

FIGHTING TALK

ORGAN OF THE SPRINGBOK LEGION

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THE WAY FORWARD

POPULAR allegory has it that Sam Goldwyn was the author of the classic phrase of opportunism:

"Those are my principles; but if you don't like them I've got others."

Now that the election results are out, now that no one can any longer claim that criticism must be hushed for fear of endangering the election outcome, it must be said that this aphorism should be writ large across the history of the United Party's decline and fall.

The United Party has had its principles, and through those principles it has managed to build up a following in the country amongst the opponents of everything for which the Nats. stand. But unfortunately when the party pundits decided that the voters wouldn't like those principles — well they had others.

It was a slippery slope on which they embarked. Once the abandonment of principle had been justified on a single issue because "it would help to win the next election," the party began to slide headlong to defeat. Votecatching became not the end result of a policy of principled opposition to the Nationalists, but an end in itself, justifying every unprincipled action, every betrayal, every reaction. The election results dealt out a heavy and resounding lesson in the fruits of opportunism.

Those who pinned their faith and hope on a United Party victory are disillusioned; some are defeated and without heart for future struggle; some are wondering what went wrong with the careful, calculated policies of the past; and many are trying to draw from the failures of the past lessons for successful action in the future. It is time that lessons be learnt.

The elections have proved that defeating the Nationalists is not only a matter of organisation, of canvassers, of poster drives, of cars and printed matter. For in this election, the United Party organisation was better than ever before, due to the single-mindedness of the Torch Commando effort. Yet organisation failed to win victory. Somewhere policy was lacking.

The elections have proved that the Nationalists cannot be beaten by attempts to outdo them in reaction, to outbid them in prejudice. For never before have the Nationalists faced an opposition which had gone so far to woo the most backward plattlander as did the United Party in its support for the Martial Law Act, the Criminal Law Amendment Act, and in its proposal for hanging the upholders of dangerous "Communist" ideas. All that was achieved was the bolstering of reactionary policies and outlooks amongst the voters, and the entrenching of popular conviction that the Nationalists are best fitted to carry out such policies.

The election has proved that the refusal to recognise

the Non-European democratic movement as an ally and a partner in the struggle for democracy, dooms that struggle amongst the Europeans to defeat. No expense was spared by the European opposition to condemn, vilify and alienate the Non-European opposition to fascism, to leave the issue one between white men, with both sides hostile to those deprived of the right to take part.

It was a classic essay in opportunism this; a classic, copybook attempt to subordinate principles to what appeared expedient and popular and to determine policy by popular prejudice. And in classic manner, it failed, inevitably, as we have repeatedly warned in these columns that it would.

Could anything have succeeded against the rising tide of popular reaction? Only a seer or a clairvoyant can say what would have been if history had taken a different turn.

But one thing is certain. Had the United Party led an opposition based on the unswerving democratic principles, on no appeasement of Nationalist reaction, on the widest possible co-operation between all sections and all colours for the defeat of fascism, we would not be where we are today. The election might still have been lost. But South Africa would have been the richer by the existence of a forceful, united movement of the people, ready still to go forward in the battle for progress, in the fight to defeat the new and more choking Nationalist tyrannies that are to come.

Instead we have nothing — neither unity nor organisation; neither confidence nor perspective for the future. On all sides is starting the process of disintegration of the democratic movement, the splits, breakaway and retirements from the battle which are the heritage of the opportunism of the past.

The rot can be stopped. But only on a new basis. Only by men of principle who put their democratic convictions above temporary expediency. Only by a firm undeviating course of principled opposition to every measure of Nationalist reaction against the people black or white. Only by a sincere, uncompromising determination to ally the two main streams of European and Non-European democratic movements together in a fight for the future wellbeing and liberty of all.

It is to this future that the Springbok Legion dedicates itself. It is for this future that we will work. History has vindicated the essential correctness of the policies we have advocated in the past, of the path we have taken despite all attacks and criticisms levelled against us. We have earned our right to speak for South African democrats.

We speak to you now. We call on you to join us in our organisation and in our work to rally South Africans of all races once again in the struggle for democracy, in the going forward together to the defeat of the Nationalists.

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THE CRIPPLING DOLLAR

ONE does not need to peer deeply into Western Europe's economy to see that it is resting more precariously than ever before on the shaky foundations of American dollars.

And one does not need any expert knowledge to perceive that the whole system of subsidising Western Europe with dollars cannot last indefinitely. This system is throwing up a host of contradictions and antagonisms that become more acute every year, until even the submissive puppet governments are compelled, by the sheer force of popular opinion, to register some kind of protest with the American overlords.

American domination of Western Europe has led to apathy and stagnation in various aspects of life; there is widespread listlessness and defeatism; but at the same time there is a strong and growing body of opinion that is demanding the traditional rights of national independence and self-determination. John Foster Dulles may have had some success in his recent "round Europe" trip, wielding the big stick, but it should not be forgotten that there has also been a vigorous 'Sack Ridgway' campaign".

STRONG RESISTANCE

The American dictators have had considerable success in making the governments of Western Europe obey their commands, but they have not stifled the free expression of the will of the people. Often they have encountered strong resistance to their policies, and on other occasions they have been forced to retreat or temporarily postpone their plans.

One of the most encouraging signs in Europe today is the resistance that the German people are making to American plans to rearm them. It is clear to every German that America expects him to be a front-line troop again in any possible third World War. But many Germans

are determined that this will not happen.

The opposition to the contractual agreements — the agreements whereby Germany was to be rearmed, in spite of American protests to the contrary over the past few years — was so strong that it forced a postponement of the war plans. The German Chancellor, Adenauer, was besieged with protests from all parts of the country, and the debate on the agreements in the German Parliament echoed throughout the country. In this instance, at least, the German people scored a distinct — if temporary — victory. It was only the subsequent arrival of "Big Stick" Dulles that pushed the war plans further ahead.

Germany is not the only example of the growing resistance to American intervention in Europe's affairs. Examples could be quoted from France, Italy, and other countries. The whole significance of this mounting opposition is that the existing structure in Europe — the creation of a false economy on the basis of dollars — cannot last. It is coming to an end, unless the Americans devise something new to take its place — and this, of course, is where the danger lies.

There are signs of apparent prosperity in parts of Western Europe. Some cities have been turned into attractive "shop-windows" that are meant to be a monument to the efficacy of dollar aid. But behind these shop-windows, there is poverty and unemployment. In many big cities, the old gang, the Hitler financiers and collaborators, are back again, smoking big cigars and driving glittering limousines. They are far from being in disgrace. Once again, they are the kingpins.

In Britain — in spite of Mr. Butler's slight tax reduction — there is widespread hardship, and unemployment is growing. Many industrialists and financiers view this growing unemployment with a favourable eye. They see in it the beginning of a weakening of the powerful trade unions. They are awaiting the



Leo Lovell, who has been a member of our National Executive Committee for several years, has again been elected as M.P. for Benoni. Leo has won wide-spread respect for his fearless and intelligent speeches in the House of Assembly.

blessed days of an "unemployment pool" of a million of men Britons so that wages can be brought down to "sensible proportions".

Everywhere in Western Europe, where the American dollar has penetrated, the story is the same: A crippled economy tottering on the false basis of foreign aid. And everywhere there is the same story of unemployment and poverty. But the peoples of these countries are not accepting their misfortunes submissively. They are resisting the increased burdens on their economy and, through their trade unions, they have met with considerable success in securing demands for improved conditions. It is clear to everyone who visits these countries that the workers need all the strength they can muster at present, because the testing time is at hand.

BRITISH LEGION CONFERENCE.

