

ALEX. HEPPLE, M. P.

House of Assembly,
Cape Town.

1st May, 1950.

PARLIAMENTARY REPORT.

Dear Friend,

Believing that you are interested in the affairs of Parliament, I am sending you this short review. I deal with three matters only because I consider these to be of special importance.

COST-OF-LIVING. During previous sessions of Parliament I have asked for steps to be taken to reduce the Cost-of-Living. Again this year I have insisted that unless something is done, more and more people will become poverty stricken. Prices of many commodities continue to rise and even the most careful of families are finding it more and more difficult to make ends meet. The Minister of Finance has said that demands for the reduction in the cost of living are a "political stunt". This is not the case. The demands arise because the wages and salaries of people are buying less and less. At every opportunity I shall persist with demands that steps be taken to bring prices down.

POPULATION REGISTRATION BILL. This is the Bill which provides for the registration of every person and the carrying of Identity cards (or "Passes" as I call them). I opposed the Bill on the Second Reading for many reasons. In the first place I don't see the necessity for such a Bill, secondly it will cost the country a great deal of money which we can ill afford at this stage; and thirdly it will cause endless difficulties and many embarrassments to many people. I shall continue to oppose it in Committee.

RENTS BILL. I was one of the small group which vigorously opposed the Rents Bill last year. When it came up again this year, I opposed it again, because once it became law, rents would jump by at least 30%. Now we have a new Bill. While its proposals are more moderate, even this Bill will mean an increase in rents and a weakening of the position of the tenant. I shall oppose the Rents Bill in its present form.

The Session is expected to run well into June, unless the Government decides to jettison some of the Bills at present before the House. At the moment there are twenty Bills still to be dealt with, as well as the usual Finance Bills and the Railway Accounts.

If you have any comments or suggestions, I shall be glad to hear from you. Please write me at the above address.

Yours faithfully,

Alex Hepple

ALEX. HEPPLE, M. P.
Member for Rosettenville.

12/5/50

ALEX. HEPPLER, M.P., ONE OF LABOUR'S MOST FORCEFUL SPOKESMEN, SAYS:

APARTHEID DREAM IS BEING MADE HIDEOUS BY NIGHTMARES OF DEPRESSION

DR. JANSEN, Minister of Native Affairs, gave Parliament his latest thoughts on Apartheid last month. He said many interesting things, from which it was clear that neither he nor his colleagues have yet evolved a positive plan to apply the enchanting policy of Apartheid. Nevertheless, it is to the credit of Dr. Jansen that he is at least searching for a plan. In the meantime the Government is applying regulations and legislation aimed at satisfying many of the election promises of the Nationalist Party, that "White superiority would be restored and maintained."

On considering some of the points made by Dr. Jansen, one is forced to the conclusion that Apartheid still means many things to many men. There is the policy of the Dutch Reformed Church, which is complete segregation. This is supported by Dr. Eiselen, Secretary for Native Affairs, who was appointed to that post because he was considered most qualified to apply the Government's policy. Dr. Eiselen says that Apartheid means "separate socio-economic units, inhabiting separate parts of the country, each enjoying in its own area full citizen rights." Dr. Malan says that while this may be the idea, it is quite impractical.

The Second Policy

So we come to the second policy, which is the Government policy of "Practical Apartheid," which is gradually being explained to the

country. Dr. Malan opened the second half of the present Parliamentary Session by expounding upon this theme, and the recent statement by Dr. Jansen develops the idea somewhat further. "Practical Apartheid," while still somewhat obscure, appears to aim at the development of South Africa along the lines of colour separation in every possible sphere, and, at the same time, the utilisation of the talents and skills of all groups to the fullest extent, with the eventual establishment of "white" industries in European areas and "black" industries in Native areas.

The third policy is "Baasskap Apartheid," often expounded under other names from the Nationalist Benches and from public platforms. It implies European mastery over the non-European on lines to be determined and applied in such a manner as may suit the individual European himself, answerable only to the unwritten law of "baasskap."

Practical Apartheid

South Africa must concern itself primarily with the aspects of practical apartheid so far revealed by

the Government. In the first place, is it "practical"? In the second place, can this policy be applied without seriously disturbing our whole economy? For instance, can industry develop on sound economic lines and compete on world markets, while, at the same time, preserving the requirements of Apartheid? Dr. Jansen says:

"We have not accepted that the Natives must be the basis of our economic system . . . the integration of the Natives into the European economy . . . will lead eventually to absolute equality and mixture of blood."

This postulates the separation of European and non-European in industry as quickly as possible. Dealing with this aspect, Dr. Jansen says:

"The presence of Natives in European areas, and also the fact that their presence there as labourer is essential, at any rate for the present, is recognised."

Factories For Native Areas

He has also said that industrialists should get away from the habit of establishing factories in the European areas and go nearer to Native areas. Is that feasible? There are many considerations that finally decide the location of factories, such as fuel, power, transport costs, markets, climate, raw materials, as well as the type of labour needed. The establishment of a Textile factory at Zwelitsha is the first real experiment on a large scale yet attempted in a Native area, using Native labour. While it may be used by political theorists as an example of Apartheid in industry, it is in many respects unique, and care must be taken that it does not confuse the study of problems affecting the sound development of all industry.

The Long View

Taking the long view, there can be no doubt that the path being followed by the Nationalists will lead to problems a thousandfold more difficult than those which exist to-day. The fact of the matter is that the Nationalist Party has proved to be a conservative farmers' party, with no understanding of the problems of industrialisation, except that offered by some of its precious professors and political dreamers.

The Minister of Finance complains that "this Native policy, which we maintain for social reasons, severely limits the utilisation of capital in the reserves . . . which means that the application of modern capital and technique to increase the wealth and carrying

capacity of the country can be applied . . . in the European areas only."

On the other hand, the Minister of Native Affairs, Dr. Jansen, warns the country that ". . . in the cities (the Natives) are working with the European on an equal footing—which gives rise to all kinds of undesirable conditions."

Industry Slackens

Throughout the written policy, as well as the Public and Parliamentary speeches of the Nationalist leaders we find one contradiction after another. In these circumstances we cannot wonder that they are having difficulty in defining their plan for Apartheid.

While they are theorising and experimenting, the pace of industrialisation slackens and the wheels of industry turn more slowly. Around the corner are grave difficulties. The schemes for building export markets are fast becoming idle boasts and the promise of the Union becoming the workshop of the African Continent is fading into a dream of Apartheid, made hideous by nightmares of depression.

SWAMPS IN THE APARTHEID JUNGLE

Colour Question Still A Political Football

LABOUR PARTY'S PRACTICAL APPROACH

BY ALEX. HEPPLER, M.P.

IN dealing with the Native Affairs vote, Parliament took another journey into the jungle of Apartheid and soon found itself struggling in the swamp of confusion. Boosted as the Garden of Eden for white South Africans, Apartheid had a magic enchantment during the General Elections of 1948. Those who listened to Nationalist politicians speaking from public platforms on the colour question gathered the impression that the solution was easy but that wicked enemies were preventing it.

The solution always remained concealed in long and involved speeches, characterised by some extreme and vicious sentiments, to say nothing of numerous contradictions. South Africa was told that, once in power, the Nationalists would make South Africa a white man's country while "accepting the principle of Christian guardianship of the non-European people." But as one Nationalist Minister has said, it is one thing to advocate a policy when in opposition and another to put it into effect.

Since coming into power, the Nationalists have given us Apartheid in trains, railway stations and post offices; they have legislated against miscegenation, and they propose other measures such as Population Registration, which they believe will help towards giving effect to their policy. The difficulty which faces the country, and apparently the Nationalists, however, is a definition of that policy. If any Government hopes to succeed in winning support for a policy, it is essential that that policy should be understood by the widest circle of people. In its own interests the Government should take the nation into its confidence and explain what it aims to achieve and what effect it expects upon the social and economic structure of the country.

The Labour Party says quite definitely that this is an economic problem and that with the eradication of exploitation and poverty, such attendant evils as slums, overcrowding and racial suspicion and tensions will disappear.

"Black Danger" Bogey

Much of the wild and irresponsible talk of a "black danger" is born of ignorance and muddled thinking, readily exploited by those who seek to gain by inflaming human passions and by creating imaginary grievances and conflict. High emotionalism makes any calm and realistic approach to the problem almost impossible. The task is not an easy one for any Government. The confused thinking of the Nationalists makes the task of this Government unusually difficult. In many respects its official policy is vague and open to many interpretations. Theoretically, there is nothing in the Nationalist Party policy that should prevent it from dealing with all the people in South Africa, including Coloureds, Natives and Indians, with justice. Unfortunately there are many things which prevent that party from allowing every inhabitant of the country to make his or her fullest contribution to the national wealth;

there are many things that threaten the economic security and personal liberty of a large section of the community. Every law-abiding person, black or white, should be safe against interference and the sanctity of his home should be inviolate. But on many occasions the Government may act contrary to this because of prejudice or demands from its supporters or from other groups.

