a half hours.

There are many different genres of Chinese opera,

but the most popular and widespread is called Peking Opera. The opera is a fusion of history, moral propaganda, drama, ballet, mime, solo and choral singing, instrumental music and acrobatics. The themes of the classical operas extol the virtues of patriotism, loyalty, military bravery, love, filial piety and so on.

The symbols and conventions are countless. There is no scenery, but with the aid of a few pieces of furniture and elaborate mime, the actors create a setting which none can mistake. An actor lifts his leg over an imaginary threshold and we know he has entered a house; another comes in with a whip and we know he is riding a horse. Another carries four flags on his shoulders—enter the general. A chair is placed on a table and we imagine heaven or a tower or a gate in a city wall. A soldier following a general becomes an army of ten thousand: a man with an oar represents a ferryman and his boat. The cardboard with the twirls on it is a cloud.

In Chinese opera half a man's history is written on his face. Each type of stage-character has a conventionalised make-up, often called a mask. It is not, however, a mask that can easily be put on and taken off. It is an elaborate design painted on to the face with grease paint. The pattern and the colours indicate to the audience who the character is and, what's more, his personality. For example, a face with a preponderance of white paint is a sly, shifty, fellow, while a preponderance of black indicates a brusque, solid, dependable type.

Characters are revealed to the audience, too, by their costumes, which are of unparalleled beauty. A gold costume signifies a member of the emperor's family: a red one a member of the nobility: a green or grey or brown dress indicates social status or profession.

There is a complete encyclopaedia in the hand gestures, in the placing of the feet and in the posture of the body. The long sleeves can be rippled in twenty different ways to express twenty different emotions or

## Answer to a Cypriot

*A Poem by an Englishman*

Are there ten to say for England that they grieve?  
Are there five of Byron's countrymen who mourn?  
Does one man weep that fellow-Englishmen  
Have thrown two patriots in a prison grave?  
Is England heedless? Has she forgotten Greece?  
Does nothing weigh now but the tyrant's lust?  
Is all the passion of that age-old friendship lost  
As youth is slaughtered, as the death-list grows?

★ ★

Dear friends know this: the conscience is not dead  
That sent George Byron to a foreign field;  
In pit and workshop here our hearts are filled  
Brimful with shame and anger at this deed.  
Together we can check and smash the will  
Of those who kill to hold back history's wheel.

P.F.



## CHARLIE CHAPLIN'S NEW FILM

### The Little King Who Loved Peace

**I**N A BRITISH studio cameras are starting to turn on a new Charlie Chaplin film, to be called "A King in New York." It was inevitable after his banishment from the United States that the theme would be exile. Charlie has come full circle from his earliest and fondest caricature of the immigrant.

Shortly after the London premiere of "Limelight", Chaplin said he was working on the idea for a film dealing with an immigrant, a little man who lands in New York and throws officials into confusion because the only language he knows is Sanskrit. Because they cannot understand him, they grow suspicious and finally send him to jail.

Once freed, the immigrant learns quickly, becomes a "success" and is elected president of the United States. The story would provide opportunity for a Chaplin report on the state of the nation. One scene was to take place in the Senate where Senators, in preposterous costume, were to be portrayed by slapstick stars Buster Keaton, Ben Turpin and Chester Conklin.

#### A LITTLE KING

The present script, as summarised by Chaplin and published in a French weekly, concerns a "very little king ruling over a very little country in Europe. His ministers depose him for seeking to use the atomic resources of his country for peaceful purposes. He goes to New York to organise a fund for peaceful development of atomic energy, is charged with "communism"

and thrown out of the country. For his place of exile he chooses Switzerland "because there are so many ex-kings in Switzerland." A secondary story concerns the love affair between the little king and an American public relations expert (to be played by Dawn Addams).

Chaplin said the film was not conceived in any hostile spirit to America but he thought there would be difficulties in distributing it there.

"Lettres Francaises," the French journal, saw Chaplin drawing himself in the script. "The king, who will sometimes carry a cane and wear a bowler hat, is an exile . . . because he is misunderstood. He believed in peace and was treated as a Communist . . ."