"This Conference, pledged to perpetuate the memory of the comrades in arms who died in two world wars, views with grave concern new signs of German territorial claims, and therefore calls upon the National Executive Council to approach the Government, to urge them to ensure that never again shall German and Japanese arms menace the principles of justice and freedom for which our Nation has sacrificed its sons."

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

"It is for us the living to be dedicated to the unfinished work which they who fought have thus far so nobly advanced. It is for us to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that from these honoured dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion — that we here highly resolve that these dead shall have a new birth of freedom — and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." (Gettysburg).

THE RUDE COLONIALS

By *ELWOOD C. CHOLMONDELEY*

"Lord Salisbury, a member of the cabinet, said here yesterday that Parliamentary democracy in its fullest sense was totally outside the comprehension of the broad masses of the colonial people." (SAPA-Reuter dispatch from London: 25.1.53).

IT must be something in this strong colonial sun that accounts for the crude and coarse sensibilities of a man like Klasie Armstrong. Even when he had put horse-stealing well behind him and become a typical representative of the people for the constituency of Stormkloof, there was something in him that immediately stamped him as a primitive bounder who had attended neither Eton nor Harrow. Parliamentary democracy, in its fullest sense, was outside his comprehension.

It is a hard thing to say of a man; but there it was. It showed itself in his first week as candidate the first time he stood for election. Breaking through the time-honoured tradition of the game, he referred to Colonel Weatherby Willington, the SAP candidate, as "that reactionary rogue and stuffed dummy who is standing against me." We had it out with him afterwards in the hotel pub, trying to make him see Parliamentary tradition in all its glory. But the fellow was stubborn as an ox. "You can do what you like," he said truculently. "But I bloody well won't call any Colonel of Hussars who shot the 1926 strikers 'My honourable friend' or 'my gallant opponent'." We should have seen then where all this Labour agitation was leading; but instead we passed it off as a dose of bad temper induced by too much melktert.

But we were wrong as time showed. He hadn't been elected for more than a week when the next straw in the wind came up. The government only had a majority of four, and the Transvaal-Western Province Currie Cup final was being played at Newlands. Klasie's whip came along to the House library where we were all sweating it out over coffee on the morning of the match, and told Klasie he had been paired off with Nico Badenhorst for the afternoon. Klasie almost bust a blood-vessel. "Rugby is it?" he shouted drawing himself up to his full six feet six. "To hell with it", he shouted. "I've followed Rangers at the soccer for thirty years, and I'm not changing now for you or Nico or anyone else see?" We tried to explain to him that he didn't have to go and see the game. All he had to do was stay away from the House for the afternoon. That seemed to make him even more

angry. It seemed he was all set to move a vote of no confidence in the Government when their supporters were away watching the game at Newlands. We argued with him through the whole morning without effect. Everytime we said "Dammit man; play the game," he said "Rugby, is it? To hell with it I say!"

It was this second shattering revelation that the man had none of the finer feelings of sportmanship and fairplay needed in a democracy that really showed us what we were up against in bringing democracy to the colonies. Tempers ran high in the House that afternoon, as we all sat there glumly with our minds on Newlands, and hatred in our hearts for Klasie who had kept us away from the game.

From here on, things went from bad to worse. Much of the hard feelings between those from "home" and the locals which runs so strong today, can be traced back to the actions of Klasie. One of his most outrageous actions was the time when he voted against an address of loyalty to the Crown just before the last Royal visit. For a week every last man of us, from all parties, tried to explain to him that the opposition is just as loyal as the government. He would have none of it. "If they're for it" he said in his rough way, "Then I'm against it. Damned if I'll be loyal to anything they support." We failed to shake him, which just went to prove to many of our better cultured people that Parliamentary institutions were not suited to the colonies.

The trouble was that he wasn't alone, otherwise we might have shrugged it off, and told ourselves he was a freak. But at every election since then he has romped home, and every time his majority is bigger than the last. There could be no disregarding the fact that his rudeness found an answering echo in the rudeness of the voters.

The voters even seemed to spur him on. He went from outrage to outrage, till all decent people began to ask whether Parliamentary institutions in a colony could possibly be justified. We never forgave him for leaving his own constituency, and standing against the Speaker in one election. We told him, somewhat

hopelessly, that it was a long established gentleman's agreement that the Speaker is returned unopposed. We tried to explain that forcing the Speaker into a party contest might disturb his impartiality in the House. "If that so-and-so's impartial" Klasie retorted, "then I'm a Chinaman." We had reached the stage where we wished he were — in China.

His election success seemed to go to his head. He became more and more truculent. He refused to accept an all-party agreement to limit speeches to ten minutes, and so kept the 1938 session going for three weeks longer than we had arranged. We all lost heavily in our businesses that year as a result, and our salaries didn't make it any better either. He voted against increasing M.P.'s salaries the next year — that is something he'll never be forgiven for; said that until we had managed to keep down other peoples' cost of living, or raise their wages, we should be more than satisfied with what we had. We tried to explain to him that no Board of Directors thought first of its employees and then of itself, but he remained unimpressed.

And then to crown it all, in two successive sessions he went and opposed the Suppression of Communism Act and the Martial Law Bill. We did our best to dissuade him, rather acidly this time. We thought we might find a chink in his rhinoceros hide. We told him that the poor would always be with us, and had to be kept in their places and saved from radical agitators. We told him the importance of not letting the side down, and about the white man's burden. We told him of the gulf that divides gentlemen from dagoes and reds, and of the importance of playing cricket and not stabbing the police in the back. All for nothing. He just said "Bull!" and went ahead as if nothing had happened.

But the discouraging thing was that he got support. His majority at the last elections was higher than ever. Fair sickness one to think of him and his crude colonial supporters, undermining the whole concept of western democracy as we know it. Goes to show there's no gratitude for all the sacrifices we have made to bring Parliamentary democracy in its fullest sense to the broad masses of the colonies.

CECIL WILLIAMS PRODUCES

"LILIAM"

LEON GLUCKMAN is to play the title role in the Regent Players' production of Ferenc Molnar's "Liliom", to be staged at the Library Theatre in Johannesburg from May 13th to May 20th. I believe this will prove to be a memorable event in local theatre history, for the Regent Players have put together a first-rate play, cast, producer and set-designer.

"Liliom" is a play as familiar to every Continental theatre-goer as "Hamlet" and "The Cherry Orchard". After its first performance in Budapest in 1909 "Liliom" wandered around the theatres of Europe's capitals in one translation after another. Oddly enough, it was far from achieving a *succès fou*. Despite that, year after year saw some new ardent actor clamouring for a chance to play the leading role in this unusual play.

HISTORY

In 1921 "Liliom" was produced in America by the Theatre Guild with Eva La Gallienne as Julie and Joseph Schildkraut as "Liliom". Schildkraut owned the only copy of the play in America and that was in German. So wildly enthusiastic was he in his reading of all the parts that he got the backing of the famous stage-designer, Lee Simonson, and the Theatre Guild undertook the step into the unknown. The production was a totally unexpected success, running for 311 performances — an event, incidentally, which helped to put the Theatre Guild on its feet and ensure its permanence.

The success of "Liliom" in America redoubled interest in the play in Europe and actor after actor essayed the coveted role. Hans Albers, one of Berlin's most celebrated actors, played Liliom in 1926 and achieved the biggest triumph of his career, so much so that he played the part countless times. To see Albers as Liliom became almost a cult!

"ROMANTIC CYNIC"

"Liliom" is the strange tale of two poor, unsophisticated people who fall in love. So uneducated are they that they are inarticulate when it comes to expressing their warm, deep feelings of love. Unemployed, Liliom falls an easy victim to a plausible rogue's plans for a robbery. What happens thereafter is best not told, except to say that rarely has a playwright contrived so ironic a twist before the final curtain.