Change of Mind

A recent example was the introduction in Parliament of a Bill to amend the Native (Urban Areas) Act, whereby native women would be prohibited from joining their husbands in the towns until the menfolk had been there five years. Previously the period had been at two years. Fortunately before the Bill was debated in Parliament the Government changed its mind and withdrew this amendment. At about this time the Government informed the Durban City Council that the same Act was being amended to enforce the carrying of passes by Native women. Here, again, the Government changed its mind. In a public statement, explaining the reasons for altering

its decision Dr. Jansen, the Minister of Native Affairs, pointed out:

1. The Native (Urban Areas) Act is applied and administered in close co-operation with the local authorities and therefore the Government seeks their opinion on the working of the Act.
2. Certain local authorities proposed this year that
 - (a) Native women should carry passes and be subject to the same provisions as native men;
 - (b) That permanent residence in urban areas be recognised only after five years continuous service instead of two years as at present.
3. That the Government found upon investigation that no local authorities had sought permission, as they are entitled to do under the Act, to apply even the existing measures in regard to Native women.

In simple language this means that while certain City Councils were agitating with the Government for action to apply harsher laws, their own officials (who were faced with the practical daily problem of applying the law) had not found it necessary to invoke the full provisions of the existing law. It would appear, therefore, that in response to some emotion or abstract theory, normal logic and reason were abandoned.

Wrong Approach

I quote this to illustrate one of the many ways in which a wrong approach is made to the colour question. In our own interests we must be practical, realistic and sincere.

Every political party shouts: "Take the colour question out of the political arena!" "Make the colour question a non-party question!" Yet it remains the football of South African politics and we are racing faster and faster downhill to disaster. In 1946 the Labour Party wrote to all the other political parties suggesting a Convention to discuss the whole question on non-party lines, but met with no success.

Dr. Eiselen, before he was appointed Secretary for Native Affairs, delivered a lecture on Apartheid in which he explained his interpretation of Separation. Lately the Dutch Reformed Church and the Methodist Church have declared their Native policies. More recently the Prime Minister, Dr. Malan, and the Minister of Native Affairs, Dr. Jansen, have made new and important statements. Commenting upon the latter, Mr. J. G. N. Strauss said this was largely the policy of the United Party, but pointed out that the United Party stood by the 1936 Hertzog Acts. He also said that he could not agree with a policy of establishing industries only near Native reserves and he "viewed with caution" the suggestion for disciplined Native labour groups.

In the course of that debate there were many dazzling highlights, not the least of which was Dr. Jansen's emphatic announcement that the Nationalists do not accept that the Natives should be the basis of our economic system. If this represents the final and official attitude of the Government it is worthy of closer examination, for it can have far-reaching effects upon our whole economy. In my next article I propose to deal with this aspect of Apartheid.

ALEX. HEPPLER, M.P., FORCEFUL LABOUR PARTY SPOKESMAN, SAYS THAT THE

ANTI-COMMUNIST BILL IS

A BILL TO OUTLAW DEMOCRACY

FORWARDED 19/5/50
 "Die Vaderland" Says: "This May Be A Trap"

How Other Parties May Fare Under This Bill

THE LONG PROMISED, MUCH VAUNTED ANTI-COMMUNIST BILL HAS NOW BEEN PRESENTED. IT IS AN AMAZING PIECE OF WORK.

After reading the Bill one can readily understand why the Government omits to mention the word Communist in the title. This is not a Bill to outlaw Communism; it is a Bill to outlaw democracy and to impose upon South Africa the very type of Government which the Bill proposes to prevent.

Nationalists become indignant when it is said that in many respects their policy smacks of Fascism. They vehemently deny the charge. But if they insist upon carrying on with this Unlawful Organisations Bill they will, in fact, be adopting the methods of Fascism, and following its wicked path to the police state.

This is no exaggeration. I challenge any Nationalist to show me how our democratic institutions will escape the effects of this Bill once it becomes law. I know many Nationalists who are most uneasy about many of its provisions, and who are beginning to wonder where the Government is heading.

"Die Vaderland"

Nervous

Even the "Vaderland" has been moved to ask some pertinent questions about the Bill, warning its readers: "this may be a trap for ourselves." No matter what party one supports, there can be no doubt that any attempt to silence political opponents by totalitarian methods will be resisted.

The Government, of course, will deny any intention to apply the provisions of this Bill to legitimate political opponents, insisting it will be used solely to deal with "communists and their fellow travellers."

Let us see how parties will fare under this proposed legislation.

The United Party

For a long time now Nationalist Party speakers, especially Cabinet Ministers, have been saying from public platforms that the United Party is an ally of Communism. "Wait till we introduce our anti-Communist Bill," cried the Nationalists, "and you will see the United Party in its true colours. They will oppose the Bill because they are defenders of Communism."

Now the Nationalists come along with this Bill, which confers on them far-reaching powers and carries wide implications, using it both as a threat and a challenge to the United Party, knowing full well that if the United Party supports it, that Party's days are numbered.

On the other hand, if the United Party opposes it, the Nationalists will accuse them of resisting measures to restrain Communism, and will tell their ignorant audiences: "There you are—we told you the United Party won't help us to oppose Communism."

Of course, this is just another exhibition of political opportunism on the part of the Nationalists, but here they are presenting a serious challenge to the United Party.

The Afrikaner Party

If ever the Afrikaner Party had reason to doubt the sincerity of its Ally, the Nationalist Party, it is now. The Afrikaner Party relies upon supporters of the Ossewa-brandwag for its main strength.

"Because this measure is severe, all its implications must be thoroughly investigated... Take alone the ban on the one-party idea... It is not the Ossewa-brandwag alone that may get into trouble thereby... An instrument is being forged that could even prevent a National Government at a time of crisis," says "Die Vaderland" in a leading article.

If members of the Afrikaner Party examine the Bill further they will be able to discern that troublesome allies as well as objectionable enemies can be summarily disposed of.

The Unlawful Organisations Bill does not define Communism. It does make Communism and doctrines or policies likely to further Communism unlawful. As far as the Nationalist Party and its Cabinet Ministers are concerned, the Labour Party is, in fact, a Communist Party. On every possible occasion they declare that Labourites are "just a bunch of Communists." Whenever Labour members of Parliament defend the rights of the poor and the underprivileged they are accused of being Communists.

This must be taken as evidence that once this Bill becomes law, the Labour Party will be declared "unlawful" and its members punished. If it were merely irresponsible back-benchers of the Nationalist Party that made these accusations against the Labour Party, one could ignore them. But the charges are levelled against the Labour Party by Cabinet Ministers.

These are the men who are to be given power under the Act to declare any organisation unlawful.

Clause 2 of the Bill says: "If the Governor-General is satisfied... that the purpose or one of the purposes of any organisation is to serve or to promote... the interests... of all persons of a particular class... etc." From its beginnings the Labour Party has said that it stands for the interests of the workers, although, of course, it is not neglectful of the interests and the prosperity of the whole community.

Nevertheless, the Labour Party does put the interests of the workers of South Africa before those of the employers. On the other hand, the employers themselves have their own organisations which place the interests of the employers first. Sensible representatives of both these groups support the idea of collective bargaining, so that there is proper understanding between management and men.

The Clause which I have quoted above could be applied both to employers and employees, "if the Governor-General (i.e., the Cabinet) is satisfied that either is attempting to promote the interests of those they represent. This is only one instance of how this clause can be applied. There are many others.

The One-Party State

Is it the intention of the Nationalist Party to establish a dictatorship before the next election? If they pass this Bill they will effectively eliminate all opposition, and the onus is upon them to prove to South Africa that this Bill is a mistake. Unless they do that and withdraw it without delay, they stand convicted of pursuing the path of Fascism.

Clause 3 (2) removes the jurisdiction of the Courts by abolishing the right of the Courts to "pronounce upon the validity" of any decree against any organisation. How far removed is this from the Prussian Statute of February, 1936, which stated: "The orders and the business of the Secret Police are not subject to review in the administrative courts. The Gestapo, as the exponent of a victorious political movement, does not worry much about the niceties of jurisdiction. Its powers derive from the power of the Party..."

Is this the path for South Africa? Is it the "Road to a New South Africa"?

On the other hand, there are many Nationalists who genuinely believe in democracy. They do not desire to make South Africans a nation of cowards and "yes-men." But if they support this measure they will be lining themselves up alongside those who are impatient with democracy.

Alex. Hepple Tackles Louw On Minister's Three-Point Reply to Cost-of-Living Motion

PEOPLE NOT EXTRAVAGANT, LAZY, THRIFTLESS

THE MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, MR. ERIC LOUW, OPENED THE DISCUSSION ON HIS VOTE IN PARLIAMENT WITH A LONG STATEMENT. REMARKABLE AS IT MAY SEEM, HE DID NOT ONCE REFER TO THE COST OF LIVING. ALEX HEPPLER, LABOUR M.P. FOR ROSETTENVILLE, IMMEDIATELY TACKLED THE MINISTER AND ASKED HIM SOME VERY PERTINENT QUESTIONS. WE REPRINT BELOW SOME EXCERPTS FROM HIS SPEECH.

