

N.A.T.O. CRUMBLES AS PEOPLE FIGHT FOR LIBERTY

WORLD STAGE BY SPECTATOR

Wherever blood flows in the world today you can see the hand of a dying imperialism at work. And wherever there is imperialism and colonialism you don't have to look far to find that the United States is involved. Without American dollar support for every tottering regime of oppression we would see in country after country the reins of government being handed over to the people who live and work in them.

So the prime cause of the terrible bloodshed and massacre, the hatred and violence stalking abroad today is the belief of the die-hards that they can hold on to their possessions just a little longer when, really, their game is up. Their belief is based on the calculation that America will always come to their support if the situation is presented as a "struggle against Communism." The American leaders are becoming extremely touchy and embarrassed at having to back up every dirty, corrupt and shameless gang of rulers on the face of the globe; but they continue to do so because they are desperately concerned with holding together their cracking and rotting war alliance against the Soviet Union.

SMASHING WAR PLANS

So, when a Moroccan fires on a French patrol in the Rif mountains, when a woman of Cyprus throws a stone at British paratroopers, when the Egyptian dictator signs a trade agreement with China or buys arms from Czechoslovakia, it all comes back to this issue—the demand of the people for self-rule, for peace and democracy is smashing through the war plans of the West.

After the defeat of American imperialism in Korea and Indo-China, the whole U.S. position in Europe and the Mediterranean is falling to pieces. NATO, the American financed and dominated war machine in West Europe is thoroughly undermined.

The real weakness of NATO was exposed by the tiny population of the island of Cyprus. The people of the island, 80 per cent Greek, objected to being turned into a NATO war base and in a determined struggle demanded self-rule and the right to be re-united with Greece.



DRAMA OF CYPRUS

This has touched off a series of events each more dramatic than the last. Turkey is a key military base in the NATO chain and the minority on Cyprus are mainly Turks. So when Turkish mobs ran amok, killed innocent Greeks, looted shops, burnt down Greek churches and did so with immunity from the fascist Turkish Government, the fat was in the fire. Greece and Turkey came to the point of talking openly about war. The Greeks demanded that the position of Cyprus be taken up by the United Nations, Britain and the U.S. acted sharply to prevent this. The Greeks threatened to withdraw from NATO. America rushed its commander, Admiral Fecteler, in charge of the southern network of aggressive bases, to both Turkey and Greece to stop the rot. The Southern flank of the NATO network "threatened to crumble," said Time magazine.

John Foster Dulles sent an angry letter to both Greece and Turkey saying their quarrel threatened the "Free world"—in other words, the war alliance. The Greeks were not impressed. Even the respectable right-wing paper Ethnos replied: "Greece must leave NATO. Greece cannot remain inside this jungle of crooks and blackmailers." That is straight language, but it is only what democrats have been saying for years.

The Americans and British were not concerned about the rights of the Cypriots. When the Greek Government called its own Chief of Staff to discuss withdrawing from NATO they warned that the war alliance was "its only defence against Communism." American intervention was mainly concentrated on "protecting Cyprus's role as an essential British and NATO bastion." (Time magazine.)

MILITARY STRONGMAN

Closely following the bloody policy of the French in North Africa, the British refused to discuss the demands of the Cypriots and sought a military solution. The civilian Governor of Cyprus was hastily sacked and a military strongman with experience in Malaya and Kenya sent to take his place.

Field-Marshal Sir John Harding cynically announced he would pacify Cyprus, "drawing on the experience of the campaigns in Malaya and Kenya." What does this mean?

In both countries the British military drove the population into an armed resistance by assaulting their free organisations, trade unions and other bodies. In the ensuing fighting they killed over 6,000 Malaysians and 10,000 Africans. They have put 500,000 Malaysians in concentration camps while at least

60,000 Africans are behind barbed wire and tens of thousands more under constant police guard. Is this what Harding has been ordered to do?



There is no doubt he has the toughness and brutality to kill Cypriots just as his troops kill in other colonial campaigns. But Harding's massed troops are in Cyprus for another purpose as well.

The Telegraph correspondent in Nicosia, Colin Reid, blurted out that Harding and the cream of the British army were arriving in Cyprus "not only to police the island against youthful hooligans." They had a wider purpose.

