

" A brilliant parliamentarian, Mr Hepple is admired by both sides of the House for the battle he wages on behalf of South Africa's workers - White and Black."
Rand Daily Mail 15/3/1958

Born in Johannesburg, South Africa, August 28, 1904. Grew up amidst rapid industrialization of the city, experiencing its harsh impact upon a typical white working-class family.

Father was an active member of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, being blacklisted and victimized by the employers for his part in the 1913 and 1914 strikes and arrested in the bloody strike of 1922 in which Alex Hepple himself took part. Both parents were Rand Pioneers and foundation members of the South African Labour Party. Mother born Pietermaritzburg, Natal, 1872. Maternal grandparents arrived in South Africa 1849. Father came from England when gold was discovered on Witwatersrand.

Married in 1931 to Josephine (Girly) Zwarenstein. Their only son, Bob Alexander, born 1934. She is closely associated with all his work. Her father emigrated from Holland in time to fight for the Boers in the Boer War, and her mother was born in the Orange Free State Republic.

Alex Hepple, a lifelong member of the South African Labour Party and office bearer from 1935 onwards, began work as a messenger boy at £4-0-0 per month - eventually became a company secretary and factory manager. These positions he gave up when he was elected to Parliament in 1948. Member of Transvaal Provincial Council 1943-1948; Member of South African Parliament 1948-1958 when Labour Party was eliminated from Parliament

Parliamentary Leader from 1953 onwards. Served on numerous bodies fighting for human rights.

Has made a special study of labour laws and trade unionism, and is a strong opponent of those who seek to interfere in the affairs of

the trade unions, or curb their democratic rights. Well known for his labours on behalf of non-white workers and the repeal of discriminatory laws.

Chairman of the South African Treason Trial Defence Fund, 1956-1961 (Dissolution);
Chairman of the South African Defence and Aid Fund 1960 - 1964:

Editor of Forward (Johannesburg) 1962 - 1964;
Director and Editor of International Defence and Aid Information Service (London) 1967 - 1972 :

Assisted several trade unions in various capacities.

Publications :-

South Africa: A Political and Economic History.
(282pp.) Pall Mall Press, London, 1966.

Verwoerd (253pp.) Penguin Books, London.
(Pelican Series - Political Leaders of the Twentieth Century) 1967.

Pamphlets :-

Trade Unions in Travail (94pp.) Unity Publications. Johannesburg, 1954. (Story of Broederbond - Nationalist plan to control South African Trade Unions.)

The African Worker in South Africa (36pp.) The Africa Bureau, London, 1955. (A study of Trade Unionism .)

A Trade union Guide for South African Workers (40pp.) S.A. Congress of Trade Unions, Johannesburg, 1957.

Poverty Wages (16pp.) Wages Committee, Johannesburg, 1959. (An examination of wage policy in relation to South Africa's lowest paid workers.)

Censorship and Press Control in South Africa (78pp.) published by the author, Johannesburg, 1960.

Pamphlets specially written for the International Defence and Aid Information Service , viz.:-

Transit Camps in South Africa (13pp.) 1967.
(Deals with The beginnings of "resettlement of Africans from "white" areas.)

The Embargo on Arms for South Africa (9pp.) 1968

Workers under Apartheid (83pp.) 1969.
2nd. ed. 1971. (88pp.) French translation - les travailleurs livrés à l'apartheid - (89pp) 1973.

"Resettlement" - The New Violence to Africans (47pp.) 1969, French translation - Camps de réinstallation - (64pp.) 1970.

Arms and Apartheid (18pp.) 1970

Apartheid Quiz (53pp.) 1972

The Press under Apartheid (63pp.) 1974.

~~South African Labour Party A Memoir~~

Articles on political issues, industrial laws and trade unionism contributed to various periodicals, magazines and newspapers.

As at March 1982

South African Labour Party 1908-1958. A memoir.

[in preparation -
being completed]

HEPPLÉ.

In the 1840's THOMAS HEPPLÉ of Sunderland, county Durham, England, married MARGARET HUTCHINSON of the same town. He was a glassmaker, employed by Hartley's Glassworks and it was near this factory, at 2 Westbury Street, that the couple set up home. The house was one of a long row of terraced cottages which are still occupied by workers, many of them in the modern glassworks now owned by the Pyrex group. (Records show that as far back as 674 A.D. glass was made at Sunderland for the monastery at Monkwearmouth, being the first manufacture of glass in England. James Hartley invented the process of making plate glass early in the 19th. century, revolutionising the glass industry.)

THOMAS AND MARGARET HEPPLÉ had 12 children in all, their first born being a boy, named after his father. This was our father, THOMAS HEPPLÉ, born on 26 June 1869. At the age of twelve he was apprenticed as a patternmaker to Doxforns Shipbuilders, for which his parents had to pay a premium to his employers. As the family grew older they moved to a larger house at 11 Wilson Street, Millfield, Sunderland.

After completing his apprenticeship and becoming qualified as a journeyman patternmaker, THOMAS served an "improvership" of about six months at another dockyard and then obtained work as a journeyman at Hartlepool Shipyards. Unfortunately the shipbuilding and engineering industries were then running into bad times and increasing numbers of skilled craftsmen were falling out of work. Like many otherx young men, THOMAS decided there was no future in North-West England, of even in other parts of the country, and therefore decided to emigrate. The discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand, Transvaal, brought stories of great opportunities for adventurous, skilled workers in developing the gold mines, and so THOMAS set off for South Africa in 1892.

He arrived in Johannesburg in 1893, to discover that engineering had not yet reached the stage to employ pattern-makers. He therefore took the next best thing, work as a carpenter on a mine at Brakpan. Later, when the firm of E. W. Tarry & Co. established an engineering works, he was glad to be able to return to his own trade.

In 1896 he married AGNES BORLAND, daughter of ALEXANDER and THERESA BORLAND (nee COYLE) of Pietermaritzburg, Natal, at the Roman Catholic Cathedral, Kerk Street, Johannesburg. AGNES BORLAND was born on the farm Mielietuin (Maize Garden) on the banks of the Little Tugela River, in Weenen County, Natal on 26th. October 1871. She had seven brothers and four sisters. Her father, ALEXANDER BORLAND was born on 1st. June 1837, somewhere in Ayrshire, Scotland. At the age of 17, soon after completing his apprenticeship as a blacksmith and farrier, he went to South Africa as one of the British artisan settlers whom the British government were encouraging to emigrate to the colonies because of unemployment and poverty throughout the British Isles. The sea voyage by sailing ship was long and distressing; the weather was bad all the way and the food was mainly salt beef and rice, giving him an intense aversion to these two dishes for the rest of his life.

After a short spell in the Eastern Cape, ALEXANDER BORLAND moved to Natal in 1855. There he met MARIE THERESA COYLE, the daughter of Irish parents, born on 21st. March 1840 in County Cork, Ireland. ALEXANDER and THERESA were married in Durban on 21st. April 1862. The COYLE family left Ireland during the dreadful potato famine of the 1840s in which thousands of Irish perished through hunger. They went to Cowes, Isle of Wight and from there emigrated to South Africa, where MARIE THERESA's father was posted as one of the first contingent of British troops sent to Natal to strengthen the colony and set up a colonial government. The family arrived in the village of Pietermaritzburg in 1850 and were stationed at Fort Napier

the military establishment outside the ~~xxxxxx~~ town.

After their marriage ALEXANDER and MARIE THERESA moved to Weenen County, about 70 miles north-west of Pietermaritzburg, where they farmed and ran a blacksmith shop, repairing wagons and shoeing horses for farmers, mostly Afrikaner boers, from many miles around. These farmers were in the main Voortrekker families which had trekked from the Cape in the 1830s to get away from British rule and in protest against the freeing of slaves. Eventually ALEXANDER and MARIE THERESA became anxious about the education of their children, there being no school or teachers in the vicinity, so they returned to Pietermaritzburg and sent their children of schoolgoing age to the Roman Catholic Convent.

Pietermaritzburg had been founded in 1838 by the Voortrekkers after their victory over Dingaan and his Zulu warriors in the Battle of Blood River. The name of the town was chosen in honour of their two leaders, Piet Retief and Gerrit Maritz. In 1842 the British seized control of the town, and set up a garrison to exercise its authority. ALEXANDER BORLAND was one of the soldiers in the regiment entrusted with this authority.