The play is rich in humorous episodes and humorous characters and there are scenes of quite unusual emotional tenderness. Molnar has been decried as

a 'romantic cynic in a passion-ridden world'. "Liliom" bears witness to this label, for in the play you find the lightest romantic touch coupled with deft, delicate handling of social irony.

STAGE DESIGN

One of the striking features of this production is the settings designed by Ronnie Philip, who in recent years has emerged as an outstanding decor artist. Philip is tired of the old convention of slapping paint on canvas. Believing that the sets must not merely reflect but positively help to create the spirit of the play, he is experimenting with a new technique for "Liliom". His drop-cloths and sky-cloths are of calico and the colours are dyed into the fabric. This permits the innovation of lighting from behind the set as well as from the front, producing quite a 3-D effect!

Philip is an experimenter, too, with materials. When I reveal the fact that oak mudguards and miner's charging sticks are extensively employed in his construction, you will look forward to



Leon Gluckman.

seeing something that is different.

CAST

Leon Gluckman, Molly Seftel, Noreen Stirling, Arthur Linscott, Frances Hossey, Maureen Chananie, Michael Tonkin and little Belle McCullum are among the first rate cast for this play. The Regent Players have as their producer Cecil Williams, whose productions in the past few years have reached a very high standard.

Legionnaires, who enjoy a 'good show', will certainly enjoy this continental classic, "Liliom".

THE CRUEL SEA

Reviewed by J.P.

SINCE we did once carry in "Fighting Talk" a book review of Nicholas Monsarrat's book, it is, I suppose, only just that we should review the film of the same name. I am afraid that I cannot hail the film with even a tenth of the same enthusiasm. It is a poor film, struggling frantically between a war story and a semi-documentary, and ends by being a bit of both, yet neither.

It is hard to understand why this should be so. It has the kind of theme at which British film studios should excel. They have the directors, the script writers of the calibre of Eric Ambler and certainly the cast should present no problem. And yet in each of these categories there was the maddening touch of the amateur.

There were some good shots of the sea and of the battle of the Atlantic, but I was left with the impression of Commander Ericson's face staring moodily

at a submerged submarine. Eric Ambler's script laid heavy emphasis on the officers' wardroom but the more poignant scenes of the book, such as the torpedoing of the ship carrying Ericson's son, were completely ignored.

Jack Hawkins, as the Commander, gave a good performance, but Donald Sinden as Lockhart was totally unconvincing. I felt almost embarrassed watching him, when I remembered that Nicholas Monsarrat, based the character of the First Lieutenant largely on himself and his own experience.

One cannot help wondering if the deletion of the poignant scenes of the home life of members of the crew and the stress on war-time heroics is not an attempt to make propaganda for war rather than peace.

The kindest thing that can be said about "The Cruel Sea" was that they could have made so much more of it.

8th Anniversary of the day East and West clasped hands—

A MILESTONE TO EAST-WEST PEACE

Message from

EX-SERVICE MOVEMENT FOR PEACE GREAT BRITAIN.

It is now eight years since the historic meeting on the Elbe took place.

In April 1945 it seemed that after the terrible bloodshed of World War II the nations would turn toward an era of lasting peace in which they would cooperate in the task of rebuilding their shattered countries.

Yet to-day wars and rumours of wars have become our daily diet. Many of the politicians and generals who spoke so inspiringly in 1945 now take part in spewing out the mass of slander that is daily bandied about.

To the ex-Service men and women who took part in the glorious victory over Nazism, and who remember those who died before their time, the present atmosphere of violence and hatred cannot be tolerated.

Men and women of every nation who have donned a uniform in time of war have, in varying degrees, learnt an international "language" that, we believe, can serve the world well in its search for a lasting Peace and a better life for all people.

We know the "language" of the shell, the bomb and the bullet, and all the sufferings and misery they bring. The understanding that this "language" brings can cross frontiers, pierce "iron curtains", and ensure that our children, and our children's children never know the disaster of War.

That is why we believe that a meeting of ex-service representatives of all Nations would contribute greatly to World Peace and International Understanding. We therefore heartily endorse the proposal made by the Australian Legion for a Meeting on the Elbe, April 25th, 1954.

We re-affirm our belief that there is no issue in the world to-day that cannot be settled by peaceful negotiation and we call upon all ex-service men and women to press upon their Governments the need for International differences to be settled in this way.

Finally, the British Ex-Service Movement for Peace salutes those ex-service men and women in other lands who are working for World Peace — many in

very difficult circumstances. We are confident, with them, that the cause of World Peace will triumph and to that end we pledge our best endeavours.

GEORGE CROSS,
Acting National Secretary Ex-

Message from

AMERICAN VETERANS FOR PEACE.

Dear Friends,

To most of us in the United States you of South Africa live in another world. But if you are of another world, we of *American Veterans for Peace* are of another America — the other America. And we are proud to call you "Brothers" and to send our warmest greetings.

The hard but unpleasant truth is that Peace is not something that just happens. It has to be worked and fought for. You in the Legion know this as well as anyone. But it is only the beginning that is hard. It took you and us a long time to even learn of each other. Now that we have met, even if only through the mails, it is our solemn resolve to continue as your allies in the noblest of all causes, Peace.

We are deeply mindful of your unstinting efforts during the past years, of the powerful support you gave to the realization of one of our greatest hopes: an ex-servicemen's Reunion on the Elbe, commemorating the memorable union of allied troops on German soil just eight short years ago. On this day, in 1953, let us again pledge ourselves to carry forth the work for peace in the glorious tradition of working together established that April day in 1945. As the soldiers met together then to seal their friendship and mark the victory over fascism and for peace and democracy, let us meet this day in our continued work for the same great cause of peace and democracy.

On this day of commemoration we salute you for the work you have done and are doing. It is our fervent hope that your efforts, our efforts, and those of veterans throughout the world will enable us to next year greet each other with a clap on the back and a handshake.

See you at the Elbe April 25, 1954!

Message from

AUSTRALIAN LEGION OF EX-SERVICEMEN.

Ex-members of the Forces of all Nations sincerely want improvements in international understanding.

With few exceptions, each and every ex-service member of the armed services of all Nations of the world, if asked, would say, "We remember the gallant and supreme sacrifice of fallen comrades. We know the present-day sufferings of the war disabled. There is no necessity for war to happen again."

Ex-servicemen desire to act as a force to improve international understanding. Action emanating from some ex-service associations in various countries has developed the prerequisites of a mighty movement which must unite ex-servicemen of all countries in friendship. For this purpose we propose an international commemoration day, April 25th, the historic day which heralded the end of World War II. On this day, April 25, 1953 we dedicate our thoughts, actions and lives to prevent armed conflict between Nations.

How then, do ex-servicemen proceed in the face of the present tension in international affairs?

We know the policy of the preservation of peace by the manufacturers of weapons of mass destruction, because we experience a restriction of personal liberties and impoverishment of living standards, health and culture. There is no secure future for home and country. The people of the world want a genuine preservation of peace by the means of discussion and negotiation, less armaments, better living standards, health and culture, security for home and country. War veterans insist that world problems be solved by peaceful means.

Ex-servicemen challenge the Nations of the world to make possible an international meeting of friendship of ex-service representatives of all Nations on or before April 25, 1954.

Ex-servicemen will prove before the people of the world that friendship does exist and must be extended for the future co-existence of human society.

Australian Legion of Ex-servicemen and Women, Queensland, Australia.