Their chief purpose, he said, was "military action if necessary in Greece in support of the Greek Constitution if the Papagos Government collapses over the Cyprus issue."

Since then, dictator Papagos has died. The Greeks, in the dilemma of holding together their right-wing Government, know that a British Army is poised to intervene unless they make the "right" decision. Of course, the Communist bogey is being worked to death. Communist organisation is strong among the Cypriot workers. In the towns under communist mayors and in the trade unions that strength has been used consistently in a peaceful, constructive manner, gaining the admiration even of reactionary pressmen.

Britain's Defence Minister, Selwyn Lloyd, last week made the nonsensical statement that "self-determination for Cyprus means the possibility that a Communist State might be established in Cyprus, and that would mean the strategic encirclement of Turkey."

MOROCCO-ALGERIA

In French North Africa the same issues are at stake, but the situation occurs on an infinitely vaster scale and the blood is running there at full flood. Immediate cause: the refusal of the French to discuss the demands of the people for self-rule. France claims Algeria is part of France—a sham that nobody believes. As for Morocco, the French shilly-shally over minor procedural points concerning the composition of the puppet administration.

But behind France's handling of the situation is the more significant chain of American air bases sited along the North African territory aimed at the heart of the Soviet Union.

The French empire is in decay. The Army in North Africa openly defies the orders of the Government and massacres of entire districts are taking place with the army commanded by "tough" officers who have close financial links with the "colons" (the white ruling class and settlers in North Africa).

SHAM DEMOCRACY

In Morocco there is no pretence at democracy, only naked military rule. In Algeria, says the New Statesman "the whole flimsy structure of Algerian 'democracy' has collapsed."

Again, of course, the anti-communist cry is being raised by the reactionary French Government in order to satisfy the Americans that their military rule is the right thing. The Algerian Communist Party has been outlawed. In France, where thousands of young conscripts have mutinied and refused to fight North Africans, it is said to be a communist conspiracy. Riots and demonstrations by North Africans, supported by ordinary Frenchmen, have occurred in many French cities. These are branded as Communist.

When the United Nations rightly included the fighting in North Africa in its agenda, the French angrily walked out and flew their entire delegation back from New York. In a huff, the French premier cancelled his coming trip to Moscow because he said the Communists had been unfriendly in voting against France at UNO.

Why France, Britain, America and the NATO command are so intensely worried about these danger signs is that they know the colonial peoples are sick of the old system. They look with sympathy towards the socialist world.

When Colonel Nasser wanted to buy arms from America to correct the balance of strength in the East Mediterranean, he found the "strings" attached were a "mutual security pact" which would have infringed Egypt's independence. So he went to Czechoslovakia. This has caused a furore. But Nasser has defied Western bullying.

The Soviet attitude was put clearly by Khrushchov in an interview with Pravda last week: The Soviet gave sympathy and moral support for the strivings of the people for national liberation, he said. The question could be solved if the legitimate rights and interests of the people of the French Union were taken into account. He added, however, that Russia did not intend to interfere in French internal affairs and that the Soviet Government believed a correct decision could be found.

That correct decision is just what Britain, France and the United States are not prepared to face.



SPREAD FREEDOM'S GOSPEL!

So big has been the increase in the number of Pioneers who have boycotted the Verwoerd slave schools in Port Elizabeth, that the African Education Movement group leaders have had to divide them into six groups. Our picture shows one of these groups, giving the Afrika salute. Daily they are harassed by the police, but the army of pioneers grows daily like a snowball, reports our Port Elizabeth correspondent. This is their determined refrain:

"Let the Gospel of Freedom spread to cover the entire country. The Gospel is spreading, it has covered the entire country."

INDIANS ANGRY AT GHETTO PROPOSALS

Entire Municipal Area to be White!

JOHANNESBURG.—One group area for all Indians in Roodepoort, Maraisburg, Krugersdorp and Randfontein is the latest proposal of the Town Council of Roodepoort-Maraisburg!

All Indians should be moved from their present homes and business premises into the one vast West Rand Ghetto, says this municipal body, in a statement which has aroused the anger of the whole Indian community.