In January 1879, when AGNES BORLAND was seven years old, the whole of Pietermaritzburg was thrown into a panic by news brought by escaping horsemen that a Zulu army had destroyed the whole of a British force of 1,800 men at Isandhlwana, about 80 miles away, where ^{they were} encamped. It was believed that the Zulus were advancing on the town, so the Colonial Secretary, who was responsible for defence of the town, ordered that everyone should prepare to go into laager and be ready to move as soon as they heard the firing of three guns at Fort Napier. The laager was barricaded to protect ~~xxxx~~ the dozen centre blocks

of the town. Families were ordered to gather bedding and rations and to bring with them two buckets - one for fresh water and the other for night soil. Every male capable of bearing arms was given a rifle and 40 rounds of ammunition. ALEXANDER BORLAND was called to arms as a member of the ~~xxi~~ voluntary Maritzburg Rifles, a force of 78 men. In the event, the Zulus made no attack on Pietermaritzburg; they were held up at Rorke's Drift by a small force of British soldiers and decided to disperse and return to their kraals in various parts of Zululand. A year later British forces invaded Zululand and defeated chief Cetawayo at Ulundi.

*1*****

To return to AGNES and THOMAS HEPPLE. Their first two years of marriage were clouded by the loss of their first two children - one died at birth and the other at the age of six months. Both were boys. THOMAS then suggested that they should leave Johannesburg and visit his family in Sunderland. So in 1898 they sailed from South Africa and went to live with THOMAS's family at 11 Wilson Street, Sunderland, and it was there that their third child/^(a girl) was born on 16 February 1901. She was christened THERESA MARGARET (although the family always it was MARGARITA and called her RITA, which name she used throughout her life).

From Sunderland THOMAS and AGNES, with their child, went to London, where THOMAS got a job at Woolich in the armaments factory. In 1902 they returned to South Africa and went directly to Johannesburg, where THOMAS immediately found work at Tarrys Engineering Works. Later he moved to a better job

at Wright, Boag & Co. In the decade that followed THOMAS and AGNES had four more children, all boys. The first was born in 1903; he was given his father's name Thomas; ALEXANDER was born in 1904 and was named after his maternal grandfather; EDWARD, named after his mother's eldest brother, was born in 1906; and GEORGE BERNARD arrived in 1910 (his patronimic was intended to honour uncle GEORGE BENJAMIN STEER but somehow the name BERNARD was substituted for Benjamin). STEER became the first Labour Mayor of Johannesburg in 1918.

THOMAS HEPPLER died on the 4th. June 1944 and his wife AGNES died on the 22nd. January 1960. They lie buried together in the West Park Cemetary, Johannesburg.

~~HEPPLER~~

~~The name HEPPLER is fairly common in the north-west of England.~~

RITA HEPPLER married William Marshall and had two sons, Jack and Robert. THOMAS married ADELA WILLIAMS and had two daughters, Yvonne and Adela. ALEXANDER married JOSEPHINE ZWARENSTEIN and had one son, Box Alexander. EDWARD married GWENDOLINE CHAPLIN and had one son, Raymond. GEORGE married JOYCE ... who had two daughters; George begat no children of his own.

HEPPLER.

The name HEPPLER is fairly common in the north-west of England. There is a village of that name in the Simonside Hills on the border of the Northumberland National Park, a few miles south-west of Rothbury and not far from the Cheviot Hills. There are Roman ruins in the village, and some miles away is Hadrian's Wall, which runs from Solway Firth and Carlisle to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, neighbouring Sunderland.

In her book "Portrait of Northumberland" (1965) Nancy Ridley writes: 'At HEPPLER are the ruins of a Pele Tower, one of the

many that formed a chain of defence which stretched across Coquetdale to the coast at Warkworth. In the reign of Henry III Hepple was the property of "Joe Tallyboys" who is said to have traced his descent from Charlemagne. Assuming the name of Hepple, the family estates passed by marriage into the hands of the Ogles, while today Hepple is the property of the Buchanan Riddels.'

LOUIS DE LEEUW.

Manufacturer's agent
PORT ELIZABETH.

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and
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USED.

Telegraphic-address:
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SOUTH AFRICA.

190

1923?

The winter's sun that bathed my limbs
+ made my sickness less
Has languished palely in the gloomy hills,
While coldness chills my flesh.
The hovering smoke absorbs the valley
As it fades into the dismal dusk,
And the air lends eerie distance 'ball sound.
~~Some~~ ~~new~~ ~~the~~ evening shadows my soul
And melancholy drugs my mind,
As though great grief had made me sad
And I had wedded of this life.

A soft silhouette in the frosty dawn,
Egotistque, deformed shape,
The sturdy oak stands frozen in the icy ground;
And swaying stiffly in the gentle breeze
The last brown leaf clings weakly to the bough
Forlorn, & lonely dying.
Afraid to loose its hold on life,
It fights to stay up there,
~~And warily stares upon the~~
And warily stare upon
Its lifeless friends below.

The Springtime of your life is here,
But will be gone within the year
For Spring is but Sweet summers scent,
— The breath of glorious days
When all the world is bright & green,
And cool, fresh rains
Wash dry winters dust away.
Joy! Joy! Breathe deep to catch
That fragrant scent —
The glorious, radiant, ^{blooming} summer
of your life
Will soon be here!

21/1/31

A restless night
In a strange new bed. —
My mind a tumult of thought,
Today, tomorrow & yesterday
Their happenings jumble & crowd,
Memories jostle the hateful fears,
As they tumble & bound through my mind
Till hope creeps in & stifles them both
— She is mistress now.

The air is blessed with the breath of ^{rain}
& The waking song of the birds
The East is led & Gold —
Hopes, dreams of content
Life is wonderful now.

A. H.

2/10/1931

[This was written the night ^{morning} before our
marriage when Alex slept in our new home
143 Second Avenue, B'z, Valley, Johannesburg]

The rolling clouds
A drooping shroud
Upon my sail,
The pattering rain
Battering my brain
With ~~Satan's~~ Satan's toll,
The thunders crash
A stinging lash
Across my heart

For those who ~~take~~ die

[1932?]

~~at a state~~
for justice
sake

RAND DAILY MAIL

MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 1932.

Picture
taken by AH
on Honeymoon
1931



SCENE OF RAILWAY WASHAWAYS.—The Fairy Knowe Bridge on the George—Knysna line, the piers of which have tilted as the result of the New Year washaways.

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First blossoms on the trees,
Wind in sudden gusts,
To herald August dusts;
A perky mildness in the air
That clears blue skies
To this you came.

To Sam's Baby
Lower morning
Aug 1942.

As so it seemed to be
~~We~~ We thought so happily—
but as you lie
content in mother's bed,
The skies throughout the world are red
With blaze of frenzied war
And millions die—
The maimed more slowly than the rest
Their ideals have an anguished "why?"

Other babes are being born,
In places where all homes are storn,
Of happy life & sweet content
Humming birds & flowers scent
And hopeful dreams like glowing morns.
Across the fields of ripened corn
In places where stark terror stalks
Each humble child
by screaming death ^{from the sky}
Upon the dungeons where they lie.
Beneath crunched mothers
Who no longer cry.

Yonder hill
Bathed in golden morning glow
Like yesterday bandaged in mist ~~glow~~
The landscape
Seeming dear and all ^{as life, & love} ~~poison~~ ^{sad}
like ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~face~~ ^{face} of ~~blady~~ ^{blady} ~~with~~ ^{with} ~~tear~~ ^{tear}
Dreading to-morrow.
To-morrow!
Tis to you like yonder hill—
gleaming, glowing bright with life, joy, hope
of people
freed from serfdom to the rich
freed from trammons ^{rule of} ~~to~~ ^{to} ~~blod~~ ^{blod} ~~loud~~ ^{loud},
~~tear~~ ^{tear}, ~~suicid~~ ^{suicid}
of ~~advancing~~ ^{advancing} man ~~concept~~ ^{concept}

[Written while on holiday,
April 1941 at Durban View
Hotel, Natal]

Beautiful dreams of youth's eager days,
Of things so madly desired

Where are they now?