"When the Labour Party introduced a motion in regard to the cost of living at the beginning of the Session, the Minister mentioned three points in his reply. He said that one contributing factor to the high cost of living in this country was extravagant living.

"I wonder whether the hon. Minister seriously intended to accuse the people of this country of living extravagantly. If he was serious it shows that he has no idea of the struggle people have to make ends meet on their present-day salaries, with a devalued pound which is hardly worth ten shillings.

"Not only the poorest people in the country are living on a diet which is nothing short of gradual starvation. The middle-income group, too, is in such a serious plight that it is heading for absolute poverty. Decent people, who apply themselves to their work, are faced daily with the distracting problem of how to make ends meet.

"After the Minister had said that people were living extravagantly, he complained that people were not saving. I want to tell the Minister that it is quite impossible for the majority of the people in this country to save a penny. Let the Minister tell the House how a man earning even as much as £50 per month, with two children, living in a house for which he pays £12 10s. per month rent, can save money.

"I have some budgets here which were sent to me by some of my constituents; people earning upwards of £35 per month who are forced, because of the high cost of living, to deny themselves some of the necessities of life, leave alone the luxuries."

Are South Africans Work-Shy?

"The Minister made a third point, that slackness has made its appearance in this country—the disinclination of people to work as hard as they did in the days gone by.

"Firstly, I deny that the people are not working as hard to-day as they did in days gone by; but, in the second place, would it be any wonder that people, distracted in the struggle to make ends meet, are not able to maintain a high productivity in their daily work?

"If you want to increase production it is no good offering people small incentives. What you have to ensure is that they get a decent bed to sleep in, a roof over their heads and decent food. Those are the incentives to production. When the Minister talks about slackness and refusal of people to work as hard as they used to work, it only goes to show that the Minister is completely unaware how the majority of people in this country live.

"If one were to believe this statement of the Minister, one would think that South Africans hated their work and that they went to work reluctantly. He said that they are slackers, that they do not want to work. Instead of abusing the people, it

is the duty of the Government, and particularly of the Minister, to give us practical plans to meet this serious situation. Of course, there is no easy solution, but at least we expect him to come to this House with some feasible suggestion to reduce the ever-rising cost of living.

The Rising Index

"The plain facts are striking. The official cost of living index in January, 1948, was 148.8; in March this year it was 156.4; but since then we have had numerous increases in commodity prices.

"The March index figure did not include the increase in railway rates, which is being passed on to the people. It did not include the increases in the prices of such things as mealies, which is going to be felt throughout the whole of our economy since it is a staple food; milk, coal, butter, eggs; even oranges have now gone up and the price of meat went up on the 15th.

"May 15 was a red-letter day in South Africa. I am quite convinced that the increases that were gazetted on May 15 must have shot up the cost of living index by at least seven or eight points, if not more. It is no use arguing on these figures any longer. The Minister comes to this House time and again and assures us that he has found a solution, that the cost of living has been pegged. But the cost-of-living index is so obstinate, it follows the opposite direction to that which the Minister says it is taking.

"The Cabinet Food Committee, I understand, considered all the problems affecting food prices and the Minister is a member of that committee, and he takes an active and live interest in its deliberations.

"This is a matter of Government policy. One would have hoped that the Minister would have taken this opportunity of stating the Government's policy on the ever-rising prices of foodstuffs particularly.

"One would have expected that the Minister would have told the House what the short-term plans and the long-term plans of the Government are. One wonders whether the Cabinet Food Committee is waiting for a glut in all foodstuffs, before they do anything about the prices of food.

The Minister Should Act

"This problem extends right throughout every section of the community, except the very rich. I think the Minister owes a duty to the country to make some statement to this House, to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by this debate to make a clear statement as to how he intends to deal with this very serious problem.

"It is no use the Minister talking about political stunts. It is no use talking about political propaganda, and it is no use talking about production costs, unless he does something really practical in order to solve this problem."

SHOULD PARLIAMENT SIT ALL THE YEAR AROUND?

Forward
16/6/50

Mr. Christie's Proposal For Overcoming

End-Of-The-Session Rush

By ALEX HEPPLE, M.P.

AFTER the Prime Minister had announced his programme for the remainder of the Parliamentary Session, giving a long list of Bills which had to be passed before M.P.s could go home, including such important Bills as the Group Areas Bill, the Unlawful Organisations Bill, the Rents Bill and the Native Building Workers' Bill—all of which require much discussion — Mr. John Christie, leader of the Labour Party, asked whether the time had not arrived when Parliament should sit all the year round.

There are two features in regard to this proposal that should be considered. The first is the fact that we have two capitals and that we continue to try to legislate for six months of the year from Cape Town, and to administer the laws for the other six months from Pretoria.

This dual capital system forces, not only the Government, but also the Civil Service to think in terms of Cape Town from January to June and of Pretoria from July to December. Members of Parliament, because of their various occupations, also like to think that from June onwards they can concentrate their efforts upon their farming or other interests. It would be ridiculous to expect members to stay in Cape Town longer than necessary; but the time is coming when sessions will take more of their time.

Government Indecision

The other point is that made by Mr. Christie. He said that the Government should make up its mind what legislation it wanted to introduce and "get as much ideological nonsense worked out of its system as possible."

This year, as last year, the Government has taken a long time to gear up to its work, and has been slow in making up its mind which of its political Bills to bring forward. Last year the Citizenship Bill came in late. This year we have had the Population Registration Bill, which was thought to be the major legislation on Nationalist Party policy for this year. But after nearly four months have gone, and as the session enters its last lap, the Government decided that two other Bills implementing their policy must be made law. The first was the Group Areas Bill and the other the Suppression of Communism Bill.

There was a time when Parliament was able to handle all its legislation by the end of May each year. Of recent years, however, the lengthening list of Bills brought before the House has created a situation that needs serious consideration. Each session ends with a number of measures left uncom-

pleted and held over until the following year.

Towards the end of May there is a mad rush to push through as many laws as possible. The almost leisurely pace of the early days of the session give way to high pressure debates and a great deal of haste. In such an atmosphere members are overworked and tired. Serious study of Bills is impossible. Impatient Ministers fidget and become irritated if debates are protracted. Whips are forced to curtail discussion.

All this does nothing to improve

the quality of the debates. More than that, the possibility arises of hurried and ill-considered legislation finding its way on to the Statute, merely to cause new problems and amending legislation later.

Serious-minded Members of Parliament, especially, find the strain of the last weeks of the session particularly distressing. They leave Cape Town with a feeling that they have not done full justice to their jobs. Not that they are to blame. It is the habit of Governments, blindly following a custom that suited the years gone by, but which no longer measures up to the needs of to-day.

Drift From Democracy: 1950 Session Reviewed

By ALEX HEPPLÉ
Labour M.P. for Rosettenville

[To give the Labour Party an opportunity of putting its views before the public, "The Natal Mercury" is placing this space at its disposal once a month. "The Natal Mercury" does not necessarily associate itself with the views expressed. This is the fourth article.]

THE Parliamentary Session which has just ended was long and exhausting. It will be remembered as a turning point in South African history because it revealed positive signs of a movement away from traditional democratic practice towards autocracy and authoritarianism. Not only have laws been passed which aim at disciplining every South African to obey the dictates of one particular social philosophy; there has also been written into our legislation Executive powers and authority of an extraordinary degree. The supreme rule of Parliament is being superseded by the rule of individual Ministers or the Cabinet.

The Guillotine

THE frequent use of the "Closure" and the imposition of the guillotine are significant features of the 1950 Session. Although this is not the first government to use these methods to hustle through legislation, it must be remembered that the present Government has applied them during a Session where members were called upon to deal with Bills of a far-reaching and revolutionary character. As a result members on all sides of the House were squeezed out and prevented from stating their opinions. Some of the issues called for political courage and determined opposition; here it was important that the rights of individual members should have been protected and that all who so wished should have been given time to speak.

Many reasons are given for the application of the guillotine, most of them being unacceptable to those who understand the meaning of democratic parliaments. In this modern age of high pressure and speed-up, political parties in power become impatient with the delays and frustrations of democracy. Democracy has many weaknesses, all of which are used by its enemies as reasons for weakening it further. The peoples of the democracies are beginning to forget that in its very weaknesses lies the strength of democracy. It gives voice and expression to minority groups and allows even objectionable viewpoints; it often delays impulsive legislation and compels even secure governments to think twice before imposing new laws upon its people; it admits to its parliaments geniuses and fools, theoretical dreamers and harsh realists, political opportunists and sincere reformers. All these go towards making democracy work and only those who lose confidence in democracy would have it otherwise.