The Roodepoort-Maraisburg Council met specially at the end of last month to discuss the demarcation of their municipality into Group Areas. The minutes of their meeting disclose an attitude of callousness towards the Indian community, and one of haste to remove them.

The meeting decided that

- The entire municipal area be proclaimed a group area for the Whites with the exception of the Coloured Davidsonville Township and the location on the farm Roodepoort No. 5 which will remain a "specified" area.

- As soon as the West Rand Ghetto is established the "Asiatics" be removed from the Roodepoort-Maraisburg area to their new homes and "Asiatics" should be allowed to trade in the Roodepoort-Maraisburg area for a period to be determined by the Group Areas Board.

- A joint committee of the West Rand municipalities and the Members of Parliament from these areas be set up to submit confidential proposals for the West Rand group area.

- All "dilapidated or uninhabitable premises vacated by Asiatics in the course of their removal to the new Asiatic township be demolished forthwith."

- The Group Areas Board be requested as a matter of great

urgency to hold a sitting in this area, and that the services of the M.P.s concerned be again solicited to lend support to the Council's proposals."

These decisions of the Roodepoort-Maraisburg Council are a complete reversal of the stand on Group Areas taken by the Council only 14 months ago.

In July 1954 the Council discussed the Group Areas Act and the official Minutes record that all the Councillors present agreed that whatever policy was decided upon it should be one which would cause least hardship and engender least ill-feeling among the various racial groups in the future.

Despite some difference of opinion about which areas and how much land should be left for Indian occupation in the municipal area, the Council finally voted that a certain exempted area and stands in the west and south of Roodepoort be left to Indian occupation.

When the issue was put to the vote the proposal which permitted the most Indian occupation was eventually carried.

NAT MAJORITY

Between the July 1954 decisions and those of last month United Party control on the Roodepoort-Maraisburg Council has been succeeded by a Nationalist Party majority, and the Nationalists can clearly not contain their eagerness to exclude all Indians and confine them in the suggested West Rand ghetto. In their haste and ruthlessness they are plainly encouraged by the Group Areas Board itself and the Government, for only last week the Chairman of the Group Areas Board announced that a new stage had been reached and that group areas would shortly be proclaimed at regular intervals.

The Indian community is burning with resentment and anger at these Nazi proposals, and will stand firm with the whole Congress movement in fighting the Group Areas.

ONE YEAR OLD! FATTEN UP YOUR BABY!

ONE issue from now New Age will be exactly one year old, quite a ripe age for a democratic paper in these turbulent times!

We would like to celebrate our birthday free from all cares and worries, but whether we shall be able to do so or not depends upon you. For we shall enter upon our second year with a black cloud hanging over our heads—the knowledge that our newspaper supplies are almost exhausted and that we need £800 extra to pay for the new lot due to arrive in November.

New Age is your baby! It can only continue to exist and grow from strength to strength if you look after it like a mother looks after her child. Make your baby's first birthday a really special occasion. Take the opportunity of showing New Age just how much you have appreciated having it in your home week after week for the past year.

Give your baby a present! A good one! Give it in cash, and make sure that one year from now you will still be able to read the best paper in the country. Fred Carneson.

Remember our addresses: Cape Town: Room 20, Chames Buildings, Barrack Street. Johannesburg: No. 5 Progress Buildings, 154 Commissioner Street. Durban: 6 Pembroke Chambers, 472 West Street. Port Elizabeth: 9 Court Chambers, 129 Adderley Street.

FOR EVERY COLOUR - BAR VOTER - TEN FREEDOM SIGNATURES

—A.N.C. CONFERENCE

JOHANNESBURG.—"NO COMPROMISE WITH APARTHEID! FULL FREEDOM FOR ALL! LINK ALL CAMPAIGNS WITH THE FREEDOM CHARTER!" THESE WERE THE KEYNOTES OF THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE TRANSVAAL AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS HELD HERE LAST WEEK-END.

Conference, which was opened by SACTU leader Leslie Massina, was more than ever characterised by a vigorously militant and self-critical attitude.