Scorned & forgotten for meaner ways
And left where they were spied?

Oh let me take them one by one,
And answer truly what I've done
To help those dreams come true.

Will I fear with shame to link my name
With the wild ideals of youth?

Or will I ^{love} ~~stop~~ with joy, ~~as~~ I did a day,
Those beautiful dreams.

April 1942

AH

To cherish & preserve the sweetness of pure love
There comes a time when we must rise above
The mundane pleasures of a selfish world
Where beauty is with filth so quickly hurled
And lovely minds in wretchedness are whirled
In wild confusion
And destroying doubt.

The selfish lusts of life make men so soon deny,
The joy and glorious strength of faith held high,
A faith that comes to those who are sincere
And those who see that though the world is drear.

By A.H.

Warrenton 11/1/46

By A.H.

Across the veld

rays bright from rain
of pools & puddles sparkle here & there
and clouds like snowmen

sprawl in ^{airy} silly shapes

~~but sun is shining~~

Across the back blue curtain that is sky.

And in this sea of green

A million anthers bob like buoys
that brown from rain that came
so late ~~but~~ but just on time

The sun was hot
In that bloody spot
where the Springbok
gambled
The desert sands
blew des his hands;
In the dusty wind that day
And beneath the sky
His shattered thigh
~~was a tragic sight to see~~
Was a tragic sight to see

~~The stretcher bearer found him there~~
~~His shattered thigh~~
~~beneath the sky~~
~~was a tragic sight to see~~
~~And beneath the sky~~
~~His shattered thigh~~
~~was a tragic sight to see~~

2 hours
|||||

With friendly words & cheery voice
The stretcher bearer spoke.
"You'll be all right -
Here! Have a smoke!"
The answer came in painful gasp
"Thanks, chum, I will!"

The wounds were dressed
The pain suppressed
And the gunner gave a sigh
For peace & rest
It would be best
If he could quickly die

~~The wounds were dressed~~
~~The pain suppressed~~
~~And the gunner gave a sigh~~
~~For peace & rest~~
~~It would be best~~
~~if he could quickly die~~

~~"OK, boss" he would not say~~

"OK, boss" The stretcher bearer grinned
And looked upon his patient then
As brothers do at times.
And then he felt soft grasp upon his hand,
And saw a paled face ~~with~~ smile aglow
And heard, "Thanks, chum, ^{Jim} peace & good!"

Long after he had gone away
The stretcher bearer stood
And muttered to himself -
"Chum!" - & the word was good.

And so thought he,
"When I return,
Shall I then be
A bloody swab,
A kaffer, and a dog?"

[1940's?]

Written By Alex. when travelling back from rushed
week-end in Jhb. to Capetown. 14/9/53.

Hurrying townsfolk in
racing cars upon the road
see the yellow carpet
of the veld in Spring,
But miss the wondrous beauty
of the single blossom, and never see
the thousand lovelies, pink
and mauve and blue and white
That give the yellow carpet
the exciting breath taking pattern
of surprise and joy for only those
who happily wander there.

Beneath the blazing noonday sun,
A solitary wagon wound its way,
Lumbering o'er the broken veld,
Seemingly lost on that vast barren
space.

No clouds above, no shade beneath,
To defend that sweltering, weary train
From the sun's great, merciless heat,
Which hourly gained intensity.

AH.

Hurrying townsfolk in
racing cars upon the road
see the yellow carpet
of the veld in Spring,
But miss the wondrous beauty
of the single blossom; and never see
the thousand lovelies, pink
and mauve and blue and white
That give the yellow carpet
the exciting, breath-taking pattern
of surprise and joy for only those
who happily wander there.

1953

Table Mountain.

You madd'giant
How quickly you can turn
From soft friendliness to stony fearfulness.

When sou'easters blow
& your tablecloth, like drifting snow,
dips below your peaks
& dissolves to nothingness.

This raging wind that tears across the bay
brings welcome rains up north, they say.
But look how cold the white horses
brance across the sea!

The haze that settles beneath your slopes
On days when Ct. ~~is~~ sighs & sweats
The mists that hide your might
On days when drenching rains are here.

(2)

You have seen those who raised you
Table Mountain

And those who waited to see you tabled off
You have seen slaves arrive
And march in chains

For sale upon the square.

And then to dungeons at Constantia

As they worked in the vineyards
~~At~~ Each day they looked upon your back
and longed for home beyond the seas.

Soldiers you have seen
Coming to conquer.

Soldiers you have seen
Leaving to die in alien fields.

People coming with hope

more
↓

(3)

Myra Your wooded slopes
Scene of many lovers hopes
cool path'd & green.
Roaming place of many men
and refuge from the noise.

Can change to fierce flames
of raging fire
fanned by the wild wind
Terrifying.

Watched from the distance

~~By~~ A chain of light.

With grandeur that belieis its might

And ruin.

Your scars are like our scars.

Battered & beaten we remain.

To fight again & again.

For you & we are indestructible

more ↓

Beneath you lies the place where
Great men have come & gone, ^{Laws are made}
Lucky men in high places
Great men, failed & thwarted.
Laws to make slaves rich men
Laws to punish those of darker tint
Laws to

That too will change
And you will see it.

± 1948 AH

Death of a Pioneer

The curious neighbours stood silently by as the coffin was carried to the hearse.

Old Bert Hollins had gone at last.

Behind the coffin came his weeping widow & ~~some of his~~ ^{many of his} his children - now busy men & women. Bert Hollins had been a family man and a good one too, ~~as~~ his friends said. There had been fourteen children, nine boys and five girls. Today only Maggie, June, Tom & Bob were there to bury their father.

Period: 1880 - ~~1918~~ 1939 (beginning of 2nd war)

Caves: Discovery of Goldfields
Jameson Raid
Boer War
Great War.
Strikes

Perhaps tragedy 1880 - Boer War
But Occup - 1918 (end of war)
1918 - ~~1939~~ 1946.

A Story In 3 Parts

By Alec Koekemoer

Love - Mother, Brother And Other

WHAT'S the matter with you? What do you want to pick a quarrel for? Leave the chap alone!

"It's all very well for you to talk like that, but you don't know the facts."

"No! No! Carry on!" "Well, ... oh! I don't think you'd be interested."

and he couldn't get even. Then ... then ... look here, Joe, I don't want you to laugh when I tell you this.

me up, as I went shyly to my desk. I was nearly there before any remark was made.

At playtime I had to run for my life. How I lived through the morning I don't remember.

They caught me after school, and rolled me in the dirt, then made me fight.

Part 1

"Ach! why are you making fun of me?" "I'm not! - but you sit there with a face like a tomato,

"Ach! why are you making fun of me?" "I'm not! - but you sit there with a face like a tomato,

"And this sort of thing happens today?" "Everywhere!" "Terrible!"

"But now I've lost the chance. He's probably gone, and I don't know where to find him."

A Story In 3 Parts

By Alec Koekemoer

Love - Mother, Brother And Other

(Last week you read about the grudge Stanley Livingstone Robinson had against Dirk du Plessis, how he had never been able to get his own back on Dirk - when suddenly one day, in town, he walked slap bang into him.)

Now read on and find out whether Stanley avenged himself ... Outside they saw the man they wanted, still engaged in conversation on the corner.

Stanley entered the flats, but was back in five minutes. "What's up?" asked Joe. "He's out!"

"You see," said Stanley, "It is a matter of psychological effect." "Of what?" "Psychological effect."

Murder, or Seven Shots at Sunrise, or something. Cut it out!" "Oh! It's no use talking to you - you don't understand."

"I don't know." "You were gone a long time." "What about it?" "Nothing!"

PART II

"I only thought it may help us to fix him - that's all!" "We're not going to drag any women into this business. They ruin everything."

could tell you the whys and wherefores of it all. Psychoanalysts they are called.

"I haven't much time, but ... oh! I might as well wait!" He crossed the threshold, and immediately our story moved faster.

"I'm telling you that it's time this love making business stopped. It's wasting petrol and good time!"

A Story In 3 Parts

By Alec Koekemoer

Love - Mother, Brother And Other

(Till now Stanley hasn't been able to get hold of Dirk du Plessis, and Joe refuses to play chauffeur any longer. Last week they ended on bad terms with each other.)