"In a general way we identified ourselves with the old Charlie, the outlaw, the tender anarchist; but since "Modern Times," "Monsieur Verdoux," and "Limelight" we have been called upon to identify ourselves with a character, more closely, more particularly defined. A man who finds unbearable and degrading the life imposed by mechanical, industrial civilisation; who proclaims that politicians legalise murder; who shows in the passion of an older man for a young girl one of life's most poignant symbols.

"From what Chaplin has said of the new film . . . he is going to carry this situation to a higher level. His hero can find a personal consolation—in his love affair—but in today's world, today's society, he meets only misunderstanding and exile."

statements. If a man stands on his left leg and points the right one to the side, that means something quite distinct from when he stands on his right leg and points the left one!

Vocal expression, too, is stylised. For instance, the young man sings in falsetto to reveal himself as the youthful hero, in distinction from, shall we say, a military hero who sings in a normal voice. There are a score or more patterns of laughter. Facial expressions are conventionalised and, of course, fit in with the make-up pattern on the face.

It can be appreciated, then, that considerable study is necessary to penetrate the mysteries of Chinese opera. Once the audience is familiar with the symbols and conventions, the words of the arias and dialogue are not of great importance.

The opera orchestra is a small affair of six or seven players, who sit, sometimes in view of the audience, in the prompt corner. The instruments are strange in appearance and stranger in sound. The timebeater knocks two pieces of wood together which, in addition to maintaining the orchestra's tempo, also serves to cue the singers. There are usually one or two Chinese violins, one or two "reed organs," cymbals, drums and triangles. To the occidental ear they certainly produce a curious sound.

A staggering feature of Peking opera is the sword fights. Sometimes there is combat with single swordplay, sometimes with two. The amazing fact is that the whirling, swift thrusting, the advances and retreats which create an impression of alarming genuine fighting, is but the unbelievably skilful display of meticulously set

patterns, which it takes years of practice to acquire. Similarly the bounding acrobatic displays, which challenge credence, are the result of the most rigorous training. It is no cause for surprise to be told that the training course for opera artists is ten years . . . ten years.

Although the opera you can see in China today is in many respects the same as it was a thousand years ago, yet during this century certain innovations have been introduced. After being kept off the stage for several centuries, women got their own back on the men by founding a school of opera in which women played all the parts including those of the warlords and emperors and romantic heroes. This type of opera, known as the Shao-sing opera, developed after the 1911 revolution. Other distinctive features of this genre are the employment of realistic scenery, a tendency towards more naturalistic acting and a more lyrical, gentler type of music.

Since China's liberation in 1949, the repertoire of the companies has been purged of operas which glorified or condoned what are today considered anti-social practices—child marriages, the selling of girls into marriage, bureaucratic swindling or autocratic tyranny. One finds, too, newly composed operas dealing with contemporary themes and employing more realistic stagecraft.

Despite the development of a tradition of straight drama in present-day China, the ancient heritage of Peking opera with its beauty, its glorification of patriotic history, its high moral purpose, its endearing human qualities, will persist into the centuries, not alone for the delight of the Chinese people but for the enchantment of the peoples of the world.



# SHAKA

By  
MOSUPETSI

THIS IS THE THIRD ARTICLE IN  
A SERIES ON PERSONALITIES  
IN AFRICAN HISTORY.

**S**OUTH AFRICA'S history is peculiarly a history of war and strife. But of all the military leaders our turbulent past has thrown up, one stands out above the rest: his name is Shaka, the greatest soldier and military strategist our country has seen. And of all the armies which have waged battle on our soil, there is none to compare with the magnificent Zulu regiments created under his inspired genius.

Not without reason is Shaka known as the Black Napoleon. Out of a rabble of 500 men, he built up a magnificent army of 50,000 soldiers, whose discipline exceeded that of the Roman Legions at their best.