FRATERNAL GREETINGS TO THE 158 DELEGATES FROM 48 TRANSVAAL BRANCHES WERE BROUGHT BY MR. ADAM DANIELS, TRANSVAAL PRESIDENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COLOURED PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION, THE CONGRESS OF DEMOCRATS, THE TRANSVAAL INDIAN CONGRESS AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN PEACE COUNCIL. "Let them call the Freedom Charter treason," declared Mr. E. P. Moretsele in his presidential address. "For us it embodies all our deepest aims for the South Africa we wish our children to grow up in!"

The great campaign which has already been launched for signatures for the Freedom Charter must show South Africa and the world that for every voter on the colour bar roll who sends a racialist representative to the Assembly or Senate, there are ten South Africans who reject baasskap and are determined to fight for freedom, said the report placed before the conference.

The people are on the march to freedom, says the report. In every part of the world the former subjects of the colonial powers are well on the way to independent nationhood, asserting their right to take part in human society as complete equals. There can be no doubt that within our lifetime the millions of oppressed throughout the world will govern themselves freely.

This new era of colonial liberation was symbolised by the Bandung conference held earlier this year. Here was a conference of free peoples who until recently had been victims of imperialism and colonialism. It was a conference which pledged to fight until the last vestiges of imperialism are wiped off the face of the earth. Oppressed people everywhere will be inspired by this conference to redouble their efforts to win freedom themselves.

It is our task to make known to the oppressed people of South Africa the fact that our movement is not an isolated and lone one, but only one arm of the great struggle of people everywhere to live out their lives in peace and freedom.

Bandung was one great landmark in the world since our last annual conference. The Geneva Peace Conference and peace are brothers; war and colonial oppression are born of the same family. We who fight for freedom fight also to maintain world peace, the only atmosphere in which we can advance and our people prosper.

The Nationalist Party has used the danger of war on the African continent and in the world at large as a pretext for the Suppression of Communism Act, for the offensives against our organisations and our freedoms. Preparations for war, whether the Cold War or Hot, is the climate in which our civil liberties are attacked. Victories for the peace forces prepare the way not only for an ending of open warfare but also for great advances by the people's movements everywhere.

In the face of these world-shaking events the Nationalist Party dreams of 100 years of apartheid. These political lunatics think that against the tide of thousands of millions of human beings they can perpetuate a system under which a Herrenvolk minority will for all time reign supreme!

NATS ARE FRIENDLESS Despite their boasts and bragging the actions of the Nationalists are those of friendless men who are filled with fear. It is this fear which is driving them from one excess to another.

The past year has seen a succession of acts designed to hold back the people's movements. There have been fresh bannings and exiles, police raids and searches, the threats of treason trials. Each year Parliament tightens the screw of the past laws and now our women are being

the positive and unconditional demand to be treated as free and equal beings.

FREEDOM CHARTER The Freedom Charter is not a dry document, but the living representation of the people's needs; it is not the treasured property of the Congress movement alone, but belongs rightly in every home, in every corner of our land.

The vehicle by which this document can become the inspiration of all our struggles is the signature campaign.

In the coming year our organisation must be tightened up so that

it can cope with the mighty tasks that lie ahead of us. On all sides are our supporters; those who look to Congress for a lead in the fight for a better life. These supporters must be brought into our ranks; Congress membership must grow; Congress is the leadership of all the people. Our policy is the answer to their needs. Our will is to fight until freedom is ours, the report concludes.

At conference end Mr. E. P. Moretsele was unanimously re-elected president. Elected to executive were Lillian Ngoyi, Lawrence Nkosi, P. Matsho, O. Motsabi, J. Nkadimeng, B. Ngwendu, J. Sibande, P. Mokgosi, B. Hlapane and P. G. Keetse.

The Jabaasberg Talks

Big Chief Meets His Boys

Based on a report by Richard Darrow

THE conference on Coloured affairs ended at Klaasjagersberg, near Simons-town, yesterday.

"It was emphasised that none (of the delegates) officially represented any Coloured organisations or groups . . .

"The conference did not try to voice the opinion of the Coloured people on the government's colour policy.

"In fact the Commissioner for Coloured Affairs, Dr. I. D. Du Plessis, made it clear that the policy was not in question . . . Discussion was confined . . . to delegates' suggestions for making it work more smoothly . . . The no politics ban was strictly observed."—Cape Times, Oct. 8.