DON'T say that! There's no love making business. I simply go there to wait for the brother, and, up to now, I've had no luck - that's all.

don't dress him in those queer clothes you told me about. It may send him goofy, like you. Bye-bye!"

"Yes?" She came towards him expectantly. "I ... I ... I suppose you wonder why I've been coming here every night?"

"Don't be a rotter, Joe!" "Well, what do you want me to do about it?" "I want you to meet the girl."

not speak. He put his arm round her. "Come on kid, don't cry like that!"

THE RELENTLESS ROBOTS

By ALEXANDER HEPPLÉ

You can see Osbert's fearful enemies at any time of the day, standing grimly and silently at the cross streets.

Materialists call them Traffic Robots, but to Osbert they are hateful, awe-inspiring monsters, black-souled and baleful, and he would rather make a wide detour than pass down the streets where they rule.

For all these months he has successfully avoided the strongholds of the enemy, but yesterday his guardian angel slept, and Osbert offered to drive a business friend home. This friend is a stubborn man, who hates to be denied, and when Osbert tried to take the circuitous route, he said.

"Where're you going? You're on the right road now!"

Osbert stuttered, "Er... well... you see... this... er... way is quicker."

But he knew it was hopeless.

"Nonsense! Go straight ahead, man. Don't you know that these traffic signals make it safer and faster to drive down these streets?"

Fearing to annoy a good customer, Osbert entered the enemy territory, filled with evil forebodings.

As the first Robot loomed before him he became a cornered rat, and turned aggressive, but the monster showed its green eye, and Osbert passed on his way. Ahead, the green light of the second Robot gleamed, but as Osbert neared, it changed to yellow then to red. With a stunning jerk, the car stopped, and the business friend cursed. Confused by fear, Osbert had a struggle to move off at the "Go", and this made him just too late to pass the third Robot. Again he jerked the car to a standstill, and again the business friend cursed.

When he started again, Osbert decided that the only way to pass the accursed monsters was to make a dash for it, so he accelerated. From nowhere a kaffir on a push-bike appeared, and for the third time the car stopped with an agonizing jolt. The business friend gurgled in an attempt to say it all at once. When the fourth Robot was reached the red light showed. Desperately determined, Osbert resolved that he would pass the next signal or die in the attempt. He got off the mark perfectly, but a dray cart and lorry turned the corner and delayed him. Undeterred, he accelerated and passed them both.

Ahead, the light changed from green to yellow.....faster faster.....—hanging over the steering wheel, he stared intently at the eye of the Robot—still yellow.....still yellow.....—he flashed past.

Then a screech of brakes suddenly applied, a sickening swerve, and a terrific crash as the car went through the plate glass windows of the corner shop.

Ragged and bleeding, Osbert emerged from the wreckage, with the light of victory in his eyes, and he shouted triumphantly to the gathering crowd. "Hooray, I beat the red!"

"No, you didn't!", said the policeman, taking out his notebook.

SUNDAY TIMES

14/7/29

Second piece ever published.

RETALIATION

By ALEX HEPPLÉ

"Take a seat upstairs, or get off the car!"

The conductor was in a bad temper, and the platform was overcrowded. A heavy woman stood on my feet, and the child in her arms hung on to my tie, and slobbered over my coat. I heard a cracking sound as a burly mechanic bumped against the packet of gramophone records in my hand. "Take a seat upstairs, or get off the car!" The conductor was insistent.

Everybody on the platform stirred uncomfortably, but nobody took a seat upstairs, and nobody got off the car. I guessed that most of them had their feet pinned to the floor, like me.

I ached to obey the conductor, but I couldn't. I knew it was my duty as a good citizen to take a seat upstairs, or get off the car, but if I pushed the woman off my feet she would fall off the car, and the child would strangle me with my own tie.

The conductor shouted again, and I began to feel hot and afraid. I sneaked a sidelong glance at him, and I moaned inwardly when I found that he was staring at me. A sickening fear surged through me, for I realised that he had chosen me as his prey.

"Hey, you—are you paralysed?"

I stared vacantly before me and prayed.

"Come on, you with the windows and the funny hat!"

Did I have a funny hat, I wondered? Hoping that he had discovered some worthier prey than me, I chanced another sidelong glance at him, but, alas, the hope was a vain one. The man with the windows and the funny hat was I.

The tramcar gave a sudden lurch, throwing the woman off my feet into the arms of an immaculate young athlete better able to bear her weight than I. The child took with it my collar and tie, which snapped just in time to save me from strangulation.

Seizing the sudden opportunity, I jumped off the car—the wrong way. I ploughed up the road with my chin, elbows and knees. All the platform passengers laughed with nervous relief, for the sacrifice had been made, and they were now all quite safe.

Painfully I rose, and, shaking my clenched fist at the disappearing tramcar, I muttered: "I'll get you yet!"—meaning the conductor.

With the sincerity and earnestness of one determined to right a wrong, I went into training as soon as my injuries had healed.

Boxing, wrestling, physical culture, Cuneism, and a course in personal magnetism, helped to convince me that when next I met that conductor I would be able to beat him to pulp.

And then, one day, when I was feeling in the pink of condition, and longing to meet him, he passed me on a Forest Hill car. Joyously I chased the car, and laughed aloud at the pitiful irony of it when he obligingly stopped to pick me up.

Triumphantly I leaped on to the platform and demanded: "Do you remember me?"

He stared hard for a moment and then exclaimed: "Yes, you're the driver of our baker's van, aren't you?"

"No, I'm not!" I shouted, "I'm the man who got off the car!" and I hit him on the point of the jaw.

He stumbled backwards and fell off the car on to the road. By some mischance he landed on his feet before he sat down heavily, without hurting himself. Determined that I would now give him the thrashing that I had planned for so long, I jumped off the car.

Ten minutes later the ambulance arrived, and a curious crowd watched the firemen bathing and bandaging a pulpy, bleeding face, and a bruised and battered body.

Again I had jumped off the car the wrong way.

First piece ever published for which he was paid 10/-

SUNDAY
TIMES
1929

[31/6/29]

36, First Avenue,
Bez. Valley North,
Johannesburg,
1/1/30.

The Editor,
"Forward".

Sir,

The Conference is over. All we upright, true and faithful Socialists have said all the things upright, true and faithful Socialists should say, and always have said. With the catchwords of the creed, we have denounced Capitalism, Creswellianism and other vile products of our own idiocy.

One and all, we exhorted our fellow delegates to abandon deceit, hypocrisy, cheating, wangling, and other main planks in our platform. We prefaced our speeches with the boast that we were there to speak honestly and fearlessly, and begged the Congerence to throw aside soft soaping tactics, and to debate with true sincerity; and then we indulged in mob-oratory, to impress each other with our own miserable worth. When quoting famous Socialists, we interjected incidents of personal contact with them, in the manner of a mother relating how her daughter nearly danced with the Prince of Wales.

By fifteen votes to fourteen we decided that the bottom dog is to be uplifted in the same way as our fathers tried to uplift him, and not in the way the modernists would like to do it. We have decided to stand by Socialism as it was in the beginning, because, as true old stalwarts, we know that it would be rank treachery to admit or consider that the world has changed since the birth of Socialism. We told the Conference that Socialism stands for the black man as much as it does for the white, and we shall impress this upon the kaffirs, even if we have to kick them harder, or curse them more loudly than before.

Mr, George Hay appealed to us to find the lost soul of the Labour Party, and we cheered him loudly, but we fear to go out into the darkness and grope for this black spirit, which will drift restlessly in purgatory until consigned to Hell. And a soulless Labour Party, composed of snobbish, sentimental socialists, political scavengers, professional politicians, and a herd of sheepish workers, will become the stepson of Mammon and brother of Capitalism.

But what do all these things matter? We were reported on the cable page of the "Mail", and right across the top was a beautiful photograph of a whole string of us, all smiling and happy, like true strong men; we did not look like the great Socialists we are, but just like ordinary people. If the enslaved masses could only realise how we are fighting for their betterment, they would honour us more than they do.

Yours faithfully,

REVENGE.

"Take a seat upstairs, or get off the car!"