W. A. OPIE,
State Secretary.

SOUTH AFRICANS RECALL VICTORY ON THE ELBE

DURING April, ex-Service organisations in America, Britain, Australia and South Africa, were holding meetings commemorating that historic meeting of the American and Soviet troops on the banks of the Elbe River on April 25th, 1945. Their purpose was to recall the mood of that time, when big power unity had smashed Nazi aggression and appeared set to lay the foundations of a new and better era in world history. Capitalism and Communism worked in harmony then to achieve great things. If it was possible then, why not now?

The Springbok Legion meeting in the Darragh Hall on April 23rd was extremely successful in recapturing the atmosphere of April 1945. Cecil Williams opened the meeting by asking the audience to rise in memory of the fallen, and gave a very moving rendering of "the Young Dead Soldiers". His speech, which followed, outlined the reasons for calling the meeting and called for support for the idea of big power unity.

The following resolutions were passed unanimously:—

1. This meeting of South African ex-volunteers and their friends urges the Government of South Africa to use their influence at the United Nations to bring about a meeting of the heads of the Five Great Powers with a view to negotiating a settlement of international problems, thereby laying the foundations for a lasting world peace.
2. This meeting of South African ex-volunteers and their friends welcomes the proposal to hold an international conference of ex-servicemen on the banks of the River Elbe on or about April 25th, 1954 and calls on the Springbok Legion to take the initiative in ensuring strong South African representation.
3. This meeting of South African ex-volunteers and their friends sends greetings to ex-volunteers in other countries who are working for the establishment of a lasting peace and express the hope that the joint efforts of ex-volunteers everywhere will bring about the invaluable unity we witnessed during World War II, which alone can ensure for all mankind peace, freedom and prosperity.

JUMBLE REQUIRED!

If Johannesburg Members can spare any old clothing, please get in touch with the Office (33-0975) who will arrange to collect it.

ON A NOTE OF TRIUMPH

THE radio play "On a Note of Triumph" by Norman Corwin, is a most moving and effective dramatisation written for broadcasting on V.E. Day. Heard today, it irresistably returns the listener to the climate of that time, when we were all asking "Can it ever happen again?" "Surely we can plan better next time." The play emerges as such stirring, anti-fascist propaganda, that it is to be deeply regretted that it cannot be broadcast to all South Africans.

As presented on the stage it has a slight weakness in the extent of the dialogue allocated to the Narrator, but Stanley Raphael, the producer had largely remedied this by introducing interpolations from the other characters wherever possible. The unfortunate breakdown of the loudspeaker equipment at the last moment forced the players to do without microphones, but they nevertheless gave first-rate performances. Stanley Raphael, Warren Sands, Guy Routh, Hans Lange, Joe Podbrey, Roy Cousins all gave sincere characterisations, and Doreen Mantle was particularly versatile — over the last couple of years she has developed a range and sincerity that puts her amongst the top half-dozen professional actresses in South Africa.

STIRRING FILM.

"The True Glory" is a remarkable film from the Normandy landings to the German capitulation. Edited with breathtaking skill and imagination, it takes its audience into the actual landing barges on the Normandy beaches, into the aircraft battling over France, the tanks fighting their way into Germany.

You are confronted with the rubble which had been French villages and towns, writhing wounded soldiers, the still bodies of men, women and children murdered by the Nazis, and the horror of Buchenwald itself on the day of its liberation. But the soundtrack carries the humour and humanity as well as the

grim courage of the men and women who fought for freedom.

The scenes which show the warm-hearted meeting of the Russian and American troops on the banks of the Elbe are tremendously moving. They are followed by an appeal for Peace which should affect even the most cynical and disillusioned.

KEEP THE WAR GOING

The war in Korea continues because the American representatives refuse to adhere to the provisions of the Geneva Convention of 1949, which lays down that prisoners-of-war must be released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of active hostilities.

The "London Times" stated: "It has to be recognised that international practice in the past, amply verified by many peace treaties and by international conventions for the treatment of prisoners-of-war, supports the return of prisoners to their own country on the conclusion of a war, without exceptions."

The London "Daily Express" wrote: "The Geneva Convention explicitly stated that 'prisoners-of-war shall be released and repatriated without delay after cessation of hostilities.' How in the face of these words can the British and Americans justify holding on to every prisoner whom the Chinese demand shall be repatriated?"

It seems that the Americans do not want the war in Korea to end. Why? Because they must have a war to justify the colossal production of arms. And why must they produce arms? Because their present prosperity is dependent on rearmament. Without that, America would have a slump on its hands, be-poverished to buy America's enormous cause the rest of the world is too impotential output of peacetime goods.

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WAR— & THE WALL STREET SLUMP

THE possibility of peace in Korea and the relaxation of East and West tension with, perhaps, a 5 power peace pact, brings economic problems to the United States — and the Western World generally — as difficult as any they have had to face in this century. At the first hint of resumed negotiations in Korea, the Wall Street stock market experienced a severe slump, leading industrial stocks dropping as much as ten points in a day.

What is the significance of this slump? Does it mean that in a conflict of peace America must experience a depression? If so, does it mean that American Big Business is finally committed to War?

One can only arrive at any sort of answer to these questions by analyzing — as far as our information enables us — the economic set up in the U.S.A. at the moment.

TWO-THIRDS FOR WAR

Now, it is unlikely that many people appreciate the position which the arms industry occupies in the U.S.A. To say that its place in the U.S. economy is analogous to that of the Gold Mining industry in South Africa's, is, I think, not over-estimating the situation. Some time ago — towards the end of 1951 — ex-president Truman, in an address to the nation, stated that army expenditure and allocations to the armed forces generally would account for over 70% of the entire state budget and that the amounts so allocated represent no less than 18% of the entire national income for the years.

To begin with, what precisely does this mean? It means simply that of the total income of the American people over one year, 18% derives directly from Government purchases of materials of all kinds for the armed forces. But the matter does not end there. To this must be added the indirect contribution of war-preparations to the public income by virtue of the fact that industries receiving payments directly from Government sources, use those payments to meet their commitments, thus creating a second round of incomes *directly* deriving from Government expenditures, and these, in turn use the incomes to create a third round of incomes, and so on. By means of a formula, known as the "multiple" it is possible to compute the final volume of these indirect incomes thus:

A. Assume that of each £1 paid out to A A spends £2/3 and saves £1/3, and of that

B spends £(2/3 × 2/3) and saves £2/9,

C spends £(4/9 × 2/3) and saves

£1/22.

N spends £(N × 2/3) and saves the balance.

Then if all the expenditures from A to N are added up, it will be found that total expenditure and therefore income generated by this original £1 of Government expenditure is £3, and the total incomes created by arms expenditures, direct and indirect, is 3 times the original amount expended by the Government. If the proportion of saving to expenditure at each stage is 1/3 instead of one-third, then total income will be £4 instead of three, and so on. But to be on the safe side, let us put the rate of saving of the American public at



one-third of income (which is a proportionately high figure), then it will be seen that the total direct and indirect contribution of the war department to the national income becomes (3×18) per cent, an 54%! At this stage I cannot remember whether Mr. Truman's figures included allocations for foreign "aid". If not then these appropriations, being made to enable European powers to make arms purchases in the U.S., would further swell the relative size of the arms contribution to the National Income. Let us, however, if we do — on the conservative side and say that defence, arms etc. accounts for just 50% of national income.