The New Age reporter was not at this conference, but he attended another confabulation in another part of South Africa, and here is his report of it:

THE JABAASBERG TALKS "WELCOME and greetings," said Big Chief Weg-Is-Jy Boerewors.

"You are all good boys—very good boys—and I want you to talk as much as you like and as freely as you like—as long as you don't (a) criticise apartheid, and (b) discuss principles." He was reading out the rules of the game at the Jabaasberg Talks, held at Uitverkoop Plaas.

Mr. Nobody (Blikkiesfontein): Firstly, I must thank Big Chief Boerewors for paying my return train fare to Uitverkoop plaas, also the pocket-money. (Loud cheers)—he pauses, and braces himself, then rushes on—My big complaint is that when the magistrate orders that Coloured juvenile delinquents be whipped, it is a European who carries out the sentence. It is only fair that Coloureds should whip Coloureds.

Big Chief: That can be considered. I will even go into the question whether we can appoint Coloured hang-men to hang Coloureds. (Loud cheers.)

Mr. Witfoet (a businessman from Etselshoogte): Can't I get a permit for a gun, Big Chief?

Mr. M.R.A. Folding (Inner Council, Cape Town) (angrily): Don't be so demanding. A gas pistol is good enough.

Big Chief: Ah-ha, but a water pistol is still better. (Cheers.) Big Chief: Thank you, thank you. At the next conference I'll increase your pocket allowance. (Cheers.) Now we will adjourn for lunch.

AFTER LUNCH SESSIONS: Mr. Meerdien: I want to know if Big Chief can accept the principle . . .

All: Shut up, Boo, Boo, Sit down.

Mr. Folding (Inner Council): Don't you know we don't discuss principles here, Meerdien?

Headman Meerdien: What I meant is that I have got a house in Claremont and it looks like the place will be declared a white zone under the Group Areas Act. Can't Big Chief make a special favour by accepting my house in principle as a historic Slamsse Quarter?

Big Chief: Don't worry Meerdien. You have been a loyal man of mine and I shall see what De Vos can do for you.

Unanimous cheers and applause. General feeling: What a big hearted Big Chief we've got.

Big Chief: Thank you, thank you. Now we shall discuss the Race classification. But this is a big secret. (The press are cleared from the room.) I am happy to say that I have discussed the matter with Meneer Clot of the Wrong Registrations Afdeling and he has informed me that the comb as a method of detection has been dropped. (Sighs of relief.) The reason is that too many people are using hair straighteners. We also have difficulties when you are—(they are bald. (Vociferous applause.)

Mr. Folding (rising to welcome the statement):

As the Principal of . . .

Big Chief: (Banging his gavel) Principle!

The meeting ends in uproar and confusion. Two policemen lead out Folding who is weeping hysterically.

DURBAN'S RECORD

—150 HOUSES SINCE 1939

DURBAN.—The Mayville and Districts Anti-Group Areas Co-ordinating Committee has been set up following a conference attended by representatives of 16 organisations in Mayville, Natal, last week. Political, social, cultural, religious and sporting organisations were represented at the conference, which was opened by the Reverend Arthur Blaxall.

Conference totally condemned the Group Areas Act and pledged that the "people of Mayville will not under any circumstances co-operate with the authorities in the uprooting of our homes."

Mr. H. R. Deoduth who presented a comprehensive report on housing in the Mayville area told the conference that the last housing project carried out by the Durban municipality was in 1939, when 50 sub-economic and 100 economic houses were built for Indians in Cato Manor.

"THE DEMONS, BEWARE!"

Many a child would shudder to hear of the Sheikh, about his frequent visits to the graveyard late at night; of his command over the world of spirits, and of his dark room that no one ever entered. His mere name reflected weird thoughts of mysterious happenings, of things that bewildered the young and the old.

Despite the lapse of three hundred years, the Sheikh and his sect adhered devotedly to the belief their ancestors brought along from the mystical East when they arrived in the mother city of South Africa as exiled warriors.

The cycle of time sped like a whirlwind, battering all that was concrete—leaving behind a massive phantom of horror and gloom. The scattered relics of their cultural legacy still remained. In his frenzy, Father Time also left behind the imprints of their powerful mysticism. Now only terrifying illusions reign. The demon may still rule but who fears? Not the learned Sheikh! All the evil spirits lay prostrate at his feet. Him they cannot challenge.