Because of its handicaps, governments succumb to the temptation of short-circuiting normal democratic procedure. On the pretext of "making legislation workable" they take to themselves wider and wider powers. In this manner the power of Parliament becomes less and less. Eventually Parliament becomes a nuisance and the urge arises to curb the activities of Parliament itself. Complaining that the opposition is "time-wasting" and "filibustering" the Government imposes time limits and guillotines, restricting discussion upon vital matters before Parliament. And so, little by little, the

country drifts farther and farther away from democracy and establishes a despotism that shackles everyone and ends in totalitarianism. That is what is happening in South Africa.

Preservation Of Free Parliament

IF our democratic system needs reforming and can be reformed the task should not be left in the hands of whatever political party happens to be in power. If the delays and irritations of the Parliamentary machine can be removed without depriving anyone of the smallest benefits of democracy, the job should be tackled without delay. The ruthless application of the "Closure" and the guillotine whereby the majority of members are excluded from stating their opinions, makes debate a farce and democracy ridiculous, but does nothing to improve Parliamentary practice. Such methods still permit the wild rantings of political muckrakers and the exclusion of seriously considered contributions.

If there is need for reform, let all political parties accept joint responsibility and devise ways and means of improving present practice without interfering with the rights of its members. In view of the uncertain attitude towards democracy which exists inside the Nationalist Party, it would be folly to leave it to them to make reforms.

Opportunist Legislation

THERE are many members of the Nationalist Party who would be shocked at any suggestion that the present Government is doing things which will eventually result in the destruction of democracy in the Union. Nevertheless the facts are there for all to see. Prompted in the first place by a desire to retain political power for all time, the Nationalist Party places opportunism above statesmanship. That is illustrated by the type of legislation which has been given precedence during the short time they have held the reins of government. Such measures as the Immorality Amendment Act, the Population Registration Act, the Group Areas Act and the Suppression of Communism Act, provide the basis of powerful political propaganda. Their fundamentals are not widely opposed by any of the political parties, but to the Nationalist Party they are steps towards the destruction of all their political opponents. The Nationalists believe that the debates on these measures have been well worth while, and that the skilful use of Hansard will provide excellent ammunition for their propagandists. But these measures mean more than that to South Africa. They mean an advance towards the disciplined Christian-Nationalist State, where independent minds will be in chains and political opponents will be traitors. It will be un-national to disagree and criminal to criticise.

Population Registration

THE Population Registration Bill does more than establish a national register of all inhabitants in the Union. It also makes it compulsory for everyone to carry an Identity Card. This burdens the country with enormous expense and imposes considerable inconvenience and indignity upon everyone. It has yet to be seen whether it will be possible to register and number every person in the Union. The problem of photographing and issuing Identity Cards to the Native population, especially in the rural areas, has yet to be met. It is a task that may take many years and its cost may exceed even the most extravagant estimates.

The Group Areas Act aims at the social and residential separation of the various racial groups. It has been enacted before a proper survey has been taken of the thousands of communities throughout the Union and without consideration of the provision of housing for displaced persons. In congested urban areas it will be possible to order large groups of persons to leave one area for another without providing alternative accommodation for them. Where Native townships in the heart of European areas are to be removed, thousands of good homes thus vacated will have to be demolished, for Europeans will refuse to occupy these houses. The host of problems created by this law suggests that no real effort will be made to apply it to the full. Has it been passed merely to deal with a few isolated cases of penetration by Non-Europeans into European areas—or to provide additional propaganda for the Nationalist Party?

Suppression Of Communism

THE suppression of Communism Act is very much changed from the original Unlawful Organisations Bill, which truly revealed the Government's determined bid for permanent political power. Even the law, as now enacted, provides a weapon which would be dangerous in the hands of any government. Every member of Parliament is now a member only during the Minister's pleasure. The fact that members have been elected by a democratic majority of voters now counts for nothing. If the Minister decides to blacklist a member by naming him a Communist or sympathiser or defender of Communism, even the Select Committee cannot save him from political destruction. Thus can the Nationalist Party hold the power to veto the choice of the electorate. Worse still, this Act severely curbs the rule of law and prevents individuals and organisations from the normal protection of the Courts if they are wrongly blacklisted.

Despotic Powers

I HAVE quoted briefly these three measures to show how political opportunism has carried with it the vesting of despotic powers in the hands of the Government. Besides these, there is inclusion in many of our laws of the power to officers and inspectors "to enter without previous notice any premises at any time during the day and night" in order to make investigations. One of the virtues of democracy has been the sanctity of the home, which could be entered by the police only in pursuit of law-breakers or upon a warrant. Now a false and malicious report can bring policemen and inspectors to rouse peaceful homes in the cold small hours of the night.

All these Acts contain dangerous powers that will bring unhappiness and sorrow to many homes. They will frighten even the respectable and law-abiding citizen. The heyday of the informer, poison-pen writer, and the favour-seeker have arrived. These and the other accessories of despotic government will now usurp the offices of the honest, the diligent and the just.

Against this background the Parliamentary Session of 1950 has been unable to deal with the problem of the steadily rising Cost of Living and other bread-and-butter issues. Consideration of the worsening economic situation has been thrust aside in order to satisfy the emotional demands of the vote-catching Nationalists.

FATEFUL DAYS AHEAD FOR TRADE UNIONS

FORWARD 7/7/50

Mr. Schoeman And The "Communists"

BY
ALEX. HEPPLER, M.P.

The Logical Consequences Of "Interference"

WHENEVER the Minister of Labour, Mr. Ben Schoeman, is accused of interfering in the affairs of the trade unions, he plaintively asks with wide-eyed innocence: "But what have I done? Tell me where I have interfered."

Perhaps we are too prone to criticize Mr. Schoeman for what he says rather than for what he does. But he has such an unfortunate way of expressing himself from public platforms.

His latest effort, at a function in honour of Mr. A. J. Downes, on the latter's retirement from the position of General-Secretary-Organiser of the S.A. Typographical Union, certainly calls for comment. After declaring that Communism had gained sufficient influence in the trade unions to become dangerous, Mr. Schoeman said:

"I am determined to rid the trade unions, in their own interests and in the interests of South Africa, of Communists and supporters of Communism."

During the Parliamentary debates on the Suppression of Communism Bill, it was argued time and again that the vague definition of Communism and Communist activities, coupled with the despotic powers conferred upon the Cabinet, constituted a grave danger to every militant trade unionist and every forthright critic of the Government. Now Mr. Schoeman readily admits

that these wide powers are quite unusual in peacetime. Yet he himself is guilty of casting suspicion upon wide sections of the trade union movement by his use of the vague expression, "supporters of Communism."

What is most extraordinary is Mr. Schoeman's tribute: "I am especially pleased that the Typographical Union has never permitted Communist infiltration to take place." What does this mean? Does the Typo. Union screen every member and ascertain his political views?

Do Workers "Infiltrate" Into Unions?

The practice of all trade unions is to recruit every possible worker engaged in the trade or occupation for which the Union operates. Where the "Closed Shop" applies,

all workers are compelled to join the union. To my knowledge, none of the workers is asked whether he is a Labour Party man, United Party, Nationalist or Communist. All that is demanded of him is that he works in the trade for which the union caters, pays his dues and abides by the constitution and rules of the union.

Even the Mineworkers' Union, which is to-day strongly pro-Nationalist and has several Nationalist M.P.s as "honorary members," does not screen its members for their political views.

It is, therefore, difficult to understand what Mr. Schoeman means when he talks of "resisting Communist infiltration." Can Mr. Schoeman quote any instances where a trade union has refused membership to any worker on the grounds that he is a Communist? In any case how is it possible for a union operating under a "Closed Shop" agreement to exclude anyone from membership?

Breaking the "Closed Shop"

I myself drew the Minister of Labour's attention to this danger in the Suppression of Communism Bill. Where the "Closed Shop" applies, if members are blacklisted and ordered to resign from their union, the advantage of the Closed Shop disappears. Once the law removes members from a Closed Shop Union, such members either become permanently unemployed, or continue to work as non-union men in a union shop. In the former case the union is compelled to carry the unemployed workers in benefit indefinitely, even though there may be jobs available; in the second case, those who employ non-union men and those who work with them will be violating an industrial agreement.

The amendment which was later inserted into the Bill, requiring the Minister of Justice to consult with the Minister of Labour before dealing with blacklisted workers, does not overcome this difficulty. It pierces deeply into common trade union practice and destroys all honour and loyalty among workers.

When Mr. Schoeman says that "legitimate" trade unions have nothing to worry about, one must assume that he means all those unions registered under the Industrial Conciliation Act. Or has he something else in mind?

Some of Mr. Schoeman's colleagues hold the view that every anti-Nationalist trade unionist is a Communist and trade unions are an abomination. In Parliament it is noteworthy to observe the ease with which Nationalist members use the words "Communist" and "Liberalist" to define anyone with whom they disagree.