The conductor was in a bad temper, and the platform was overcrowded. A heavy woman stood on my feet, and the child in her arms hung on to my tie, and slobbered on my coat. I heard a cracking sound as a burly mechanic bumped against the packet of gramophone records in my hand.

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The conductor shouted again, and I began to feel hot and afraid. I sneaked a sidelong glance at him, and I moaned inwardly when I found that he was staring at me. ~~My blood was curdling~~ A sickening fear surged through me, for I realised that I was to be chosen as the victim of ~~for~~ the conductor.

"Hey, you!, Are you paralysed?"

I stared vacantly before me, and prayed.

"Come on!, You with the windows and the funny hat!"

Did I have a funny hat, I wondered? Hoping that he had found some better prey than me, I stole another sidelong glance at him, but I was pained to find that my hope had been a vain one. The man in the windows and the funny hat was I.

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He stumbled backwards, and fell off, on to the road. He landed on his feet, staggered a few yards, and then sat down heavily, but was soon on his feet again, gesticulating wildly. Determined to give him the thrashing I had intended, I jumped off the car, to attack him on the street.

Ten minutes later the ambulance arrived, and a curious crowd watched the firemen bathing and bandaging a pulpy, bleeding face, and a bruised and battered body.

Again I had jumped off the car the wrong way.

[see printed copy two pages above]

The Editor,
"The Star"

17th. June 1938.

Dear Sir,

At the beginning of this week it was announced that the Censor had banned Upton Sinclair's book "No Pasaran" and I am surprised that none of this author's thousands of admirers has uttered a word of protest. Perhaps, like myself, they are too dumbfounded. "No Pasaran" is not a sex novel, nor is it pornographic, so it would be interesting to ~~kn~~ know on what grounds the Censor has considered it unfit for the people of South Africa. It deals with the war in Spain, and is pro-Government. Is it to be banned because it supports a legitimately elected Government?

Upton Sinclair has always taken up the cudgels on behalf of the under-dog, and to-day he is universally recognised as an honest fighter for truth and Justice. In every case where he has written books in support of a cause, nobody has been able to disprove his facts. He prides himself on the meticulous care in which he investigates all aspects of his case before he goes into print.

America can thank him to-day for the reforms which were brought about because he exposed the horrors of the Meat Packing Industry in his "The Jungle". Prohibitionists the world over acclaimed him for "The Wet Parade", a novel which showed ~~why~~ the great forces which were sparing nothing in order to bring about the failure of prohibition in America, and showed how these forces could be defeated. "Upton Sinclair presents William Fox" was a gigantic exposure of the rottenness of the Film Industry, and how Big Finance ousted William Fox; in this book he accuses numerous people - he is not afraid to name them - and gives facts and figures. These have never yet been refuted, and nobody has ever won a libel suit against him.

Despite his constant output of propoganda books, he was able to secure an enormous vote when he recently stood as Democratic candidate for the ~~Governorship~~ Governorship of California, against a very strong opponent. America is to-day giving him the recognition which he justly deserves, but South Africa, for some unknown reason, singles him out ~~for~~ as undesirable. Does the Censor know that Sinclair is considered very Puritan in literary circles overseas?

Yours faithfully,

CORYDON

A. Hepple,
P.O. Box 4358,
JOHANNESBURG.

143, Second Avenue,
Bez. Valley North,
Johannesburg,
22nd. Feb 1932.

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Dear Friend,

The purpose of this letter is to thank you for your kind invitation to the League of Soviet Friends, and to offer some explanation of our rather early departure. I would like to look you up, but I find so little time, as my lunch hours are always occupied with some necessary work or other. However, I hope that this letter will convey all I intend, and that you will not misunderstand my feelings.

Any movement that aims at the extinction of the present system of ensuring the survival of the fittest parasites, and endeavours to substitute a higher social life of justice and happiness, will have the full support of my wife and me. Unfortunately, we are rather out of touch with most of the existing reformers, who are attached to some political belief or other, and we think that the success of most of these movements would ~~improve~~ improve life for some, but still leave a section of humanity submerged. Petty objections to some minor opinions or methods, are blinding these reformers to the main issue, and even in Russia there is the continual breaking away, petty quarreling, selfishness and self aggrandizement, that is so typically bourgeois. Are we not searching for a life apart from that? It was much this sort of feeling that we both sensed at your meeting. Probably those who were most flippant were most sincere, but it is a painful experience to walk out of a life of misery, poverty, unemployment and oppression into a room of revolutionaries haranguing and quibbling over the wording of their society's constitution. Admitting the necessity of a sound foundation, does it not seem to be adding one more injustice to the many the bottom dog has to bear?

You will gather from the above that my wife and I were disappointed, or more honestly, disheartened. Perhaps our idealism will make our aims and schemes too much like childish romance to appeal to the average person. Perhaps we expect too much; or perhaps ~~our~~ our youth blinds us to much that older reformers uphold; but we shall continue to look to the time when man shall be

"Scepterless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself; just, gentle, wise...."

A hope that makes life worth living. But I digress.

As I was still suffering from the effects of illness, I was anxious to get home early, and this was the real reason why we left so abruptly. But frankly, the perpetual and perplexing argument was no tonic to me. We wish your new movement every success, but are definite in saying we shall not join. Any way in which we can help to make this life a better one for others, or help those who are doing more active work in this direction, we shall not hesitate to find, so you may rely upon us to do our share.

I shall renew my subscription to the New Masses shortly. In the meantime, please continue to forward same. The collapse of the throne of Mammon is awkwardly reflected upon most of us in a shortage of spending power, so I find luxuries like books impossible just now.

With kindest regards, and best wishes,

D, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 1942

• A Tip To Mr. Hofmeyr

Time For Masterful Speeches Is Gone!

By A. HEPPLÉ

The author is a member of the National Executive of the Labour Party and a member of the Economic Advisory Committee to the Labour Party.

THERE are quite a number of people in this country who unfortunately spare no effort in avoiding payment of their just contribution towards winning the war. They get up to all sorts of tricks, and more often than not, they get away with them.

The war is costing a lot of money, and no one will deny that if we want to win the war we must pay for it. The fairest way is to tax the people according to their wealth — the more you have, the more you pay. It is logical. Sadly enough, there are many with plenty of money who don't like the idea.

The war presents many problems to them, apart from taxation. Investments are not what they were, and there is the danger that money won't be worth anything after the war. So they have to put their money in jewellery, art treasures, and other stuff that will "always be worth money." Of course, there are the War Loans at 3 per cent., which are quite safe. And right now, the best buy of the lot is land.

The war is at a critical stage. Tobruk was a severe setback. This is the time to deal with "pocket patriots" if ever there was one. Our Minister of Finance, Mr. J. H. Hofmeyr, does not think so. Speaking to the Chemical, Metallurgical and Mining Society last week, he supported the President's suggestion that the Union should return to

gold coinage. One of the reasons he gave was that such a step would be a useful hedge against Inflation, and that people who were now rushing to buy land, would be happy to be able to secure gold, with considerably less risk of depreciation. This is an alarming statement. It is dangerous.

Is our Minister of Finance seriously advising the unpatriotic how best to evade their responsibilities? In an "all in" war, these people should be hurrying to the Government with every penny they can spare. What better investment is there than Victory?

The Labour Party believes that all idle money should be borrowed by the Government, free of interest, to finance the War Effort. Perhaps this is too unorthodox for Mr. Hofmeyr, who stands firmly behind vested interests, but he surely cannot quarrel with the point of view that all idle money should be lent to the Government to pay for the war and reduce the danger of Inflation. For a long time he has been warning the nation of the dire results that would follow inflation.

It seems that the bugbear of Inflation has blinded Mr. Hofmeyr to Inflation itself. While he has been busy campaigning against its dangers, he has failed to see that for the poorly-paid, it is here already. Perhaps Mr. Hofmeyr does not include the staple commodities of life, meat and vegetable, among those things which should be stabilised. The prices of all agricultural products in South Africa have risen enormously since the outbreak of war, and they continue to rise. This means that the

people's real income is dropping lower and lower.