Using his fighting force as an instrument, he created a vast Zulu Empire whose influence encompassed Natal, half of the Transvaal and Free State, and parts of the Eastern Cape and Mozambique. When he acceded to the chieftainship of the tiny Zulu principality, Shaka's domain occupied perhaps 100 square miles; on his death his sway extended over an area 200 times as great.

All this was achieved in the astonishing space of 12 years.

Who was Shaka, and how was he able to build up the most effective army and one of the greatest Nguni nations in the history of our land?

Shaka was eminently a product of his times — the product of conflicting pastoral societies. The tiny Zulu tribe where he was born in 1786, like its neighbours, centred around its cattle; it wanted cattle, and always more cattle; and cattle in their turn needed more land. With numerous tribes jostling the other cheek by jowl, it needed only a single aggressor to spark off a chain reaction of dispossession which would turn one displaced tribe against its weaker neighbours, plunging the whole land into turmoil.

The only antidote against this sort of thing was a system whereby numerous small tribes placed themselves under the protection of a strong tribe.

To such a "confederation" of tribes — headed by Dingiswayo, chief of the Mtetwa—belonged the Zulu. In his lifetime Shaka created an infinitely greater and more integrated "confederation" — the ama Zulu.

**I**N 1810 Shaka succeeded his father as king of the Zulu tribe and immediately set about reorganising the army in an unheard of manner. Intensive drilling was introduced; the men were divided into regiments according to age group; sandals, the customary footwear for Nguni soldiers, were discarded; the revolutionary short steel-bladed stabbing spear, replaced the awkward throwing spear; and body-length shields made of tough oxhide were introduced.

The value of these reforms were quickly evident, in Dingiswayo's campaign against Zwide. To the amazement of all, the Zulus revealed themselves as the most mobile, disciplined and effective force in the confederation. Their bare feet gave them superior speed in charging the enemy whose throwing spear was no defence against the stabbing weapon of the Zulus.

Added to these techniques of fighting, Shaka devised the brilliant crescent battle formation — a "chest" from which curved out the "horns" on either side. Behind the chest waited strong, fleet-footed reinforcements ready

to fill any gap in the crescent when the pincer movement got under way.

With superior weapons, mobility and strategy, the Zulus quickly established themselves as a tribe not to be trifled with; and gradually, other tribes sought protection and security under Shaka's wing. This process received great impetus, on Dingiswayo's death, when all the tribes which had previously looked to him for leadership now joined Shaka as his natural successor.

All these newcomers were effectively absorbed into the Sparta-like social system evolved by Shaka. They were thenceforth regarded as Zulus.

The new Zulu society was a highly disciplined and integrated order: "Submission to authority, obedience to the law, respect for superiors, order and self-restraint, fearless and self-sacrifice, constant work and civic duty — in a word all the noblest disciplines of life were the very foundation stones upon which he built his nation. So rigorously enforced was the life-long practice of all these excellencies, that he left them all a spontaneous habit, a second nature among his people," writes Bryant.

Even Fynn, one of the British adventurers who visited Bulawayo (Shaka's capital) was impressed: "We were struck with astonishment at the order and discipline maintained in the country through which we travelled."

In talks with other members of the British party, Shaka emphasised the high degree of orderly government in Zululand, and the law-abiding and moral behaviour of its people. In his kingdom, said Shaka rather pointedly, anyone could leave his property anywhere without fear of its being stolen, nor need any man fear that his wife or daughter would be dishonoured.

Fynn records further: "He expressed, however, his aversion to our mode of punishing some crimes by imprisonment, which he thought must be the most horrid pain that man could endure. If he were guilty, why not punish the deed with death? If suspicion only attached to an individual, let him go free: his arrest would be sufficient warning for the future."

This last comment of Shaka's throws some light on the vexed question of his alleged brutal system of punishment.