When the Minister of Labour talks of "supporters of Communism" there is little wonder that trade unionists are suspicious. Opponents of the Labour Party have used this type of propaganda for a long time. Deserters from the Labour Party have always found that a vague reference to Communism excuses their own opportunism and political acrobatics.

Mr. Schoeman's Good Sense

Now that the Government has enacted a law containing vague generalities (upon which Cabinet Ministers expand in public), the way is open for those who wish to oust the present trade union leaders. Not only will the spiteful and disappointed opponents of trade union leaders be able to make hay, but now the way is open to the Nationalist Party organisers to take over. For many months Dr. Albert Hertzog, through the medium of his weekly newspapers, "Die Klerewerker" and "Die Bouwerker," has been conducting an anti-Communist campaign against the Garment Workers' Union and the Building Workers' Industrial Union.

By using the wide powers conferred upon them under the Suppression of Communism Act, the Government could quite easily remove the leaders of these Unions and leave the door open for Dr. Hertzog's nominees to walk in. Let us hope that the good sense of Mr. Schoeman will prevent such an event.

BACK-TO-GOLD CRUSADE

Free Enterprise Cuts Out The Hope Of

FORWARD "Honest Money" 14/7/50.

Dr. Holloway And Depreciated Currencies

SOUTH AFRICA WANTS A HIGHER PRICE FOR GOLD. MANY PEOPLE THOUGHT THAT DEVALUATION LAST SEPTEMBER WAS ONLY THE FIRST INSTALMENT ON BENEFITS COMING TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOLD-MINING INDUSTRY. THE NEXT INSTALMENT WOULD BE AN INCREASE IN THE PRICE OF GOLD.

In a special broadcast at the time, Dr. Donges declared that devaluation would "hardly affect the man-in-the-street at all . . . If it does it will ceratinly not affect him unfavourably." Nine months of devalued currency have shown how wrong Dr. Donges was. The effects of devaluation are contained in the Cost-of-Living Index, which has risen from 153.6 in September, 1949, to 159.2 in May, 1950.

Of course, that is not the whole story. Cold figures cannot relate the grim and bitter struggle the family man is having to make ends meet.

The response of the share market to devaluation was almost electrifying. As share prices soared, so did hopes of a higher price for gold. Visions of huge profits for the mining companies (and the share speculators) were before many people.

The Price of Gold

President Truman punctured South Africa's hopes by declaring at a Press conference that as long as he was President of the United States there would be no increase in the price of gold. Despite this setback, it was still felt in responsible quarters that America would change her mind. Dr. W. J. Busschau, one of our leading economists, holds the opinion that nothing on earth can prevent a rise in the price of gold.

But the price remains at 35 dollars an ounce, the figure at which America fixed it, as the highest price she would pay.

The picture is a depressing one, especially for those who have seen their gold mining shares slump to pre-devaluation levels. The man in the street finds himself bewildered and confused, drifting dangerously near to poverty.

Honest Money

It is in this atmosphere of uncertainty that Dr. Holloway, our retiring Secretary for Finance, has expressed an opinion on the role of gold in international monetary

affairs. In an interview with the Press, he said:-

"Gold, the only safeguard of liberty, is kept away from the individual citizen. The promise on our banknotes is not honoured. The value of money is what it is made by small groups of bureaucrats working in secret in Government offices and Central Banks." Dr. Holloway advocates a return

BY
ALEX. HEPPLER, M.P.

to the gold standard, "with gold at its right price in terms of paper currency."

How is this "right price" to be determined?

Some experts argue that a free market in gold, permitting unrestricted dealing in gold, would make it a simple matter to establish the real values of the various paper currencies of the world.

A free market in gold would be eminently suitable for South Africa as a gold producer, but the uncertain economic condition of the world to-day makes the ultimate effect of such a step problematical. In terms of the inflated prices of all other commodities, the price of gold should be much higher than the 35 dollars an ounce which is fixed to-day.

America holds three-fifths of the world's gold; she is also the world's largest creditor; she is also the world's only important buyer of gold. And America is not prepared to pay more than 35 dollars an ounce for South African gold.

Perhaps Dr. Holloway, while he is in his present mood of criticism of the capitalist system of managed currencies, will tell

South Africa how she can best jump the hurdles of international high finance, and so reap the benefits of a higher price for gold, without creating new problems of international exchange.

Worthless Paper

As "one of the men wielding dictatorial powers," Dr. Holloway says that the tiny groups who control the monetary systems are responsible for the instability of trade and industry. He says:-

"All paper monies are worth a fraction of what they were before the war. That is the result of totalitarian management—or so-called management—and that will always be so . . . As soon as an agreement is reached, it is disrupted by a rise in prices . . ."

This is an inevitable result of our system of free enterprise, where everyone grabs for himself. In such a society those who wield the power take every precaution against those who would snatch it from them. They are forced to become more and more dictatorial and ruthless in their methods. Hungry mouths and homeless people matter little in the struggle of the financial giants.

Dr. Holloway is wrong if he thinks that he and other Government officials are the guilty men. The guilt lies with those who have directed such policies in order to bolster up the system of free enterprise of profit-making.

South Africa's real problem is not the price of gold, although a nice little increase would be warmly welcomed, especially at the present time. The problem lies in the economy of the country itself, and the wide disparity between the standards of living of its people.

THE SOAP-BOX ORATOR IS DOOMED

Forwards 2/14/50
One By One Our Liberties Are Going

Cabinet Ministers And Officials Now Decide The Rights Of The Individual

BY
 ALEX. HEPPLER, M.P.

THE SOAP-BOX ORATOR IS DOOMED. Street - corner meetings, generally impromptu affairs, will disappear in a tangle of red tape and restrictions. The rich and privileged will still be able to hire expensive halls for their meetings. The poor, if they have the time and patience to comply with all the regulations, may speak only if the political giants of the City Hall are big-hearted.

A Johannesburg Municipal by-law recently promulgated makes it illegal for any person to hold or convene or organise any public gathering or procession in any public place under the control of the Johannesburg City Council, without the written permission of the Council through the Town Clerk, who may refuse permission if he has reasonable ground for believing that such a gathering or procession, if held, is likely to result in public disturbances, riots or damage to property, obstruction to traffic or interference with the amenities or conveniences of the public.

Applications to hold meetings or processions must be made at least seven days beforehand to the Town Clerk, and must be supported by a requisition signed by twenty-five or more registered voters, and must also contain information as to the purpose for which such a meeting or procession is to be held.

The object of this by-law is to prevent disturbances such as Johannesburg has experienced when rival political groups have clashed on the City Hall steps.

Vanishing Liberties

Any man who has an axe to grind or a point of view to express has up to now been free to stand on his soap box on any street corner and hold forth to all those who care to listen. That free speech on occasion has led to free fights should not justify the restricting of free speech. Under the guise of protecting our democratic institutions against abuse there is a growing eagerness to silence criticism.

One by one our liberties are being restricted and circumscribed, and in many instances, are vanishing. Not only Governments, but Provincial and local authorities, are assuming autocratic powers, establishing themselves as the final arbiters on the meaning of democracy.

Building Up Autocracy

This new by-law is a clear illustration of such despotic powers in the hands of a local Government official. Practically every piece of legislation now passed in the Union empowers the Cabinet or a Minister or an official to determine the rights of individuals. Often delegated powers in legislation are unavoidable, but little by little Parliament is frittering away its own authority and building up an autocracy more powerful than Parliament itself. It is, therefore, no wonder that the lesser legislative bodies are also grabbing as much power as they can. This recalls the view expressed by Professor H. Laski in his "Liberty and the Modern State."

"Private ownership of the means of Production is no longer compatible with democratic institutions... liberty for us has always been hindered and hampered by its necessary subordination to the claims of property. It has been enjoyed only as its exercise has not threatened the owners of economic power... They seek to abandon liberty in that they may preserve their privileges. If we permit its abandonment, at some stage conflict is certain, for the mind of man cannot in the long run be habituated to tyranny. At some stage the slave revolts against his master. They seek to abandon liberty and they will succeed unless we organise ourselves to prevent their success."

Obviously, many of our legislators need lessons in the meaning of democracy. While United Party leaders in Parliament oppose Nationalist legislation, which they say "creates a Fascist despotism, clothes the Executive with unnecessarily wide and despotic powers, and makes intolerable inroads upon the freedom of the citizen," some of their City Councillors are busy restricting the most important of all civil liberties—the right of free speech.

THE ACCUSING FINGER OF THE RETAIL PRICE INDEX

Government That Promised Much But Now Says Nothing Can Be Done

Have The Nats. Abandoned The Workers?

BY
ALEX. HEPPLER, M.P.