In America, Roosevelt has asked Congress to pass legislation, before October 1, authorising him to control farm prices. He is boldly striking at the heart of inflation. He knows that without control of farm prices — grain, meat, vegetables, butter, cheese, etc. — economic chaos is inevitable. We are indeed fortunate here in South Africa that, despite the big rise in the prices of necessities such as meat and vegetables, this chaos has not really struck us. But it will, unless something is done, and done very soon. Mr. Hofmeyr has said:—

"The problem of a Minister of Finance in war-time is really a two-fold one. He has a fiscal problem and also an economic one . . . so as time goes on he finds himself paying much more attention to economic than fiscal problems."

And with which we agree. The needs of the hour demand something more than masterful speeches. This is no time for our Minister of Finance to be seeking ways of escape for idle Capital. In place of his usual orthodox, 'safe' policies, we would like to see him put his words into practice, and really turn more to economics — particularly as far as the wage-earner is concerned.

As an immediate step he could consider the urgency of large-scale production of consumers' goods, as a means of providing for the needs of the people of the Union and the convoys that call here, and at the same time combating inflation. And while considering this matter, he could bear in mind the need for drastic reductions in the prices of these goods, which would lead him to understand how and where the Department of Finance must be an integral part of the department of the Food Controller.

+ 1942

INFLATION AND INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION IN SOUTH AFRICA.

During the past few months the Minister of Finance, Mr. J. H. Hofmeyr, has spoken on many occasions about the danger of inflation. He says that there exist in the Union to-day, certain tendencies towards inflation, and that if necessary, he will take steps to prevent these tendencies developing.

Leading South African economists, such as Dr. de Kock, Deputy Governor of the South African Reserve Bank, and Professor Arndt, of Pretoria University, also refer to the "dangers" of inflation and offer certain proposals for its prevention.

The public, as a whole, pay little or no attention to the warnings of Mr. Hofmeyr and the economists. They feel that this is a matter of "high finance", and is not their concern; unless of course, they happen to have a nest egg somewhere, and are afraid of losing it. This attitude of the public may be attributed to the fact that during the past ~~fifty years~~ century, money has assumed such extraordinary and complicated functions in our society, that even the economists themselves are often confused, and the "man in the street" looks on with awe. The words of the financial page in his newspaper, - the Bank Statements, Commodity Price Indices, Money Market reports, Fiduciary Note issue, etc. etc. mean nothing to him. He is rightly concerned with earning enough money to live on, and cannot be bothered with what he calls "high finance".

To-day the whole world is at war, & everybody talks of a "New Order" after Nazism and Fascism have been crushed. But if "things are going to be different after the war", we must know something about Money, and what its place is to be in the "Brave New World". If the people of the world are to be contented, they must harbour no fears of the power of money

This article deals with a crisis which has arisen because there is too much money in the Union, viz. the danger of Inflation. The future of South African Industries is linked up

- with inflation -

reserves which have been steadily accumulating since the outbreak of war. Between the 31st. December 1938, and the 30th. June 1941

with inflation, because this plethora of money which is causing uneasiness in the minds of Mr. Hofmeyr and the economists can be utilised to the advantage of the Union's Industries.

It must be remembered that the Union's dependance on the Gold Industry is so great that if anything were to happen to Gold the entire nation would face ruination. About one half of the people of the Union rely directly and indirectly upon the Mining Industry for their livelihood. The Gold Industry of South Africa has been compared with the Wool production of Australia, and the Mutton of New Zealand, but if the worst came to the worst wool and mutton represent clothing and food to the peoples of Australia and New Zealand, but Gold would be worthless to the people of the Union.

The Inflation which is looming on the horizon in South Africa to-day is not the monetary Inflation which took place in many countries after the last war, and which occurs when a Government is in a critical financial plight, and resorts to the artificial creation of money. The inflation which Mr. Hofmeyr fears is "Price Inflation". He has described its prevention as "the maintenance of stable purchasing power of our ~~money~~ money".

Dr. M. H. de Kock defines price inflation as:-

" A rise in the general level of commodity prices.....and implies something unsound or abnormal in the higher price level"

WHAT CAUSES INFLATION ?

There are a number of factors which contribute towards this abnormal rise in the prices of commodities, but it is generally accepted that the main causes are:-

- (a) Increase in quantity of money available to the community.
- (b) Fear of Inflation
- (c) Shortage of Consumers Goods
- (d) Increased wages, of workers.

The main source of the increase in the quantity of money has been the creation of credit by the Reserve Bank against its large gold reserves which have been steadily accumulating since the outbreak of war. Between the 31st. December 1938 and the 30th. June 1941

there was an increase of £51,500,000 in circulation in the Union, which is roughly 41%. The South African Reserve Bank buys the entire gold output of the Union, sells what is necessary to balance the Union's Exchange requirements, and holds the surplus in reserve. This reserve is known as the "Retained Gold Output", and has been growing at the rate of about £2,000,000 per month.

According to Dr. de Kock :-

" The existence of the large retained gold output in the Union in recent years is attributed to primarily the high price of gold (from 84/11½ to 168/-) and the large quantity of gold produced, as a result of which the gold output increased from £86,670,000 in 1938 to about £118,000,000 in 1940, and is estimated to amount to over £120,000,000 in 1941."

In addition to this, the Commercial Banks, Investment Companies, Building Societies, etc. have large deposits lying idle owing to the restricted avenues of investment resulting from the War.

The existence of this idle money is unsatisfactory from the Government's standpoint, because if it is advanced to the public it will aggravate the position of money in circulation being far in excess, of available commodities, and so force up the price of commodities.

Fear of Inflation is a psychological factor, but a very important one. It is important because this fear leads to panic, and a flight away from money; those who have spent their lives accumulating money, now seek to change it into commodities, or gilt-edged investments. The very people who possess money are the first to lose faith in it; they quickly accept rumours that money will soon be valueless, and they do their utmost to turn their money into what-ever they believe to be safer. This accounts for the boom in diamonds, precious stones, jewelry, and real estate which has taken place during the past eighteen months. Of course, the demand has driven up the prices of these things, but the philosophy of the buyers is one of consolation that something has been saved from the shipwreck. Mr. Hofmeyr quoted figures to a meeting of Transvaal financiers, showing that transfer duties on sales of real estate were 40% ^{HIGHER} in April/August 1941 than in April/august 1940

He said that this was ~~at~~ a clear indication that an enormous amount of property buying was taking place. "Abstain from the purchase of fixed property at inflated prices, thus stimulating speculation", he appealed. He warned of the ultimate disaster which would overtake those who persisted in such speculation. Unfortunately, Mr. Hofmeyr knows that his appeals are unavailing, for the people to whom he is talking are obeying the cardinal law of Capitalist society - "Each man for himself". To listen to appeals to their patriotism, or public spirit, might endanger their possessions, but with customary optimism, Mr. Hofmeyr entreated the financiers:-

"I want to ask you to check those dangerous psychological tendencies in those whom you are able to influence, to check this quite unwarranted sense of insecurity and the sense of fear." Of course there is no ground for such a fear in South Africa. There are very few countries in the world to-day where there is less ground for such fear. Our monetary and banking position is very strong."

The shortage of commodities in the Union to-day is a natural consequence of the war. Importation is difficult, sources of supply restricted, and a large part of the national effort has been diverted into the production of war materials.

"The main contribution of such non-productive effort towards rising prices is that wages and materials are diverted from normal commercial channels into non-productive war materials, and there must, therefore, be a shortage in the things which normally go to satisfy the requirements of a normal living world."

This means that trade is restricted. The fund out of which overhead expenses are recouped is smaller, and one of the first impulses in the business world is to increase the unit price charged for services against a smaller number of units produced, in order to recoup what are, to a certain extent, fixed overheads..... and so as the various commodities pass through the many hands which play their part in producing an article for ultimate consumption by the public, each adds his quota; the inevitable result is a spiral of increasing prices."

(S. A. Accountant & Secretary - Nov..1941)

General Smuts recently accused "certain people in this country" of not realising that there is a war on, and reminded them that "this is the time for, sacrifice, not business as usual".

But will manufacturers and merchants forego their profits and

turnover when they know that, despite the war, the relentless struggle against their competitors must still go on? Pity the public-spirited manufacturer who neglects his normal markets and relaxes his efforts because there is a war on!! His rivals would soon wipe him off the market, and he would be left with whatever War contracts he may have and nothing else.