WALL STREET AND PEACE

This is a terrible situation by any standards. Now we begin to see why Wall Street reacts so sharply to peace proposals. For let us try to imagine what would happen if the U.S.A. having reached the present tension with the East could no longer justify this arms expenditure. The immediate reaction would of course be a really serious Wall Street slump, followed by a catastrophic fall in the prices of all commodities directly or indirectly participating in arms manufacture — followed very quickly by a similar slump in all other prices. It would, obviously mean the cutting off of all incomes, deriving directly from Government expenditure on the armed forces, and thus, by due process, of indirect incomes accruing as set out above.

Now this process of depression could and would be arrested sooner or later if resources now being utilised in arms manufacture and the equipment of armed forces could be switched to the production of consumer goods. However since most authorities agree that consumer demand in the United States has reached saturation point even on the basis of the present high level of incomes, such a switch over could only result in a state of chronic over-production, which would mean, in turn, widespread bankruptcy and unemployment.

We see, therefore, that the U.S.A. has a very large vested interest in the cold war. The situation envisaged above is never likely to occur because it is impossible for the U.S. to scrap her arms industry entirely now, even if she wishes to. The most that might follow on peace in Korea would be a scaling down of the tempo of arms manufacture and of the defence programme. Even so the scaling down process would be slow and piecemeal, for a too drastic revision of the arms budget might result in a flight from the dollar to gold and hence, dollar devaluation and a return to the pre-war pattern of international Economic anarchy.

The greater probability is that while American economic policy is controlled by Wall Street and the great steel monopolies, the cold war will continue, enclosing, here and there, areas of "heat" in which a certain amount of arms can be expended.

By way of contrast, let us, very briefly, discuss how a Socialist country, similarly situated as regards defence, would

coupons available to each person; the adjust itself to the easing of international tension and a consequent wrapping of an arms industry.

To begin with one must try to imagine the function of money in a socialist state. One must try to grasp the fact that in such a state money has no other use than as a regulating mechanism between demand and supply. It differs from a rationing coupon only in that it gives to the owners a wider choice as to how he shall exchange his "coupon" for goods. Thus, price in a socialist country, is no more a measure of value than was, say, a petrol coupon during the war a measure of the value of petrol.

Now let us for the sake of convenience stick to this analogy. The greater the scarcity of petrol, the fewer the

more plentiful petrol becomes, the more coupons available, and so on. One may restate this proposition, by saying the greater the scarcity, the lower the individual "purchasing power" i.e. "income". Conversely, the greater the supply of petrol, the greater becomes the individual "purchasing power".

In a Socialist Country, then this principle applies to all commodities. Plenty means high incomes — scarcity, lower incomes. In the case of petrol, the greater the supply, the lower the "price" in terms of coupons, until, when a stage is reached at which supplies are sufficient to meet any possible demand, coupons are done away with altogether. So, in a socialist country, the greater the supply of any commodity, the lower the price, until when supply is large enough to meet any volume of demand, "coupons" i.e. money, are dispensed with altogether and demand is limited, only by absolute maximum need.

Hence in such a country, a large arms

industry, withdrawing resources from the production of real wealth, acts as a brake upon the growth of individual income. While it exists the "rationing" medium, money, cannot be dispensed with and demands must be kept below maximum. It is thus in the interests of the socialist states to fight for peace and to dispense with arms production as soon as possible.

Recent reports tell of price reductions in the Soviet Union of up to 50%. In a capitalist state such a fall in prices would mean ruin. In a socialist state it means unprecedented prosperity, for price and income move in opposite directions. The mere fact that such reductions were possible, argues that the defence programme in the U.S.S.R. is of relatively modest proportions. If the Russians were able to dispense with the arms industry entirely, they would soon reach the stage of production in which each would receive according to his need.

A CALL TO PEACE

A PROVISIONAL Committee has been formed to arrange a conference which will launch a National Peace Movement. The initiative has come from the Transvaal Peace Council, who have been inundated from all over the country with requests for literature and speakers. Amongst the other organisations at present represented on the provisional committee are the Springbok Legion, the African National Congress, the Students' Liberal Association, the Congress of Democrats, and the Indian Congress.

The following is a call to peace issued by this Committee. There is every indication that the Conference, which will be held in Johannesburg in July, will be most successful.

"THE whole world lives in the shadow of the threat of war.

Armaments are being stockpiled, new and more frightful weapons perfected. Science, which should work to make life easier and happier for all mankind, is being harnessed to devise new means of mass slaughter and destruction. National economies are being crippled by the armaments burden, and living costs soar. Racial discrimination becomes a source of national bitterness and conflict, threatening armed clashes.

But this is only the 'cold' war.

In Korea, Malaya and Indo-China the war is hot. The last two years of war have killed many millions of men, women and children, injured millions more, ravaged countries and destroyed what man has built in those lands since the dawn of history.

For the whole world, the hates and tensions of the cold war threaten to boil over into the slaughter and destruction that has laid Korea waste. A way must be found to prevent that disaster, to enable conflicts to be resolved before war breaks out, to find a way for differing social systems to exist peacefully side by side.

Thus far governments have failed to find a way.

We believe that the peoples' will for peace, if powerfully expressed in every land, can succeed where governments may fail. There is an urgent need for people of every social outlook, religious faith, political credo, every racial group, to discuss and find the policies which will unite all in their unshakable will for peace.

We believe the people of South Africa must find their own way to defend humanity and preserve world peace. All about us military bases are being prepared for war. Neighbouring territories are becoming vital strategic sources of war materials and manpower. Our own country is already paying heavily for the Korean War, is committed to military pacts in the Middle East, and is becoming one of the prime producers of uranium for atomic weapons. Our racial policies are the cause of international tension, diplomatic breaches and UNO debates on the threat to world peace. We are moving into the front line of a future war.

We make an earnest call to the people of our country to meet and discuss the sources of world conflict, and find a way forward to the achievement of world peace. We believe that in a People's Congress for Peace we can draw from our different ideas and ideals that which we have in common, so we can act to preserve peace. We call on South Africans of every racial group, every walk of life, to grasp with both hands the opportunity offered by this Congress to make their voices heard in the noble cause of peace.

We appeal to you, fellow South Africans, to attend the Congress and by free discussion to seek agreement of all citizens on ways to end wars now in progress, to prevent new armed clashes, and to reach international agreement to safeguard peace now and in the future."

TALKING OF WAR BOOKS

By E. C. PATTERSON

WHENEVER the talk turns to novels of war, the same query is raised; and left largely unanswered. Why, ask the critics, are the best books of world war two so markedly inferior to the classics of world war one? No amount of analysis and dissection, no unstinting publisher's praise manage to raise "The Naked and the Dead" to the status of Barbusse's "Under Fire", "From Here to Eternity" to an "All Quiet", "The Cruel Sea" to Dos Passos' "Three Soldiers" or "The Young Lions" to a Hemingway's "Farewell to Arms." It is always the same few titles that are bandied about in the discussions of the best books of the war.

Nowhere, in all the discussions I have heard on the subject, has there been a suggestion that perhaps the best sellers are not the best books. Yet this seems to me to be the heart of the whole matter.

Possibly in 1918 and the years shortly after it was different. But the public of today has developed tastes and values in literature drawn from the million-copy, serialised and motion-pictured best-sellers of the years gone by. "No Orchids for Miss Blandish" set the new style in crude, psychopathic violence described in four-letter words which has made it possible for "From Here to Eternity" to be taken by the public as a "great" piece of writing. Peter Cheyney's "Dark Hero", the fascist-minded, cold-blooded killer-hero, drugged with whisky and women as a guard against thinking, has conditioned critics and publishers alike to rave in superlatives over Mailer's "Naked and the Dead." And only a whole flood of books whose purpose is to horrify and chill the spine with stupendous, three-dimensional, technicolour shocks and disasters, could have laid the basis for the world-wide acclaim of "The Cruel Sea".