THE COST-OF-LIVING GOES UP AND UP. LIKE AN ACCUSING FINGER THE RETAIL PRICE INDEX POINTS TO THE FAILURE OF THE GOVERNMENT TO ARREST STEADILY RISING PRICES. EVERY MONTH THE INDEX IS HIGHER. WHEN THE NATIONALISTS TOOK POWER IN MAY, 1948, IT STOOD AT 146.7; TO-DAY IT IS 161.0.

During the recent session of Parliament, the Minister of Economic Affairs, Mr. Eric Louw, showed great dexterity in avoiding a show-down on this issue. He left it to the Minister of Finance, Mr. N. C. Havenga, to defend the failure of the Government in the battle against rising prices.

Whenever the matter was raised by the Opposition, Mr. Havenga would become angry and accuse the Opposition of making political propaganda out of a serious problem.

He was provoked to make some interesting comments on the cost of living generally. On one occasion he said that no Government anywhere in the world had been able to reduce the cost of living. On another occasion he said that talk about reducing the cost of living was sheer nonsense.

He also said that recent increases in farm prices were merely in conformity with national policy accepted by this and previous Governments.

THIS IS ALL VERY WELL, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE POOR WORKER? WHAT ABOUT THE WAGE AND SALARY EARNERS?

By now it should be quite clear to the urban workers that this Nationalist - Afrikaner Party Government, which boasted so loudly of the good things it would bring to the poor, is no different from any other Capitalist Government. It is also clear that they were guilty of reckless political propaganda when they promised that they would reduce the cost of living.

Now that they are in power they appeal to the people not to ask the impossible.

The Minister of Finance is right when he says that political propaganda must not be made of this problem. But he should cast his eye upon his allies, who are adept at propaganda.

I agree with the Minister of Finance when he says that fixing the blame does not help. But I disagree with him when he says that it is impossible to reduce the cost of living.

There are ways in which a Government can arrest rising prices, providing it has the will to do so.

But if Mr. Havenga is right, and prices cannot be reduced, is it fair to peg wages and cost of living allowances as has been done in the Public Service? Must the wages and salary earners have their real wages reduced in this manner in order to provide higher prices for producers and distributors?

THE VICIOUS SPIRAL

For many years we have been told about the vicious spiral of wages chasing prices. Workers are exhorted not to make demands for higher wages on the grounds that, if workers were to secure increased wages these would be immediately absorbed by a further rise in prices.

The workers in South Africa have been very reasonable. They have made no noticeable demands for wage increases in the last two years. Yet during that time commodity prices have steadily increased. Where, then, is this vicious circle?

DEFLATING INCOMES

Speaking in Parliament on June 21 last, the Minister of Finance said:—

"You cannot reduce the existing level of the cost of living because if you want to do that you will have to go in for a policy of inflation, which no country in the world is prepared to do, and which this country is not prepared to face.... When we come to future increases (in prices) that is an important question. I appeal for co-operation on all sides. I said that we must try to hold the line. At the time of devaluation I made a public statement and I said that unless people of all classes were prepared to make sacrifices, not to make demands, then we would lose the benefits of devaluation."

Since then the prices of several farm products have been raised, and, partly because of devaluation, other commodity prices have also gone up. This is reflected in the Retail Price Index, which has risen from 153.6 at the time of devaluation to 161 in June, 1950.

Over the same period there have been no general increases in wages or salaries or cost-of-living allowances.

In this the Government itself is adopting a firm stand, and has refused to tie the cost-of-living allowances to the official index. It has pegged cost of living, stating that "an alteration in the present position would not be justified in view of the existing economic and financial position of the Union.... Further it is essential that the benefits of devaluation should not be lost to the country by increased costs involving additional taxation."

Surely this financial rule should apply to every section of the community? The Government could have adopted the same attitude towards the farmers when they demanded higher prices. They could also reply in the same terms to manufacturers and merchants who ask for price increases.

The Minister of Labour promised some time ago that existing cost-of-living allowances would be raised. But nothing has happened. It is reported that the mineworkers will shortly ask for a further increase of 15 per cent. in their wages and for other benefits. As ardent supporters of the Government, will the Mineworkers' Executive refrain from doing anything "in view of the existing economic and financial state of the country."

CAN COST-OF-LIVING BE REDUCED?

There are ways of reducing the cost of living. They require real co-operation from all sections of the community. They also conflict with the selfish greed of the system of private enterprise. There must be a new attitude towards farming and industrial production; efficiency must be demanded of the employers as well as of the employees. There must be a stricter examination of profit margins. Unproductive and administrative overheads must be reduced to a minimum.

Most important of all, the Government must foresake a lot of its ideological nonsense, which is involving the country in a great deal of expensive legislation, mostly to the benefit of the Nationalist Party propaganda machine.

Capitalism has never yet been able to solve the problems of inflation and deflation satisfactorily. But to-day there is associated with the evil of inflation a cynical indifference towards wage-and-salary-earners, while the privileged classes are adding to their riches.

The Government should know that things cannot continue in this way much longer.

The "Cat" And The Criminal

Flogging No Deterrent To Crime

Penal Reform vs. Corporal Punishment

BY
ALEX. HEPPLÉ, M.P.

IN ITS LATEST REPORT, THE PENAL REFORM LEAGUE QUOTES SOME INTERESTING FACTS ON CORPORAL PUNISHMENT. "Flogging in the South African penal system," says the League, "consists of cuts or strokes with a cane, or lashes with the cat or other approved instrument." Such punishment was applied to no fewer than 20,729 offenders in the nine years from January 1940 to December 1948. In all, 127,739 strokes were administered.

For those who believe that corporal punishment is the best corrective for criminals, these figures should be gratifying. But they should also be read with crime statistics in order to assess the effect of flogging upon criminals. The comparison reveals that physical pain is no deterrent to lawbreakers.

In 1939, the number of persons sent to jail was 157,716 of whom 47,056 or 30 per cent. were sentenced to more than one month's imprisonment; in 1948 the number was 174,595 and of these 67,381 or 38.6 per cent. were sentenced to more than one month's imprisonment. Not only have more crimes been committed, but the ratio of serious crime has jumped alarmingly, even though corporal punishment was ordered in more cases.

In Medieval Times

Flogging was the accepted way of punishing criminals in medieval times. The thumbscrew, the rack and the ducking stool were also popular until about a century and a half ago. Gradually enlightened nations sought other methods of treating their criminals, and imprisonment has become the general punishment today.

In more recent times, social workers, psychologists and others have urged more humane methods of reforming and rehabilitating those who have fallen into a life of crime. In many countries corporal punishment has been abolished. South Africa has retained this form of punishment, mainly because it is believed that this is the best way to deal with non-European offenders.

The Penal Reform League, which itself believes that corporal punishment is effective with certain juvenile delinquents, says that in the case of adults "there is evidence that no improvement resulted from corporal punishment . . . As the floggings went on the cases became harder and harder until the indeterminate sentence was passed upon them . . . a strong presumption exists against the general use of corporal punishment for adults."

Public Hangings

Following upon the statement by the Prison Reform League came three items of news which reflected some aspects of this question.

In the first, Mr. C. R. Swart, Minister of Justice, replying to a demand at Winburg for the re-introduction of public hangings, said:

"It would not be good for people to witness executions. Europeans were sometimes hanged, and however bad they were, they had dear ones, and it would be terrible for them if Native or Coloured people were allowed to laugh and make jokes at the European's execution."

In the second case, on winning his appeal against a conviction for stealing a bicycle, a Native complained that he had already received six strokes, which were part of the sentence. Mr. Justice Price said: "This whole case seems to have been treated in the most perfunctory way . . . It seems strange that strokes should have been administered after an application to appeal had been made and granted."

In the third case, a hard-labour prisoner told a Maritzburg magistrate: "In no prison in South Africa is any attempt made to reform convicts. Reform can never be brought about by brutality. Sadism is practised to a fine art."

What M.P.s Think

During the recent session of Parliament members discussed corporal punishment and I quote some of the views expressed:

THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE, Mr. Swart, has made it clear that as long as he is Minister corporal punishment will not be abolished, nor will the death sentence. He said contemptuously:

"In England a lady-like Labour Government has decided that these poor old evildoers must no longer be whipped and corporal punishment has been abolished."

MR. S. E. WARREN (Nat.): "What must the Government do? Must they throw their arms around the kaffir's neck and kiss him and plead with him not to attack the Europeans? . . . In this country, with its mixed population, where on the one hand you have people of a high civilisation, and on the other hand people of a low standard of intelligence, you must take drastic action against crime . . . The Native or Coloured is only afraid of jail when he goes there for the first time."

MR. SAM KAHN (Native Rep.): "It is the theme song of the Minister of Justice that violence must be met with violence and I am sorry that the Minister has so far lost sight of the real and important aims of criminal punishment that reformation and rehabilitation of criminals has become a lost aim."

MR. A. DAVIS (U.P.): "I hope that the Minister will not take seriously the suggestion that corporal punishment should be abolished."