It has been said that while Shaka was a strong man, he was not a good man. This criticism arises, presumably, out of Shaka's frequent recourse to force — sometimes harshly administered — to preserve order in his empire and to maintain social cohesion. Many of his measures smacked of the mailed fist, but when one examines the methods of Napoleon, with whom he is often compared, Shaka is certainly not the grotesque butcher that some of our historians make out. And compared with the brutalities perpetrated by the colonial powers in Asia and Africa today, Shaka appears to be something of an amateur.

A further aid to perspective is that Shaka's penal system (no less than its modern counterpart) was a reflection of the codes prevailing at the time. Apart from the fact that his system of punishment was largely sanctioned by tribal standards, it should be noted that a number of the more fantastic atrocities attributed to Shaka have been disproved by competent authorities.

(Continued on page 14)



## books

## How is the Empire?

JOHN HATCH was the British Labour Party's special envoy in a seven-week tour of ten African countries and in "New from Africa" (published this year) he tells with naive pride of a speech he made to 15,000 in Dar-es-Salaam. "I told them . . . how the British labour movement had grown out of the poverty and struggles of the British working class . . . I told them of the feelings of the British labour movement . . . about the conditions and aspirations of the peoples in the colonies. *I assured them that we recognise the great debt which British people owe to colonial subjects who have contributed so much to our standard of life . . .* (my startled italics!). King George whose last death-bed murmur is rumoured to have been: "How is the Empire?" could not have shown more concern for and gratitude to his colonial subjects.

These 123 very topical pages, with footnotes to some chapters that bring them ever more breathlessly up to date, are offered as a primer on the colonies for Labour party members who are reminded more than once that "African eyes are turned inexor-

ably on Britain and particularly the British labour movement . . . We hold in our hands the lives of 60 million people . . . It is nothing less than British honour which lies at stake." (p. 18.)

Neither Honour nor Labour principles counted for much when the British Labour Party steered colonial policy; and the truth is that if there is any distinction between Tory and Labour goals for the colonies it has been difficult enough to discern. Hatch's longest chapter "When Black Chief Marries White Girl" deals with the Bamangwato crisis and the unanimous demand from all (including Tshekedi, says Hatch) for the return of Seretse. Yet nowhere is it mentioned that it was the Labour Party government which tricked Seretse into exile in what Churchill termed that "disreputable transaction."

The chapter on Kenya could almost have been written by any of the government information officers Hatch met.

Hatch's best chapter deals with South Africa and he offers our Labour Party sound advice to "look to the future and play its part with the Non-

European people in a long-term fight for genuine democracy."

But it is genuine democracy itself which is absent from all Hatch's solutions for the rest of Africa. He finds indirect rule outdated, so the Protectorates should be transferred to the Colonial Office, but of independence or self-government, never a word. For other African countries the solution is "multi-racialism" (vague enough to mean anything), but never equal rights. But it is this book's final formula which takes the prize. Writing of the Gold Coast, Hatch looks to these people to prove themselves worthy leaders of "colonial democracy". This is indeed a new animal for Africa! The effort to hold on to the colonies without appearing to do so has inevitably produced new methods and a new vocabulary but imperialism remains imperialism even when steered by Labour, and even when colonial exploitation is acknowledged and receipted with touching gratitude.

R.F.

"NEW FROM AFRICA," by John Hatch. Published by Dennis Dobson. Price 12/6.

## Law and Disorder

IT is not difficult to understand why the Kenya Government should go to great lengths—legal, semi-legal and plain illegal—to deport Peter Evans. For this mild-sounding man has a powerful knack of firing deadly pointed barbs with an air of great innocence. His book "Law and Disorder" abounds with them, starting on the dust-jacket which innocently subtitles his book "Scenes of Life in Kenya." Don't let it mislead.

For this is something more than it sounds. Peter Evans dissects the body social of Kenya with the fine judicial perception and the dry wit which is the best tradition of the British barristers-at-law. The time chosen is the period of the rise of the Mau-Mau. Evans, who had lived in Kenya twenty years before, returned for a visit at the right time. Kenyatta and others were charged and on trial.