No child dare absent himself from the religious class which the Sheikh conducted in a little hall behind the mosque of a congested locality in Cape Town. The only child whom the Sheikh pardoned was Ganief. Even after two days' absence Ganief would enter the class with a cheerful face, greeting 'salaam-alaikum' and the Sheikh responding with a calm nod, as if he would have pardoned for a day more. This often perturbed Sulaiman, Ganief's best friend.

Many a time Sulaiman wanted to remain absent so that he could attend the matinee show where his cowboy heroes played thrilling roles. But the thought of the Sheikh would shatter his hopes. He did not want to be in the bad books of a man who commanded the evil spirits or 'arwaagh' as his father called it.

One way out for Sulaiman was to enquire from his friend Ganief why the Sheikh didn't get annoyed over Ganief's absence and how he could befriend the Sheikh. After all, a favour can be expected from a pal. Surprisingly, Ganief retorted, "What you want to know for?" Then, Sulaiman threatened to break his friendship with 'such a mean pal' . . .

"O, so you want me to tell the Sheikh . . ."

In the end, Sulaiman had to retreat, assuring Ganief that he would still remain his 'best pal' . . .

The only time Sulaiman took risks to fill his heart's desire was when the Sheikh went out to visit urgent cases. Complaining of a severe stomach-ache, Sulaiman rushed out of the class and into the nearest cinema. But then too, Ganief's co-operation was essential. Ganief who was the monitor would be kind enough to overlook his friend's alibi and moreover not disclose the secret to Sulaiman's father. It would be unbearable to a father who was an ardent member of the 'jama' that maintained the class. He expected his only son to receive the teachings and blessings of his 'guru,' the Sheikh, who had no match in town for his mystical powers.

Sulaiman's ill-fated hour came when his father called at the class to listen to the children reciting the Holy Quran, the melodious humming of lyrical Arabic. The Sheikh was absent and so was Sulaiman. The loving 'abuya' (father) of the beloved son left the class in a furious temper. That evening dozens of curious faces stared from their doors and win-

dows, hearing the shrieks and screams of a hoarse but tender voice coming from the house of Sulaiman.

Sulaiman's 'abuya' conferred with the Sheikh and was convinced that his son was visited by an evil spirit that lured him from the Holy Writ. The boy had to be treated.

A bespectacled, tall and burly figure in his forties, his moustache clean shaven but his face decorated with a thick long beard, his head covered with a red turban embroidered in gold thread, and his body enwrapped in a pitch black satin garb that reached his ankles, the Sheikh was seen entering Sulaiman's house. That night in a dimly-lit room filled with the fragrance of oriental perfume that smoked from a cup containing burning coal, the Sheikh set to his task.

The eyes of the master of all evil spirits widened with a furious gaze and then closed as his lips moved softly whispering the 'mantra,' the healing spell. He blew at the victim several times and then calling him nearer he poured some red powder on the smoking cup. The boy's face was lowered towards the cup and he was commanded to inhale deeply. In a moment the victim lay unconscious. The Sheikh smiled and so did Sulaiman's 'abuya.' The demon had been conquered. The surrounding air was filled with the pungent smell of burning chillies.

But that was only an ordinary feat of the Sheikh. The day a live demon was captured by him was the most awe-inspiring event that set the town talking. Altogether three people had witnessed the scene, Sulaiman's 'abuya,' his uncle and the victim who was Sulaiman's mother.

For a week Sulaiman's mother lay sick in bed, unable to move, suffering severe pains in her whole body and with a high fever. Sulaiman's father tried two doctors but neither seemed to assure quick results.

"Why," trembled the lips of the ailing woman as she told her restless husband, "Why waste the money on doctors? Don't you understand what can be wrong with me. Remember the quarrel I had with the woman next door over my beloved son? Her threatening voice still resounds in my ears 'You won't remain so vigorous for ever. Wait and see . . .' Get the Sheikh quickly if you want me alive."

And then she sank in her bed. Tears rolled down the weary cheeks of Sulaiman's 'abuya.' He rushed to the Sheikh and brought him along.