COL. DOHNE (Nat.): "There are people who say that corporal punishment is cruel, but I want to put this to you: What punishment was prescribed by the Creator of the Universe? Was it not corporal punishment? He said to the parents, 'Chastise your children.'"

A. HEPPLÉ (Labour): "To meet brutal violence with brutal violence on an equal scale is not the answer. . . While there is a desire for revenge and a desire to inflict bodily injury upon those who inflicted bodily injury upon us, we cannot allow these emotions to enter into the application of justice."

MR. DE V. VISSER (Nat.): "I trust that we shall never revert to that barbarous custom of executing people in public."

MR. W. H. STUART (Nat. Rep.): "There will always be occasions when one has to smack. Here and there you may find a child who can be brought up without a paddy-whacking but it will have to be a miracle of a child and I would not like to see the result."

Civilisation or Barbarism?

In South Africa the European is faced with the task of setting an example to the Native. He must demonstrate the virtues of civilisation as against the evils of barbarism. By utilising uncivilised methods of treating its criminals South Africa is repudiating civilisation and refusing to accept the fact that progress is its cornerstone.

The Cat is one of the glaring weaknesses of authority. Its use can only shame us. It says that our civilised intellects can devise no better methods of curing evils than those used by our barbaric ancestors.

CIVILIZED LABOUR POLICY BREAKS DOWN

Nat. Failure To Consolidate ~~Poor-Whiteism~~

BY ALEX. HEPPLER, M.P.

A PRESS REPORT FROM DURBAN STATES THAT SOME GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS ARE REVERTING TO THE EMPLOYMENT OF NATIVES.

The reason given was that the experiment of employing European instead of Native labourers has failed.

IF THIS REPORT IS TRUE, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD TELL THE PUBLIC THE FACTS AND CLARIFY ITS ATTITUDE IN THIS MATTER.

It will be remembered that on assuming power the Nationalists triumphantly asserted that they would put into effect the Hertzog "Civilised Labour Policy" of 1924. Early last year the Prime Minister, Dr. Malan, sent a circular letter to all Government Departments and the Provincial Administrations, instructing them to follow this policy.

This civilised labour policy was of utmost importance in 1924. Although there had been a minor industrial boom as a result of the first World War, openings for skilled jobs for European youths were limited. Most of the new industries were looking to the vast reservoir of cheap black labour.

Europeans, most of them undecided and uncertain of the future, were poorly educated and equipped for industry. But they were beginning to learn.

In the wretched years that followed the 1914-1918 War, there was a considerable amount of industrial unrest, and Europeans fought to improve their wages and working conditions. In their struggle they saw the covetous eyes of the industrialists turning more and more to the Native labour market, where plenty of cheap and docile labour was available. There was then a growing belief, encouraged by the Chamber of Mines, that South African industry could be developed economically only by the use of cheap black labour.

In 1914 there were 60,000 non-Europeans and 40,000 Europeans employed in industry. Ten years later there were 116,000 non-Europeans and 60,000 Europeans. The rate of increase in the number of non-Europeans had been twice that of the Europeans.

Major Strike

This was one of the major issues involved in the 1922 Strike. After the defeat of the Smuts Government in 1924, the Nationalist-Labour Pact Government introduced measures such as the Mines and Works Act, and the Industrial Conciliation Act, which established the legal protection of the European worker against competition by "cheap black labour." The Hertzog civilised labour policy aimed to extend this policy into Government departments.

That was all of a quarter of a century ago. The Union has since outgrown its industrial babyhood. The relief of the European and the non-European worker in industry have now been fairly established. The uncertainties and problems of yesterday have almost disappeared.

When Hertzog proclaimed his civilised labour policy, the gross value of the output of the Union's industries was £80,000,000. By 1945 it had risen to £417,000,000, and the number of employees had increased to 178,000 Europeans and 341,000 non-Europeans.

What Figures Show

These figures show that while the protection of the interests of the European has prevented the swamping of industry with cheap, exploited, black labour, wide scope has been found for the employment of all races of workers.

The Nationalists, however, behave as though the country has stood still. The effect of the urbanisation of large numbers of Europeans and non-Europeans is lost on them. Only antiquated and stultified Nationalist minds could find inspiration in the outmoded policies of twenty-five years ago. They desire to revive the bad old days of poor-whiteism. While industry is providing limitless opportunities for white and black workers to acquire skills, this Nationalist Government declares unskilled labour is the preserve of the white man. The Nationalist Party pretence of protecting the European worker betrays him into permanent bondage to poor-whiteism.

During the recent session of Parliament the Minister of Labour stated that 461 Natives had been replaced by 422 Europeans and 39 Coloureds. He also stated that the European labourers were costing £164 per annum more for married men and £101 for single men.

The Durban report says that the Europeans have been found to be unsatisfactory and expensive, and that a large number of them have been discharged from employment at the Magistrates' Court.

It will be interesting to have an official statement on the facts of the matter.

Hertzog Civilized Labour Policy

THE civilised labour policy, laid down by the Hertzog Cabinet of 1924, stressed:

Firstly, that wherever practicable, civilised labour was to be used in all Government departments in place of uncivilised labour.

Secondly, it defined "civilised" as meaning "according to the standards of living of the Europeans."

Thirdly, it ordered that all possible avenues of employment be provided for white youths.

It pointed out that the immediate benefits of cheap "uncivilised" labour would be offset by better work resulting from permanent social and economic benefits afforded to the European.

ALEX HEPPLÉ,
LABOUR M.P.,
ASKS:—

CHALLENGE TO GOVERNMENT

WHAT'S COOKING IN THE MINEWORKERS' UNION?

FORWARD

25/8/50

GREAT INTEREST HAS BEEN AROUSED IN TRADE UNION CIRCLES OVER THE ELECTION OF DR. ALBERT HERTZOG, M.P., TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE MINEWORKERS' UNION.

It must have been a proud moment indeed for Dr. Hertzog. At last he had realised a lifelong ambition. An ardent Broederbonder, a bank director, as well as a director of a daily newspaper, Dr. Hertzog this year appeared as Chairman of the Board of Directors of Die Werkerspers, Uitgewers Maatskappy (Edms.) Beperk, publishers of "Die Werker." This newspaper appears at regular intervals with supplements, "Die Bouwerker" and "Die Klerwerker," and also handles the publication of "Die Mynwerker."

Not only is Dr. Hertzog Chairman of the Board, but he is the largest contributor and hardest working individual in the whole organisation.

It will be remembered that with the aid of the Marais and Neethling Trust Funds Dr. Hertzog started the Mynwerkers' Bond during the Thirties, and was prominently associated with the United Mine-workers' Committee which fought and ousted the old leadership of the Mineworkers.

Against this background it is not surprising that "Die Mynwerker" proudly announces the election of Dr. Hertzog to the Executive, in the following terms:—

"The Executive's decision to elect Dr. Hertzog as a member was prompted by the realisation that the presence of the leader at a time when most far-reaching decisions have to be made is indispensable. Big developments are pending for the mineworkers. Battles for great issues—above all, the second instalment and the free Saturday—lie ahead. But the future cannot be built unless the Union's own house is in order. A firm hand and leadership are the demands of the hour."

BUT NOT EVERYONE IS HAPPY ABOUT THIS TURN OF EVENTS—CERTAINLY NOT ALL THE MINEWORKERS.

In the first place, it indicates that the mineworkers are entering the field of politics, even though they state that they support the present Government.

The question immediately arises—are they emerging as a political wing of the Nationalist Party

(with the blessing of the Government) or are they entering the field as potential opponents of the Nationalist Party?

Where Does The Government Stand?

The views of the Minister of Labour on the question of politics in trades unions is well known. On many occasions he has declared himself opposed to politics in trades unions. As a matter of fact, he feels so strongly in the matter that he has frequently clashed with the Labour Party and the trade union movement because they believe that trades unions should take political action. In Parliament, on September 20, 1949, he said:—

"I will do my best as Minister of Labour to keep politics out of trade unions, no matter of what nature, whether United Party or Labour Party or Nationalist Party. The moment that politics enter trade unions, and I am speaking as a trade union man, there are all sorts of disputes and difficulties."

The Minister has even gone so far as to refuse to publish industrial agreements containing the "closed shop" clause where trade unions were affiliated to the Labour Party, or where their constitutions contained a political levy clause.

In the case of the Mineworkers' Union, it appears that the election of Dr. Hertzog was made possible by an amendment to the constitution. I do not know if this amendment has been approved by the Industrial Registrar, but, in any case, the change was not made by means of a referendum amongst the rank and file members of the Union.

THERE ARE MANY MINERS WHO WOULD OPPOSE THE APPOINTMENT OF ANY POLITICIANS TO THEIR EXECUTIVE, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHATEVER PARTY THEY MAY REPRESENT.