Evans sat in on the case, summing up the prosecution, the magistrate and the accused in the cold light of many years of legal experience at the British Bar. He describes it more intelligibly and interestingly than did Montagu Slater (The Trial of Jomo Kenyatta) though in less detail; and he does what Slater failed to do. He passes personal judgement on the character of the case, and on the verdict given.

From spectator, Evans turns to investigator in his own right. Disturbed by repeated tales of outright brutality and murder done by the so-called "security forces" — especially those drawn from the ranks of the settlers themselves — Evans decided to check. His investigation produced evidence that African prisoners taken for "questioning" had been cold-bloodedly done to death. He laid the evidence carefully before the police. For

his trouble he was declared a "prohibited immigrant" and arrested for deportation.

But Evans is not one to let go easily. He fought the deportation order from inside a Kenya gaol, making of himself a very painful thorn in the flesh of the Kenya Government. Force finally triumphed over law. But Evans gets the last word in his book, in which he flays the Kenya and the British Governments for their "Law and Disorder." His allegations are those of an eyewitness, and one with an unusually keen eye and an extremely sharp tongue. Typical of Evans feelings and judgement on "Life in Kenya" is the dedication of his book to the former Colonial Secretary, Oliver Lyttleton. Underneath the dedication, there is solemnly quoted Mark Twain's epigram on Rhodes: "I admire him, I frankly confess it; and when his time comes I shall keep a piece of the rope for a keepsake."

L.B.

"Law and Disorder," by Peter Evans. Published by Secker & Warburg. Price 18/-.



# William Morris

TO MOST OF US the name of William Morris evokes a mental picture of the Victorian artist and poet in revolt against the ugliness of the commercial age; the creative genius who came out of the studio into the workshop and designed and made beautiful things — furniture, wall-papers, typefaces — for everyday use. Now Morris was all of these, but over and above that he was a great pioneer of the Socialist movement in Britain. A deliberate attempt has been made to cover up this side of Morris's life, and to present it in a false light. The leaders of the British Labour Party, for example, sometimes claim to be followers of a special brand of "British" socialism, quite different from the explosive "continental" brand of socialism which follows Karl Marx. And they not infrequently accompany these claims with praise of Morris, who is supposed to have been an originator of this sort of socialism. Recently an American professor has

written a whole book to show that Morris was not really a socialist at all, but a sort of Roosevelt New-dealer.

Such distortions of the truth about William Morris have been dealt a death-blow by the recent publication of E. P. Thompson's brilliant study "William Morris—Romantic to Revolutionary," published by Lawrence and Wishart. Here for the first time we may read the full story of Morris's contribution to the British labour movement. And Mr. Thompson proves beyond a shadow of doubt that Morris was no dilettante sympathiser on the fringes of the movement, but a full and active participant and leader; a founder of the Socialist League and for many years editor of its paper, "The Commonweal"; a man whose entire leisure was occupied with the endless round of party meetings and public lectures; a familiar figure on the open-air platform in London and in tours which took him the length and breadth of Britain.

Mr. Thompson shows too that Morris was not a special brand of "British socialist" but that he stood firmly within the Marxist tradition from which the present generation of Labour leaders has strayed. Yet William Morris, by his very nature, was the implacable enemy of any sort of doctrinaire dogmatism. Everything he touched was filled with the original stamp of his own leonine personality; his very mistakes (and as Mr. Thompson shows they were not a few) bore the stamp of his noble generosity and his revolutionary ardour.

This is a fine book. I advise you to get hold of it and read it. And then read (or re-read) Morris's "News from Nowhere," Morris's fine story of the socialist Britain of the future, and still, in my opinion, the grandest piece of imaginative writing about socialism ever produced.

"WILLIAM MORRIS—ROMANTIC TO REVOLUTIONARY," by E. P. Thompson, published by Lawrence and Wishart. Price 57/6.