It is surprising that Smuts condemns those who want business as usual, when he himself boasts of the expanding markets of the Union's Industrialists, and the rapid development of our local Industries.

Increases in wages are never palatable to employers, but they workers are sometimes able to obtain these increases. It cannot be said that the scale of wages of South African workers ~~have~~ has risen appreciably since war began, despite the statements made to the contrary. There has been a fivepercent increase in the wages of all those earning less than £3-10-0 per week, and in some industries employers have granted a small cost of living allowance. The increased spending power of the public has come from increased earnings, ~~in~~ due to the great amount of overtime being worked in war industries, and the fact that many more people are in employment, including those in military service. According to the economists, the danger in this increased spending power is that more people will be able to buy goods, of which there is a shortage, and so the prices of these goods will be forced up. As prices go up, workers will demand ~~the~~ higher wages, and then we have what is known as "the vicious spiral of wages chasing prices". We cannot deal here ~~with~~ with any of the unique schemes which have been proposed to combat this evil, but we can observe that wages have never yet caught up with prices. We should also note that the Government has appointed a price Controller, and a Controller of Man Power. Regarding the former, it is significant that he was unable to prevent increases in the prices of Meat, Vegetables, Cheese, Butter and Milk - staple items in the peoples' diet. Commenting editorially on the Control of prices

the New York Times on the 14th. September last said:

" The problems of price fixing would baffle a Convention of economic geniuses and saints not to speak of ordinary congressmen"

We must accept the fact that the price controller cannot prevent prices rising, but he can, to a certain extent, prevent profiteering.

EFFECTS OF INFLATION ON THE WORKER.

We have observed that the monied classes become panicky with fear of inflation, but it is important to know what the effect of inflation will be upon the living standards of the working classes. When prices are rising, there is one commodity which rises in price more slowly than the rest, and that commodity is labour power. If increased wages or cost of living allowances are gained by the wage earners, such increases are obtained long after prices have risen. Whereas the rise in price of the necessities of life - food, clothing and shelter - is always greater than ~~the~~ any rise in wages, it must be remembered that the wage earner spends his entire income upon these articles, and the monied classes do not. Thus ~~it~~ it will be seen that the conditions of inflation favour the rich against the poor. Particularly where the workers are unorganised will they suffer most, because they cannot take joint action to secure higher wages or cost of living allowances.

In this connection, it is interesting to read the views of Dr. de Kock:

"prevention of any rise in prices.....can be further secured by controlling prices to the extent that is considered necessary, and by striving deliberately to avoid increases in wages and salaries and the introduction of cost of living allowances, which bring about a further increase in production costs, and a further justification for a rise in prices."

Dr. de Kock is also of the opinion that the vicious spiral of wages chasing prices is aggravated "when labour is well organised, and has a controlling voice, or the balance of power in politics". Which means that if Labour is too weak to fight, no compensating increases in wages will be given to ~~it~~ offset the increased cost of living. The sharp rise in profits which has always been a

feature of war time, is being repeated here in South Africa to-day. During the first ten months of war, the Government collected over £2,500,000 in Excess Profits Duty, calculated at 50%.

Despite this, Dr. de Kock and the Government wish to pursue a policy of "deliberately striving to avoid increases in wages and salaries". The financial sufferings of a war caused by the Capitalists must bear entirely upon the shoulders of the worker, no less than the actual fighting itself.

It is becoming clearer every day that despite pious declarations of a better life after the war, and great social changes, despite the Atlantic Charter, there is no honest intention to abolish the cruel power of finance capital.

PREVENTION OF INFLATION.

Mr. Hofmeyr has warned the public that if the present tendencies continue and extend, Government action will become necessary.

Actually, Government action has been taken in some cases, such as freezing of wages in certain industries, price control, and rationing. Under existing economic conditions, there are several ways in which the Government can combat inflation, viz.:

- (a) Price Control
- (b) Rationing of goods
- (c) Freezing of wages
- (d) Compulsory Savings Schemes
- (e) Extension of taxation to smallest wage earner.
- (f) Withholding of advances by Commercial Banks.
- (g) Development of local Industries, and extension of facilities for the importation of overseas goods.
- (g) Utilisation of accumulated Credit for redemption of overseas debt.

At present the Reserve Bank is redeeming the Unions debts in London, to the fullest possible extent. Rationing has been attempted in respect of Petrol, but according to the authorities, consumption has increased, due to the weakness of the method adopted.

It is unnecessary to deal with the various other items in detail, as their respective importance emerges from references elsewhere. There is one method of combating inflation which is of the highest importance to the Union generally, and that is "Development of local industries", and for that reason must be considered very carefully.

DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN INDUSTRIES.

Industrial development ~~afferts~~ retards inflationary tendencies because the production of a greater volume of consumers' goods overcomes the danger of prices of these goods rising.

The sources of supply which have been lost to the Union as a result of the war, can be replaced by the establishment and development of our own Industries. Another opportunity, such as that which

the Union had during the Great War, has arisen, but under circumstances that are extremely favourable to us. An opportunity to

expand industrially, and to lessen our abnormal dependence upon the Gold Mining Industry. ^{As previously stated} Today, more than half the entire population

of South Africa is dependant, directly or indirectly, upon the gold mining industry for a livelihood. Relative to this, Dr. de

Kiewiet, in his "History of South Africa" remarks upon a Report made by the Brigden Commonwealth Committee of Australia in 1929:

" A country with very rich gold mines, which provided all the exports, and no lower grade ore, could gain a very considerable population by using the profits of the mines to subsidize manufacturing industry, unless its disadvantages in manufacturing were very exceptional. "

Unfortunately, South Africa has never adopted a bold policy as far as the Gold Mining Industry is concerned. It has never utilised this enormous asset as a means of establishing the national economic welfare against such time as the country may have to ~~xxxx~~ depend upon something else instead of gold.

Earlier in this article (Pages 2 and 3) reference was made to the "Retained gold output", which is growing at the rate of £30,000,000 annually, and for which the Reserve Bank cannot find a ready field of investment. The position is aggravated by the abnormal price of gold, and in the words of Dr. de Kock

" the present financial situation of the Union already savours of acute artificiality, with its inherent dangers to both material and moral values in the long run as a result of a price of gold which is, if anything, too high for the national economy of this country as compared with other countries."

organisation which will be in a position to encourage investors confidently to provide adequate capital industrial undertakings."

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This is the answer to South Africa's Industrial problem. Full use must be made of this artificial situation. Almost the whole world is at war to-day. Conditions change rapidly. Is there anyone who can say with confidence that Gold will remain the medium of exchange in the years to come? While we can, let us exploit our gold production and the high price of gold to the fullest. Let us use this credit for the development of our own Industries.

Some years ago, Prof. Frankel wrote in his "Capital Investment in Africa":

"Experience has demonstrated beyond doubt that whatever the rate of overseas investment in Africa may be in the future, it is very necessary to foster those forms of economic progress which will enable the peoples of the African continent to contribute in a greater measure than they have done so far, to the upbuilding of Capital resources themselves."

We can go further than this. We can, as a Nation, use the credit referred to above for the establishment of Co-operative or State factories, for the production of the goods needed for our own consumption. It would be foolish to use our accumulated gold reserves for fostering private industrial establishments, because we would then be laying the foundations for future trouble with vested interests. An essential feature of such Co-operative or State establishments would be economic independence, model working conditions, planned production, and the provision of healthy employment for workers. The raising of the economic standards of all sections of the community could be forced through the progress of these co-operative industries, where exploitation would not exist. The case for State or Co-operative Industries is made by the Chairman of the Industrial Development Corporation, Dr. H. J. van der Byl, in his address to Shareholders in December 1941:

"..... Generally, however, the activities of the Corporation are directed towards guiding and assisting others in financing the establishment or development of industrial undertakings, and, as far as may be practicable, the corporation will not provide an unduly large proportion of the Capital necessary. It is intended to provide an organisation which will be in a position to encourage investors confidently to provide adequate capital for industrial undertakings."