The master asked the patient's name, her mother's name and her birth-date and scribbled it on a piece of paper in 'tulis,' the Arabic script written from the right to the left. Then, making calculations with numerous figures, he exclaimed, "Hmmm . . ." and nodded his head all to himself. He made some enquiries about a quarrel with some woman and then asked whether they had received any eatables from her.

"I don't think so" replied Sulaiman's 'abuya.' "We are not on speaking terms with the woman," he added. The Sheikh hugged his shoulders.

"Think again" the Sheikh suggested, to which Sulaiman's mother suddenly heeded.

"Yes, the Sheikh is not wrong. How can he be wrong?" And she explained that cakes for 'barakat,' token of a Thursday night religious gathering, were received from the neighbourhood. She had eaten one as it was sinful to dishonour 'barakat.'

"I thought so," said the Sheikh and got up to leave the room. With a despairing look on his face Sulaiman's father asked "What now Sheikh?" Pleading for the immediate treatment of his wife, he burst into tears. The Sheikh consoled him and asked him to pray for her safety. He regretted his inability to attend to such a serious matter at that moment and explained that it needed contemplation for two full nights. A demon had been 'given into' her, but he was sure of curing the patient. The best night for exercising his powers would be Thursday night which would fall on the third day after the next. That night according to the lunar system, was the twelfth night, and with the rise of the moon up till the fourteenth night the powers

would receive all his goods on payment of the loan plus a small sum as dividends for the investment. Mr. Hoosain explained that taking interest was 'haraam' (prohibited).

All the requirements were delivered to the Sheikh the next day. That memorable Thursday evening Sulaiman and his father stood at their front door restlessly waiting for the Sheikh's arrival. It was past twelve o'clock of a winter's night and dark clouds loomed over the city. The wind blew haunting tunes and whirled forcefully, dispersing the thick clouds. For a moment Sulaiman's eyes caught the glitter of the full moon but the moving clouds hid its brilliance from his sight. To him it appeared the moon was playing 'hide and seek.' Then the

by A. QAISE

TWENTY-FIVE year old Mr. A. Qaise is a journalist by profession. Among his published short stories are "The Magic Wizard," "The Clueless Letter" and "Crime, or the Survival of the Fittest." At present he is busy on a short story dealing with the relationships between an Indian storekeeper and an African, entitled "The Last Blanket." Also on his agenda is a novel with a South African Indian background called "Son of a Coolie." Set in Natal, the story starts about fifty years ago, portraying the life and struggles of an Indian family through a number of generations.

What is the main duty of a writer? "To write what he sees truthfully. At any cost he has got to tell the truth," said Mr. Qaise. "That is his duty to his people."

Mr. Qaise regards the New Age short story competition as a big success. "I hope you organise more of them," he said, "so that you can unearth more gems hidden in the dark minds of South Africa."

This is the last of the short stories to be published. Readers are invited to give their opinions on the stories and the judges' choice.

of the demons ascended. Thursday night being preferable for such work would also be the descending night. But until then, he would not neglect his patient and would give her three bottles of 'banna'—water to drink with a healing spell cast on it, to prevent transgression by the demon.

Little Sulaiman stood at the door, gazing at the impressive figure of the Sheikh whom he always wanted to befriend but for the obstinacy of his friend Ganief.

Sulaiman's 'abuya' and the Sheikh discussed the things that would be required for the treatment. Two ounces of saffron needed for a solution for 'ajoomatjies' or talisman; one pound of 'miyang,' pieces of granite that smoked into perfume; a black cock without a single feather of any other colour, whose blood was of prime importance for the treatment; and twenty-five pounds in cash for some rare herbs unobtainable in this country but always stocked by the Sheikh for an emergency. And, as for the Sheikh's service charges, it was entirely left to Sulaiman's father, for, as the Sheikh further explained, his guru had prohibited him from asking any remunerations. Of course, voluntary offerings need not be refused.

The patient's husband faced the most distressing moment of his life. Where would he get the forty pounds? All his savings were spent on the doctors. But somehow or other, the precious life of his beloved wife had to be saved. The only monied person among his acquaintances was Mr. Hoosain, the shopkeeper round the corner. Perhaps he might advance some money.