ALAN DOYLE

## SHAKA (Continued from page 12)

"Shaka was cruel at times," says Ritter. "What great soldier is not? Titus, most 'humane' of Roman conquerors, crucified 1,000 Jews a day at the siege of Jerusalem. Shaka burnt sixteen women alive. Crassus, after defeating Spartacus, crucified 6,000 of the revolted slaves. When Tilly sacked Magdeburg in 1631, the women of the town were raped. Shaka's troops would have been put to death for this crime. Before judging the Zulus we must recall the behaviour of all the belligerents in the last war."

IN several notable respects Shaka had, in his context, progressive ideas. He strove continuously to curb the power of the witch doctors and to destroy his people's confidence in their occult craft. Once he exposed the smelling out ceremony as a fraud by secretly sprinkling blood outside his kraal and then calling on the witch doctors to divine the culprits. After a protracted witchhunt in the course of which numerous respected citizens had been singled out for execution, Shaka revealed that he himself was responsible, exposing the witch doctors to the ridicule and hatred of the tribe. Although he may not have laid too much store by the witch doctors, Shaka on the other hand observed many of the superstitious customs of his nation, and when it suited him used witchcraft to scare his enemies.

There was no superstition in his attitude to the Europeans whom he met. Shaka grasped immediately that they belonged to a civilisation whose arts the Zulu nation could profitably acquire. He conferred on the early European traders in Natal the status of sub-chief, and did all possible to make them comfortable.

Shaka even had a ship constructed to take his emissaries to his "brother" King George with instructions to conclude a pact of friendship; but, unhappily, they got no further than Port Elizabeth, where local officialdom

forced them to return. At the same time he formed the idea of sending two of his choice regiments overseas to learn reading, writing and the arts and crafts practised by the subjects of his brother king. On their return these soldiers would act as a nucleus for educating the whole nation.

Shaka was greatly disgusted when the emissaries returned with coloured cloth, beads and geegaws, and dismissed these trifles as contemptible rubbish; what he wanted from the British was knowledge, not worthless ornaments.

Up to the time of his mother's death Shaka was "without doubt the most popular and respected king and national hero of the Zulus" (Ritter). His brilliant victories had secured peace and wealth for his people; the strict enforcement of all laws meant security for law-abiding citizens; his dauntless and resourceful courage had won him the undying devotion of his army.

But now a curious change came over Shaka's personality. People who failed to show appropriate grief at his bereavement were summarily executed; he became morose and irritable and vindictive.

Soon murmurings started in the tribal councils, and a group of ambitious men decided to make a bid for power. At 42 years of age Shaka died at the hands of Dingane, his half brother.

The nation and military machine which Shaka constructed survived many years after his death. He died before the affairs of Zululand were complicated by the coming of the Boers and later the British. When the inevitable showdown came it took the British six full months of incessant and bloody fighting to subdue the Zulu nation. The fact that it required more than 20,000 redcoats armed with the latest artillery to defeat the Zulu impis 35 years after Shaka's death is striking testimony to the enduring quality of his achievements.



# LETTERS from READERS *This South Africa!*

Sir,

Owing to Patrick Duncan's singularly ill-conceived intervention, the correspondence about the Liberal Party has strayed rather far from its starting point.

That was Peter Meyer's review of the handbook of Liberal Party policies, published in last November's "Fighting Talk." I remember that Mr. Meyer's tone struck me then as rather petulant and occasionally petty. But I must now admit that the Liberal Party, by its acts and omissions, has done its best to justify Mr. Meyer's strictures.

Mr. Meyer wrote that the tepid language of much of the handbook showed the Liberal Party as "aloof" from the Non-White masses. A month or two later Mr. L. Bernstein put his finger on the contrast between "active co-operation" promised by the Liberal Party to other (White) parties on certain issues and the "sincere desire to co-operate with the A.N.C. and S.A.I.C." which the party also expressed.

The Liberal Party could have replied that, theoretically at least, this slight difference of emphasis was not significant. And if its deeds supported the argument, the party might well have been given the benefit of the doubt.