The Industrial Development Corporation does not set itself as its main task the building up of South African Industries, and thereby South Africa itself. It declares that it is mainly concerned in finding safe fields of investment for financiers, etc. Its main concern is to protect investors, to attract people with money to certain industries. It is natural to expect that investors will put their money in those industries which show a speedy return, and high profits; industries which will take time and care in building will not receive ready support. Assuming that Dr. van der Byl speaks for the ruling classes in our rotten economic system, we can accept his observations on industrial development as being very important. He stresses the fact that skilled wages are many times higher than unskilled wages, & that the local market is extremely restricted, because a very considerable proportion of the population is in such poor circumstances that it cannot purchase the goods produced by workers earning very much higher wages. He says:

"Some sacrifice may have to be made temporarily by some of us in order to assist in the establishment of conditions whereby the less favoured masses may share, to a greater extent, the benefits of modern civilisation, while at the same time, making a greater contribution towards the advancement of Southern Africa. To this end our human resources will have to be developed in accordance with a definite plan, and secondary industry must form the most important means of achieving the well being and prosperity of our whole population."

These are fine words, but his explanation of the purpose of the Industrial Development Corporation, as quoted before, reveals an entirely different ambition.

South Africa, as a young nation, mainly dependant upon British and American Capital, finds itself in a world of war and imperial conflict, and ~~despite~~ will soon be faced with grave decisions. Despite the fact that the South African nation is playing its part in the defeat and destruction of Nazism, and as a whole is determined to carry on until final victory is won, there must be no supine or reckless neglect of the problems of the future.

The chief problem will be the settlement of the African Continent, its freedom and independence, and its place in world affairs.

In Britain to-day, a movement which is gaining support, is Federal

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Union, which aims to abolish state sovereignty, that is, the existence of numerous rival states, and so abolish war. Recently we had the Atlantic Charter, with eight points for the preservation, of the free rights of nations. During the last war we had proposals for the United States of Europe. Such schemes are merely attempts to build up new powerful blocs, and mightier antagonisms, but South Africa, industrially backward and undeveloped, and with small pastoral and agricultural resources, would indeed be insignificant and unimportant in such a federation.

What South Africa needs is to,develop and progress in a manner which will bring a better life, of peace and contentment, free from all the ills which have beset the rest of the world during the past forty years. Let South Africa learn from the sufferings of the European countries, and decide whether to bolster up the tottering Capitalist system of exploitation , with its attendant poverty, unemployment, starvation, slums, and numerous other evils, or whether to wipe the slate clean, and commence on a sound basis of Socialist Planned Society. The example of Russia is there to guide us. The many difficulties which beset the Government and its economists in their attempts to develop and expand our Industries would vanish immediately the people take the courageous and determined step of eliminating Capitalism.

Forward. Sept 1942,

SOCIAL SECURITY CONFERENCE

By **A. HEPPLÉ**

The writer is vice-chairman of the Transvaal Provincial Executive of the Labour Party; a member of the National Executive; and a member of the Labour Party's Economic Advisory Committee.

THE South African Press is giving great publicity to the forthcoming Social Security Conference in Durban. There is the impression that something new has appeared on the horizon — not only new, but amazing.

Gen. Smuts has sent his blessing to the Conference, with fulsome commendation, and Dr. Colin Steyn will attend. Of course in addition to these two prominent members of the Cabinet, there is support from many other important citizens of the Union. It is encouraging that the matter of Social Security is receiving the attention of these people, and the Committee is to be congratulated upon obtaining such wide support.

At the Conference, many angles of Social Security will be drawn, and the Labour Party may well take note of them, because it is deeply interested in Social Security. It is deeply interested because it has a Social Security Code of its own, and because it was the Labour Party which introduced a motion in Parliament many months ago, calling for the provision of a Social Security Code in South Africa.

For many years the Labour Party has been laughed at because of its "Utopian" attitude towards the economic problems of the country. In asking for a Social Security Code the Labour Party was seeking some immediate benefit for the suffering people — something "to get on with" — and the Labour Party does not pretend that a Social Security Code is Socialism, because it is not.

Here was an opportunity for the Government to applaud the Labour Party or to laugh it out of court. More

diplomatically, they accepted the motion "in principle." Later, Dr. Van Eck, Chairman of the Social and Economic Planning Council, said that one of the important tasks of the Council would be the consideration of the Social Security Code. In debate Gen. Smuts said he would like to have more facts and more detail. The Labour Party has drawn up a Social Security Code, in which every aspect of the subject has been carefully worked out. It is a scheme which will be found to be sound and workable. The "Sunday Times" wrongly says:—

"Certain bodies have suggested schemes, but this is the first time that concrete suggestions covering everyone in South Africa, and worked out in terms of cost, is being considered."

The Labour Party did not introduce the Social Security motion in Parliament and leave it there. Is Labour's Code being purposely ignored? Is an attempt being made to kill it by ignoring it?

Will the United Party adopt the Durban Committee's Code, call it "non-political," and present it to the country as another fine feat by the United Party? These are questions that must be answered now.

It would be unfair to compare and criticise the Durban Committee's Code with that of the Labour Party at this stage, but delegates to the forthcoming Conference would be well advised to study Labour's Code and to remember, above all, that real Social Security can only be effective when everyone in the country receives enough wages to ensure proper food, clothing and shelter. Merely to provide benefits for the sick, unemployed and disabled is to build up a charitable organisation, and to place our people in the position of beggars. Social Security is the right of every person, and should not be doled out as charity.

5

SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS POSTPONED AGAIN.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ School Board Elections were last held in 1937. They are due to be held every three years. In the interests of Education generally and for the maintenance of our democratic system there should be no reason why these elections do not take place.

Since 1940, the Privincial Council has passed every year a School Boards Elections Postponement Ordinance to legalise the position. During the war years it was said that conditions did not permit the regular election of new school Boards but in this year of Grace 1946 one would expect that no obstacles would present themselves.

Surprisingly enough, the usual Ordinance of postponement was ~~xxxx~~ brought before the Provincial Council on the 7th. May. Opposing the further postponement on behalf of the Labour Party Alex. Hepple said that most of the Boards had become antiquated and there was great dissatisfaction amongst School and Parents Committees as well as amongst the public as a whole at the present position. The excuse that Voters Rolls were out of date was a poor one. Had not the country had Parliamentary, Provincial and very recently some by-elections on these so-called out-of-date Rolls? Many things had happened since 1937 and the time had now come to make a real effort to restore to the people of the province the franchise in respect of the election of School Boards. "It would be folly for right-minded men to agree to a further postponement," he said, "for such acquiescence is tantamount to disenfranchising our citizens."

Despite Nationalist support, the Labour opposition was unable to influence any United Party members to support this appeal for democratic rights. The postponement for a further year was agreed to, the whole of the United Party voting solidly together. So the people of the Transvaal will not have a School Board election this year.

July 1944

SATURDAY AFTERNOON CLOSING.

A. HEPPLER, M.P.C.

When Saturday afternoon closing eventually becomes law, shop assistants will look back at the history of their struggle for the long week-end and wonder.

Perhaps no other proposed ~~Shop Hours~~ Trading Hours legislation has met with such hostility and opposition as that which included the early closing of shops on Saturdays. The fight has extended over so many years that its beginnings are almost forgotten. Experiments have been made, investigations instituted, commissions appointed, demonstrations held and the Provincial Council has debated the matter so often that it has assumed the proportions of a national crisis. No one can deny that the interests of the Transvaal Province have been well protected; no one can deny that every precaution has been taken lest the people of the Transvaal inflict upon themselves something that would be bad for them.

Whoever the shop assistants were who originated the request for Saturday afternoon closing, they certainly took a poke at a hornet's nest. A few of the stings they provoked are

"that the demand has been inspired by Reef traders to deprive Johannesburg shopkeepers of their Saturday afternoon trade."

"that Saturday afternoon is the only time that workers have to shop"

"that farmers and miners cannot come into town on any other day but Saturday"

"that if the public cannot spend their money in the shops on Saturday afternoons they will squander it on the racecourses or at the dogs"

"that working people only support Saturday afternoon closing because the N.U.D.W. has sold them the idea."

Of course, there have been many other stings, enough to fill this magazine, some of them ingenious and some of them no so ingenious. I have often wondered if there is somewhere a stubborn, pig-headed group of men who have made up their minds to fight the proposal to the bitter end.

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