The writing of these best-sellers of world war two, it cannot be gainsaid, is efficient, sometimes even masterly. But for all that, they remain good sellers, and, to my mind, poor books. Slick craftsmanship is not enough to make a great book. For that good content is required. And it is in this that the great novels of the first world war succeeded, where the best-sellers of our own day have failed so miserably.

Who, having read Barbusse or Remarque, can fail to understand the great social currents of the closing years of the first world war? The cynicism and frustration the war wrought in the hearts of decent people on both sides, which gave rise to the mass fraternisation of official enemies, and which set into motion the international chain of revolts, mutinies and revolutions which dominated the post-war world? Here, on their varying canvasses, the best novelists of that time caught the spirit and

the meaning of their times, and conveyed, in a way that no camera record can do, the moving of men's ideas and outlooks which make all the social, political and even the military developments of the time comprehensible to the reader of a later generation.

In their way, all the best works of that time were novels of social protest at the corruption, the meaningless slaughter and the cynical profiteering of their times.

But what is the content of the best sellers of our times? For a best seller, social consciousness is taboo; wars are fought in vacuums, and future generations reading the "Cruel Sea" or "The Naked and the Dead" will only be able to place them in time by the references to radar and P49's. Their content, one and all, is of unrestrained violence and brutality and horror dominating the lives of unthinking, unconscious puppets who walk like men. Nowhere, when reading any of the popular war-time novels did I feel: There, but for the accident of geography, go I.

Fortunately, all the novels of the second world war were not best-sellers, with the best-sellers' defects. There were novels, and I think great novels, which future generations without our taste for Peter Cheyney will class together with the best of world war one. Foremost amongst those I have read I place Ilya Ehrenburg's "Storm", a novel in the War-and-Peace tradition, which uses the whole vast scene of Europe as its canvas. No other novel of our times manages so effectively to people the titanic armed conflict with such flesh-and-blood, with people who think, feel and react in a way comprehensible to us, and in a way which deepens and broadens our whole understanding of the events themselves and of the men and women who determined their outcome. The same author's "Fall of Paris", on a smaller canvas, reveals the same depth of under-

standing of human beings and the same mastery of the writers' craft.

There are others, perhaps lesser known. There is the unforgettable tale by James Aldridge of the Greek partisans, "The Sea Eagle", which tells of men whose courage and love of liberty raised them above their illiterate and primitive backgrounds, and elevated them to heroic stature. The author's love of people, his understanding of the greatness that is in men and of the great and stirring times through which we lived between 1939 and 1945 characterises also his epic tale of the R.A.F. in Greece, "Signed with their Honour."

Jack Lindsay, who both before and since the war has made his mark as a writer of historical novels, was also moved by the sweep of war-time events to write of the things he had seen and taken part in. And the two war books he wrote are, to my mind, incomparably the best things he has ever done. "We Shall Return" is the story — the only story I have encountered — about the retreat to Dunkirk, and the terror and chaos which was the beach there in that inferno. Here is horror, to excel Monsarrat's worst; and yet it is horror of a different kind. It is horror challenging ordinary men to rise to new heights of courage, of compassion and consciousness, and horror conquered by men who rise superior to it. It moves, grips and inspires one as Monsarrat's cold photographic plates of horror cannot do; it leaves one with a confidence in the future, where the "The Cruel Sea" leaves only goose-pimples. Of the same calibre is Lindsay's "Beyond Terror", the story of the retreat from Crete, and of those who were left behind to carry on the fight as best they could.

Significantly, there is little that rates high from the American writers, who, more than others, suffer from the pressure to conform to best-seller standards of form, style and content. I have come across only three novels of the war by Americans which manage to break this destroying pressure. One, by a former Czech Stefan Heym, "The Crusaders", comes close to great achievement, but fails through the weakness of his characters and lapses in literary skill. The other two by an expatriate living in France, Kay Boyle, uses skill and great craftsmanship to good purpose in "A Frenchman Mut Die", a story of a single incident of the "Caine Mutiny" type, and in "Avalanche". Both these tales are perhaps too slight to be rated as 'great'. But good they are, and better worth the reading than the best-sellers that get talked about so much.



THE Nationalist Party has plenty to congratulate itself on at the moment. Not only has it won the Election under the slogan of "Apartheid", but it has increased its majority to 29 seats. But it can congratulate itself only on the basis of its cleverness at vote-loading and delimitation trickery. To claim that it has a mandate from the Volkswil, a claim it will certainly stake, is no more accurate than the result of a horse race in which every horse but the winner has been doped. Let us be quite clear about that. The European electorate of this country has *not* accepted Apartheid. The total of votes received by Opposition groups offers a concrete negation to that claim and it is something which should give us and all democratic South Africans the courage to carry on the fight against Malanzism with renewed vigour and inspiration. Here is a thought to carry around with us. That if every voter had an equal say in the election, i.e. if all constituencies consisted of an equal number of votes, let us say ten thousand, the Nationalist Party would lose at least thirty seats.

The future is dark and uncertain, but our role in the present situation remains unchanged — to replace the Malan Government with a democratic, representative body as soon as possible.

WE have been so busy with our own elections that we have barely noticed another great piece of injustice that has been perpetrated just a little North of us. There the question of Central African federation was the subject of a referendum held amongst the white settlers only. If you counted up the number of people who said "Yes" to federation, you would find the figure in the neighbourhood of five percent. The other ninety-five percent, both black and white Rhodesians, were totally opposed to the Huggins plan, but of course the vast

(Continued in next column)

Film Review

GOLDEN MARIE

THE arrival in Johannesburg of a worth-while film from the continent (or anywhere else for that matter) is a comparatively rare event. "Golden Marie" is perhaps the first wholly successful European film to be shown here since "Bicycle Thieves". (It is, of course, of a very different genre).

"Casque d'Or" is a legendary Parisian figure of fifty years ago. This dramatisation is primarily a love story, at once tremendously real and moving, but in part frankly melodramatic. The golden-haired Marie is the associate of Apache thieves. Bored and at odds with Roland, her latest amour, she meet Manda, a young carpenter, an ex-convict friend of Raymond, one of the gang.

There is at once a strong physical attraction between them, and Manda later fights and kills the jealous Roland. He flees from the police to the country where Marie follows him, and they live together blissfully. Léca, leader of the Apache gang, who desires Marie for himself, causes Raymond to be arrested for the killing, and Manda gives himself up to the police. Manda learns of Léca's betrayal and he kills him. The final scenes are of Manda's ignominious execution at the guillotine, watched by the agonised Marie.

The two leading characters are presented so vividly, are drawn with such insight, that you quickly understand them and are involved in their story. The performances of Simone Signoret

(Continued from previous column)

majority had no say at all in a scheme which will vitally affect their whole existence. Doubtless Sir Godfrey Huggins is also jubilantly chanting "Volkswil", but it is as empty a claim as Dr. Malan's Apartheid mandate.

The threat of peace breaking out in Korea is again looming largely in the world press. The sharemarket has taken a swan-dive, and even the American General Staff are conceding that everyone is heartily sick and tired of the useless slaughter that has been going on for the past two-and-a-half years. Let us hope and pray that this time they mean it.

At least let us give a cheer to Z. de Beer who managed to knock the hoey out of the Greyshirt Louis.

and Serge Reggiani are really remarkable. Signoret's Marie is a fascinating gigolette, frankly sensual, provocative and impertinent in the earlier scenes, and later passionately and constantly in love. Reggiani, using an amazingly effective restraint, gets across Manda's self-reliance and strength as effectively as his weakness. His performance is a revelation of what acting for the films can be.