Mr. Hoosain gave him the cash, securing in return, a gram-radio, two newly-sewn suits, his wife's wedding ring and in addition a promissory note for the full amount. The deal was concluded with a solemn understanding between the two that the debtor

sudden drumming of distant thunder roused in the nothingness of the alleys and both father and son stood alert. The door of a car banged. The Sheikh had come, followed by Sulaiman's uncle.

Before he entered the patient's room, he ordered the lights to be switched off. Then, fishing out of his deep pockets a candle-like wax taper he placed it in an empty glass. He pulled out a small white packet wrapped in a cloth and rubbed it with his fingers. Suddenly the packet caught fire with which he lit the wax. The candle glowed dimly, fizzled and smoked, filling the atmosphere with the pleasant smell of oriental incense. In a nearby cup was a burning coal on which he spread pieces of perfumed granite that smoked as it burnt.

The massive figure of the Sheikh approached the patient and stood quietly gazing towards the ceiling. After about fifteen minutes of tranquility he jerked his head like one who regains consciousness.

"Al-Qadir," God the Powerful, he exclaimed inhaling a deep breath. "Quick, get me a deep basin or a big container with some water in it, cold water, and also a glass of water."

Sulaiman's uncle rushed to the kitchen and returned with the requirements.

"Please stand in one corner, all of you—and don't move whatever happens. You must keep on reciting the Holy Verses . . ." The spectators moved to a corner far away from the patient's bed, hugged their heads down and prayed.

The Sheikh dissolved some powder in a glass, ordered the victim to close her eyes firmly and swallow the liquid. A soft blow at the dim wax taper brought darkness in the room. He murmured something, bent towards the floor, picked up the basin of water and placed it on the bed near the victim. A thunderous crack echoed from the raging skies outside. In a frenzy the victim vo-

luted into the basin once, twice and thrice and then lay almost lifeless.

"Put the lights on," the triumphant voice of the Sheikh roared, breaking the dead silence of the dark room. With the glow of the light his face brightened, a smile of conquest played upon his lips.

"Your troubles are over! See in the basin. Don't go too near it. Though he is at his last breath, any spilling of the water on you can be dangerous." Astonished faces cast a glance from a distance. In the blood-red water moved a living creature, something like a chameleon. After a few minutes the water no longer moved. The demon had been defeated. The Sheikh carried off the container with the demon to be cast in the fathomless ocean.

Next day when the primary examinations were to be held, Ganief was asking Sulaiman for help in the test. Sulaiman's response was abrupt: "I am very sorry."

Then he reminded Ganief of his unwillingness to disclose anything about his friendship with the great Sheikh.

"All-right" agreed Ganief, "but you must 'soomba' (take oath) you won't tell anyone."

Only then Ganief parted with the secret:

"You see I always go out on errands for the Sheikh. Sometimes he sends me to the graveyard to catch chameleons."

* * *

ADJUDICATORS' COMMENT

It is welcome to find humour in South African stories—almost as rare as waterholes in the Kalahari—and this story struck us as a genuine find. The writer, a Cape Town man, has found his material on his own doorstep, a facet of the inexhaustible variety of life and character in this country. Although his picture has a sharp critical note and an underlying sadness—the exploitation of ignorance and superstition—it is sympathetically told and even the Sheikh himself comes out at the end still an imposing figure, though somewhat hollow. The scene at the driving out of the demon is well handled and the ending is nicely timed and is not a "trick."

The way in which the characters is handled is old-fashioned by modern standards of story-writing. The Sheikh, the two boys and the father are seen from the outside rather than from within their thoughts and emotions. We are not told, for instance, what each thought and felt about the remarkable events in the story. Were they suspicious or were they completely convinced and awed by the magical performance? Greater excitement and tension, and a heightening of humorous effects could be achieved by going more deeply into the minds of the characters. And what were the feelings of the Sheikh himself? One would like to know more about him and how he upholds his position in an age of reason and doubt. There are great possibilities for humour, irony and enlightenment in the scene with which this writer is familiar.

The style of the writing is too heavy. In a sense, there is a humorous contrast between the dramatic images used and the lightness of the theme. But this can be overdone and we feel the writer might gain by developing a more swift, gay and economical style.

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