But what is its record? Its total abstention from the Congress of the People, either as participant or observer; its studied silence (broken only by Mr. Ngubane's disastrous innuendos) about the Freedom Charter, its toynading with Dr. Friedman on the basis of a matric franchise; its active encouragement, at least in the Cape, of Bantu School Boards and Committees; its failure to lodge even one protest against the voluntary extension by the Port Elizabeth City Council of the

ban on African meetings to the entire Port Elizabeth magisterial district—this in the heart of a constituency whose Africans are supposedly represented in Assembly, Senate and Provincial Council by members of the Liberal Party.

In face of these facts and much else done and not done, I do not see how Liberals can answer Messrs. Meyer and Bernstein. Against these facts, the party can only plead words, more words—better words than the U.P. maybe, but still only words. And we are long past the time for mere words.

About Pat Duncan's intervention in the controversy, least said the better. Swart's use of his speech and article to excuse further restrictive legislation should surely teach Pat and other Liberals that they can only give comfort to the Nats. by witch-hunting on the left. "Socialist" and Mr. Bernstein again, in your May issue, said all that need be said about the substance of Duncan's article.

The sooner that Liberals stop looking over their shoulders for "Communists" and realise that it is now, as far as South Africa is concerned, only a dirty word used by Swart's friends and fellow-thinkers to describe opponents of the colour bar (among whom Liberals should wish to be counted), the sooner they may be ready to get down to a real job of work.

Yours faithfully,

C. W. M. GELL.

Port Elizabeth.

Sir,

Although I am employed by the Native Affairs Department I wish to make a few comments on an article by Patrick Duncan "A Plea for Neutrality" in your April issue of "Fighting Talk."

Firstly, Mr. Duncan says that the Congress of Democrats has close links with the African National Congress and he goes on to ask if C.O.D. were to recruit African members how it would reconcile this with these links. Apparently Mr. Duncan is worried by party entities, i.e., the A.N.C. is purely African and the C.O.D. European. But the Congress of the People was held in Kliptown last year and all four Congresses pledged to endorse the Freedom Charter.

What pinches Mr. Duncan is that this Freedom Charter might not have come from Kliptown but from the "Report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of South Africa, in June 1950."

## BIRTH CONTROL

Prof. A. C. Cilliers, known as South Africa's most prolific pamphleteer, and one of the most brilliant physicists, told me that every Native who has more than three children should be jailed.

"We can have 10 Tomlinson Reports and it will not help us a bit if the alarming population increase of the Bantu is not halted."

(The Star, 19/5/56.)

Sent in by T. M.—5/- Prize

## GUEST CHAMP

Stewart MONAGENG, the Welkom Native messenger boy who ran the three miles in 13 min. 54.7 sec. should be given the chance to compete at the Olympic Games in Melbourne at the end of the year (writes James Hawthorn).

That is the opinion of Wally Hayward, former Springbok long-distance stayer, who finished 10th in the 1952 Helsinki Games marathon.

The "Colour Bar" prevents this. But the Hayward suggestion is that the bare-footed star should be sent to Nigeria—and given the chance to get into their Games team.

(Rand Daily Mail, 23/5/56.)

Sent in by L.B.

In the Liberal Party itself there are many Africans members. Is it because these Africans are controlled by White Liberals? Only Mr. Duncan knows the answer.

If the Liberal Party adopts a resolution on any issue which may be vital enough to need the co-operation from the Congress, and the latter agrees (since after all they are fighting a cause in common), that would mean, according to Mr. Duncan that the Liberals would be controlling the Congress. Baby talk!

Mr. Duncan then says that this was not the purpose for which the A.N.C. was formed and he asks how a political body can change its fundamental character so radically.

As I see it, the Nats and the U.P. are not fulfilling what they originally stood for. The Nats. have shown that to remain in power their policy must be a reign of terror with police intimidation, shootings and killings. Is that the constitution of the Nationalist Party? Mr. Duncan will tell us the answer.

We have to live and lead according to the times. A policy of neutrality is as good as isolationism. We have to align ourselves with Russia, China and other free nations of the world, the significance of which was illustrated by the Bandung conference in Indonesia last year.

"READER"

The correspondence on this topic is now closed.

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