The director, Jacques Becker, has a pure, direct style which admirably serves his purpose. His command of tempo allows a long look at a scene or a series of quick glances with equal effectiveness. It is a tribute to his mastery that in spite of a plot with complications and subtleties, there is little dialogue but always perfect clarity.

There are many beautiful touches and striking minor episodes, such as the village wedding, or the scene of Manda's employer watching him depart and then with finality closing the door (of the world of respectable citizens). Some minor characters stand out vividly, in particular the wonderful old crone at the country cottage, the loyal Raymond, and Marie's gigolette friend.

Becker's treatment does not attempt to lay the responsibility for the tragedy at Society's door, nor are the characters depicted as the helpless victims of an omnipotent Fate. The characters are shown as the makers of their own destiny, although there is an obvious environmental factor.

This outstanding film has whetted the appetite for more outstanding Continental fare. We can only hope that the South African exhibitors will allow us to see them, rather than the second grade foreign films that are fairly regularly offered to us.

R.C.

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CONSCRIPTION FOR WHAT?

SOUTH AFRICA was one of the few combatants in the last war that did not impose any kind of conscription for military service. Those who felt that it was a bit too much to be asked to help save their country from Hitler were permitted to stay comfortably at home. One Erasmus was one of those who took full advantage of this indulgence. Yet to-day, when there is neither a hostile army in the field in North Africa nor a bomb-throwing fifth column busy in South Africa, this same Erasmus tells us that he is considering whether conscription should not be applied, and that steps will shortly be taken to augment the strength of the A.C.F. by compulsory means. The U.P. has not been heard to criticise this statement, nor are they likely to do so, since warmongering has always been a department in which they have been particularly proud of their ability to out-Nat the Nats.

The possibility that conscription will shortly be introduced seems, therefore, to be a substantial one. Many people are not aware that the machinery for peace-time conscription already exists in South Africa, and could be put into operation without any necessity for Parliamentary approval. *The Defence Act of 1912, as subsequently amended, provides that every male citizen must register for military training in his seventeenth year. After registration, he may volunteer for training in an A.C.F. unit. If he has not volunteered by the time he turns twenty-one, he may then be compelled to join and to undergo a four-year course of part-time training, with periods of continuous training not exceeding four months. In the event of the number of men required for training being greater than the number who have volunteered but less than the total number available, a ballot may be held, in which a specified number of men are chosen by lot.*

Once a man has joined an A.C.F. unit, whether voluntarily or under compulsion, he may be prosecuted for failure to carry out his duties, and corporal punishment may be imposed in certain cases.

In the past, the number of volunteers has always been sufficient to keep the A.C.F. up to strength, and the provisions for compulsory training have not been enforced. Why should there now be talk of conscription? As far as the public is aware, there has been no sudden drop in the number of volunteers coming forward for training. It would seem, therefore, that the Government requires a larger army for the future and that the youth of South Africa, who have never failed to respond to any genuine necessity for the enlargement of the armed forces, are not convinced that a larger army is required.

No Government spokesman has yet explained with any clarity why South Africa should require a larger army at the present time. If any such necessity existed, one would expect that the first step to be taken would be to explain the necessity clearly to the people, in order to stimulate the flow of volunteers and avoid the need for conscription. If conscription is introduced without any such preliminary drive for volunteers it can

only mean that the reasons for the enlargement of the forces are either non-existent or totally unacceptable to the public.

Various reasons have been obscurely suggested in official quarters. We have been reminded that South Africa is a member of the "Middle East Defence Organisation." Does this mean that South Africans are required to help prop up the tottering rule of the pashas and the oil companies in the Arab countries? Small wonder that there is no rush for volunteers for such a task. Then we are treated to obscure hints about "the internal situation." If these hints mean anything, they mean that conscripts are required to get the Government out of trouble, if and when it makes trouble. Obviously, our young men are not going to rush in their thousands to the recruiting stations for that purpose.

If these are not the reasons for the talk of conscription, only one possibility remains: the Government must contemplate that South Africa may in the near future be involved in a war. Since there is no nation which is in the least likely to invade the territory of South Africa, we could be involved in a war only through the voluntary decision of our Government. It is accepted in countries which call themselves democratic that a Government which contemplates any momentous policy decision should, if possible, obtain a mandate from the electorates for that decision. In the recent election campaign, neither party made any attempt to obtain the people's authority for a policy of war.

It is clear, then, that the Government is trying to slip something past us which they do not want to justify openly. If the talk of conscription is revived in the coming months, we must not simply let it pass. We must demand our right as citizens to be told exactly why our services are required, under what conditions we will be made to serve and what ultimate purpose the plan is meant to serve. To accept such a decision blindly is to court the same sort of disaster which befell the docile masses of Germany when they acquiesced in adventures whose outcome they could not or would not foresee.

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"A MAN FROM BETHAL"

As ROY COUSINS saw him

THE manner in which European South avoid seeing the conditions of life of our non-Europeans is strongly reminiscent of the ostrich-like attitude of many Germans under the Nazi regime. Even those of us who recognise the terrible oppression which exists in South Africa and try to do something to rectify it, seldom allow ourselves to face the horror which is the daily lot of so many of our citizens. This week a man walked into the Legion office for assistance, and suddenly I found myself face to face with the 'real' South Africa.

Ishmael is a young African who came with his family to live in Sophiatown, Johannesburg when he was seven years old. During the war when he was eighteen he joined the N.M.C. and on his discharge he became a building worker. But he fell ill with kidney trouble and he was soon out of a job. He regularly visited the Non-European hospital for treatment, and one day while he was returning home he was stopped by a police car. *There and then, his pass and hospital card were destroyed in front of him, and he was arrested.* He was found guilty of a pass contravention and sentenced to nine months on a Bethal farm.

There he was put into a fenced-in enclosure, stripped of his clothes and given sacks to wear. He was put to work in the fields with many other Africans in similar conditions. Indunas beat with sticks any man they considered not doing enough work, and since he was a sick man Ishmael was often beaten. He was not allowed to see a doctor, nor was he allowed to write home. Two prison labourers died on the farm, and Ishmael helped to bury one of them. The body was sewn into sacks and ploughed into the ground.

After Ishmael had worked on the farm for several months, an oxen on Ishmael's team had an accident — it choked itself on its halter and died. The farmer told Ishmael that he would have to work for an extra year to pay for it. Guarded by day, locked in by night, escape was difficult. Many men who tried it were recaptured and severely flogged.

For five years Ishmael was imprisoned on that farm. Whenever his latest sentence, arbitrarily imposed by the farmer, was up, a fresh one was imposed. Ishmael thought only of escape, and finally he managed it. He walked by night so that he would not be seen, and he

was lucky enough to meet a kindly old man who gave him some old clothes to replace his sacks.

When he arrived home in Sophiatown his mother could hardly believe her eyes. She had given him up for dead, and had made frantic but unavailing efforts to find out what happened. She brought Ishmael to our office to see if our social welfare worker could help him to get work and a pass. She is quite a remarkable woman. Since she was married at fourteen she has had a very hard life, but she has a strength, a resilience that has kept her uncowed, full of spirit, determination, and perhaps most remarkable, humour.

We are still trying to help Ishmael. We've got him a job, but after days of running all over Johannesburg, his pass is still in doubt. We'll do something. But I, for one, have been jolted out of my comfortable abstraction from the human issues. I'd probably be hopelessly neurotic if I didn't try in some measure to recapture my peace of mind, and doubtless my indignation will simmer down somewhat. But for those of you who don't come across such cases personally, I hope this story upsets you a little. It helps, I think, to make us work a little harder to make this into a decent country.

LILIOM



Molly Seftel, who plays 'Julie' in the Regent Players' production of "LILIOM", is one of the most promising of Johannesburg's younger actresses. She attracted a lot of attention with her performance in the very difficult title role in "Theresa Racquin", which was produced by Sheila Houston two years ago for the Playmakers. Miss Seftel has worked with Leon Gluckman before in "Death of a Salesman" and "Governor's Rock", the play by James Brown, the well-known local journalist. In playing 'Julie' she follows in the footsteps of several illustrious actresses, such as Eve la Galliene, but the producer is confident she will score a personal triumph.

HONOURING OUR GREAT

TO develop peaceful relations between countries and peoples, and to encourage cultural exchanges between the peoples of the world, the World Peace Council is celebrating each year the anniversaries of great men of world culture. For 1953 six world figures have been selected. They are:

- the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Cuban writer, HOSE MARTI, national hero of the Cuban Independence Struggle.
- the 100th anniversary of the birth of the great Dutch painter, VINCENT VAN GOGH.
- the 400th anniversary of the death of the famous French writer and humanist, RABELAIS.
- the 2,200th anniversary of the great Chinese poet and patriot, CHU YUAN.
- the 410th anniversary of the death of the brilliant Polish astronomer, COPERNICUS, whose 400th anniversary could not be celebrated because of the war.
- the 150th anniversary of the birth of the eminent moralist and democrat, EMERSON.

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Two Gentlemen of Chicago

TWO young witch-hunting Americans Roy Cohn and David Schine, who are visiting Europe in search of un-American activities among United States information offices, have recently made newspaper headlines all over the world.

These two young men personally appointed by Senator McCarthy, look and dress like college boys. They had been having a wonderful trip through Europe, ordering veteran State Department officials to their hotel rooms for cross-examination, men who had been in the service longer than the two youngsters have lived. After nine days in Europe they had been responsible for firing four senior officials. Rapidly journeying from city to city, they have compiled a long list of people who will be called to Washington to testify before the infamous McCarthy.

Then they made a serious mistake. They announced their intention of going to London to "inspect" the B.B.C. Certain British Members of Parliament, among them Mr. George Wigg, of the Labour Party, were immediately interested. The suggestion was put forward that Cohn and Schine should be invited to a private all-party meeting at the House of Commons. It was suggested that the M.P.'s question the young men on the exact purpose of their inquiries and give them their view on the investigations. It was thought likely that the M.P.'s would tell them some very interesting things about themselves. It did not take Cohn and Schine very long to decide that they would leave the B.B.C. (that hotbed of Communists!) severely alone.

It is interesting that McCarthy's (and his committee's) activities become steadily more outrageous despite strong opposition, both in the United States and outside. Some powerful pro-Republican publications bitterly attacked his more extreme persecutions, but to no avail. Apparently, more Americans dislike and distrust McCarthy and his activities than approve of him. The same Press interests that poured scorn and vituperation on the early defiers of the Un-American Activities Committee, that refused to publish their defence statements, became anxious as McCarthy widened his net.

These conservative gentlemen want leftists and liberals persecuted, but they see the writing on the wall when the witch-hunt gathers momentum and threatens personal opponents of all types.

One cannot help being reminded of our own United Party. It is difficult for some people to learn the lessons of history. They help to launch the snow-ball by declaiming their anxiety to shoot or hang Communists, and when it has become an avalanche of terror, they cry "Unfair! Hands off me and mine"

It is likely that many of the victims of Cohn and Schine were people who vaguely approved of McCarthy's earlier inquisitions. They have probably learned better by now. But what a tragedy that so many people have to learn the hard way. If only they would learn that there is no compromise with fascism. It must be recognised as soon as it rears its head, and it must be fearlessly, unequivocally, opposed.

WICKED WASTE.

The Society of Friends, the British Quaker Movement, has made the following estimate of what it would be possible to provide with the current British rearmament budget of £4,700,000,000.

6,000 blocks of flats at low rentals;

20 Great Universities with an endowment of £10,000,000 each;

200 large schools for city areas;

400 small schools for smaller towns;

10 Agricultural Research Centres with endowments of £6 million each;

200 Hospitals fully equipped.

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Newlands Hotel,
177 Main Road,
Newlands,
Johannesburg.
24th April, 1953.

Editor,
"Fighting Talk".

Sir,

Some months ago I wrote to you urging that more interest be taken by your paper and by the Springbok Legion in Proportional Representation by the single transferable vote. You pooh-poohed the idea. Now look at the result of the general election and the sudden interest in P.R. taken by the United Party, "The Star", etc.

The fact is, as I have written to you before, there are too many people rushing round in circles shouting "democracy" who haven't the faintest idea of what they mean by democracy or what democracy in fact is. In my opinion no territory — whether town, village, city, state, province, or "sovereign" state, can start to be called democratic unless its governing body is elected on a P.R. basis (and I further hold that the best P.R. system is the single transferable vote for individuals — not the party list system of continental Europe).

My opinion as stated also holds good for any organization — club, society, trade-union, etc. — where there is any contest for seats on the committee. Last time I wrote on this matter you commented "P.R. can be operated only when there are a number of different sections, groups, parties, or territorial areas which can be voted for. In such a case a vote is cast not for an individual . . ." I now enclose for your information a list of organizations in New South Wales which use P.R.

It has been my intention to visit at your new offices again; but for the past two-three months I have been stationed out of town and my only available time in town is from about 4.50 p.m. onwards, in which to do shopping and everything. Since I joined the Springbok

Legion some seven years ago I have been waiting for some constructive lead but have been disappointed; all the Legion and "Fighting Talk" have done is to dish out destructive criticism of everyone disagreeing with the Legion. The definition of democracy nowadays appears to be: What I think, is democratic; anyone disagreeing is undemocratic.

To put this or any other country on a democratic basis, we must fight for P.R. for all legislative bodies from village councils up to Union Assembly, for the recall for all elected persons, the Initiative, and the Referendum. Your editorial footnote to my letter appearing in your September issue (and my subsequent talk with (I think) Mr. Cousins in your new offices showed that Legion officials knew practically nothing of P.R.: I am fairly sure, in spite of all your protestations about and advocacy of Democracy, that you know nothing of the Recall, the Initiative, or the Referendum.

Your April issue — the last in my possession — has nothing whatever constructive about democracy; instead we get dished out, page one "against" the Nationalists; page three "against" the Nationalists; page four, praise for Dictator Stalin (why on earth does a self-styled democratic paper devote a page to praising a dictator?); page six, a full-page film review; page thirteen, almost a full page about a dead musician of whom 997/8% of your readers had never heard — your contributor himself wrote that the "compositions . . . are very little known outside . . ." the U.S.S.R.

Yours faithfully,

H. L. LEVITT.

Sir,

I am writing to express my agreement with the article, "The People versus the Fascists" in the last issue of "Fighting Talk". I liked the optimistic tone because it is only realistic to recognise

that the Nationalists and their stupid policies cannot, absolutely cannot last forever. At the moment perhaps it is difficult for us to see the wood for the trees. We lose our sense of perspective and imagine that the Nationalists are powerful, that they are bound to win the election and that means they will be here for half a century.

That really is impossible, for many of the reasons you mention in your article — the rise of the Non-Europeans' political power, the fighting back of white democrats and, of course, influences from outside. So, though the fight is hard at the moment, we should take courage from what we know MUST happen in the future and fight all the harder so that the improvements of the future can be achieved with the minimum of delay.

Good luck to the Legion in its work.

Yours etc.,

F. SCHERMBRUCKER.

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