In April, 1949, when Dr. Hertzog was telling the general council of the Mineworkers' Union that the gold mines should be nationalised, nine Nationalist Members of Parliament were elected "honorary members" of the Union. These "honorary miners" were Dr. Hertzog, Dr. Diederichs, Professor Malan, M. J. van den Berg, J. Du Pisane, A. J. B. Deysel, F. E. Mentz, D. J. J. Mostert and de V. Visser, not all of whom supported the idea of nationalisation.

Shortly afterwards, both the then Minister of Mines, Mr. Eric Louw, and the Prime Minister stated quite definitely that there would be no nationalisation of the mines and that the Party stood four-square behind Capitalism.

If the Industrial Registrar has, in fact, approved of the amendment to the Mineworkers' constitution, some change must have taken place in the policy of the Department of Labour.

I have quoted above the attitude of Mr. Ben Schoeman, the present Minister of Labour. In 1946, when Dr. Colin Steyn was Minister, the Ironmoulders sought to insert a new clause in their constitution, enabling them to affiliate to the Labour Party. The registrar refused to agree to this new clause, even though it provided that those who did not desire to pay the political levy could contract out. The Department has consistently refused to budge from that position.

While the amendment to the Mineworkers' Union constitution does not provide for affiliation to a political party, it certainly introduces an analogous position. It permits the election to the Union's controlling body a person not even remotely connected with mining, and it secures a leading official position in the Union for a prominent member of the Nationalist Party, and an M.P. to boot.

"Die Mynwerker" report suggests great times ahead for the miners, and hints at Dr. Albert Hertzog as the "leader." In fairness to the trade union movement, the Minister of Labour should state the Government's attitude without delay.

NATIVE TRADE UNIONS

The Case for Their Formation

By Alex. Hepple, M.P.

IN the May issue of F.C.I. News, Lt.-Col. K. Rood suggested the formation of Native industrial committees within industry, rather than the establishment of Native trade unions. The other side of a contentious problem is put in the following article.

In publishing the views of Lieut. Colonel K. Rood on the organisation of Natives in industry, the Federated Chamber of Industries has once again drawn attention to a problem of great importance to South African industry. It is also a problem which has caused considerable discussion and argument in European trade union circles for the past three decades. During that time not only has the Native made great strides towards an understanding of modern civilisation, but South African industry itself has progressed on a vast scale. In such circumstances the role of the Native in industry has become of paramount importance not only to industrialists and to European workers, but to the whole of South Africa.

Future of the Native in Industry

There are two important points to be decided before we consider the advisability or otherwise of Native trade unions. The first is whether the Native is to be a permanent part of our industrial labour force; the second is whether the Native worker is to be educated and taught to become a skilled or semi-skilled worker.

I think we are so far committed to the use of Native labour in our industries that it would be quite impossible to depart from that policy now, even if it were desirable. The Native has become indispensable as our major labour force and must be treated upon that basis. On the question of the degree of skill which the Native should acquire, this has been and will continue to be determined by the needs of industry itself. Natives have been excluded from most skilled trades either by law or by general acceptance of the practice of indenturing only European apprentices; this is the result of the fear of the skilled European craftsman, in the early days of our industrial development, that he would gradually be supplemented by the Native at cheaper rates.

In recent years, however, great changes have been taking place in production techniques which tend toward the gradual elimination of the old type skilled craftsman and his replacement by "operatives." While such changes have been delayed or even resisted in the older established industries, new industries have utilised modern line-production methods or sub-divided operations, using exclusively non-European and particularly Native labour. Without traditions or agreements to consider, no revolutionary changes in method were needed, nor were entrenched workers to be displaced. This factor, more than any other, is carrying South Africa along the path where increasing numbers of Natives will be employed in industry.

Because the Native is particularly suited to repetitive work, and keenly anxious to succeed in tasks requiring some form of skill, he is adapting himself more and more to the needs of industry. Despite political necessity and the demand for the preservation of the "civilised Labour policy" the Native is in industry to stay and nothing will prevent him from acquiring greater skill, practical knowledge and ability.

Fears of the European Worker

Any consideration of the Native worker must take into account the security of the European worker. After the first world war, European workers faced the danger of being ousted permanently by the apparent desire of industrialists to man South African factories with "cheap black labour." They saw in the attitude of the Chamber of Mines a threat to all European workers. The circumstances which led up to the 1922 Strike, and the resulting change in Government in 1924, when a Nationalist-Labour Pact came into power, are well enough known.

From this pact was born our present industrial legislation, which has resulted in co-operation between employers and employees and establishes collective bargaining as a basis of settling differences. But this legislation excludes the vast majority of workers because they are Natives. The Industrial Conciliation Act No. 36 of 1937 does not recognise Natives under the definition "employee," and Native trade unions have no legal status. According to official statistics for 1943-4 only 31 per cent of the employees in private manufacturing industry are European, while 52 per cent are Natives. It will be seen, therefore, that more than half the workers in industry are excluded from the benefits of the Industrial Conciliation Act.

In 1947 the Government introduced the Industrial Conciliation (Natives) Bill to provide for Native workers and their unions on a separate basis. This Bill was not proceeded with, because the measure was opposed not only by those who rejected the idea of recognition for Native trade unions but also by the Natives themselves, who considered its provisions discriminatory and restrictive.

At the present time the Industrial Legislation Commission is investigating, among other things, the powers and functions of Native trade unions.

Recognition of the Native Worker

Opinion on the question of the wisdom of allowing Natives to organise themselves into trade unions is divided. There is one school of thought which believes that to allow Natives to organise their own trade unions and give them legal recognition would be to place a powerful and dangerous weapon in the hands of backward and uncivilised people.

There is another school of thought which believes that Native trade unions are not only desirable but necessary. Their belief rests upon the experience of the trade union movement in other parts of the world. The objections against Native trade unions are very much like those used against workers' organisations in Europe a century or more ago. In Britain the Combination Acts of 1799 made trade unions and other workers' organisations illegal; yet the British trade union movement not only continued to grow but eventually became a major political force. In 1871 the Criminal Law Amendment Act made it possible for trade unions to be prosecuted if they went on strike and "committed acts calculated to damage the employer in his business" by picketing. The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants was in fact so charged and had to pay £23,000 damages to the Taff Vale Railway Co. The "Taff Vale" judgement compelled the unions to devise some

means of protecting their rights and so the British Labour Party was born—to fight politically on behalf of trade unionists. Since 1945 this Labour Party has been the Government of Britain. I quote this to illustrate that persecution and suppression animate people to fight, and defeats do more to strengthen their cause than easy victories.

This may well be the case with the Native workers in South Africa. If the Europeans adopt a hostile and unsympathetic attitude towards them they will be forced more and more to depend upon their own resources, which may well be turned towards a Native nationalism with a strongly anti-European bias. In the industrial field this will lead to disastrous results.

Attitude of Industry

In August, 1948, the Transvaal Chamber of Industries stated its attitude to Native trade unions in the following terms:—

"To leave the Native trade unions to develop haphazardly cannot possibly produce a healthy state of affairs, especially when it is considered that a large proportion of organised Native workers are not trade union conscious . . . it would probably be a progressive step to give statutory recognition to Native trade unions, and to prescribe the conditions under which they may exist; lay down rules for their discipline; fix penalties for contravention of the rules, and generally provide skilled assistance to guide them in their negotiations and relations with their employers."

European Trade Union View

The trade union movement has agitated for a long time for the recognition of all workers, including Natives, under the Industrial Conciliation Act. In its evidence to the Industrial legislation Commission the S.A. Trades and Labour Council declared:—

"The Council has consistently opposed this (present) definition of "employee" and has insisted on the extension of "employee" to cover all workers. At every Annual Conference resolutions to this effect have been adopted because organised labour recognises correctly that the threat of cheap labour hangs like a Sword of Damocles over the improvements secured by trade unions of the "recognised employees."

Individual European trade unionists have made several attempts to assist in the organisation of Natives in their own trade unions. In 1947 there was established a Technical Advisory Committee for African Trade Unions which aimed at helping Natives to establish properly functioning trade unions, advising in negotiations with employers, and providing technical training for Native trade union officials. Many European trade unionists assert that it is vitally important that Natives should learn the value of collective bargaining and stand in the same relationship to the employers as do the Europeans. This requires the legal recognition of Native trade unions. They fear that otherwise the Native will become isolated and independent, filled with antagonism towards the European worker and an easy prey to exploitation, and so undermine the wage standards of the European.

From the standpoint of the industrialist, orderly arrangements with all their employees are essential. Legally recognised channels between industrialists and their employees will promote confidence and harmony. More than that, recognised status will encourage pride of craft and the carrying of a trade union card will be greatly treasured by Natives, especially those with ambition. All this leads to greater efficiency. With the role of the Native legally determined and protected, progressive employers will be able to embark upon training schemes, trade tests and other methods of raising efficiency. Ultimately all sections of the community would benefit and much of the existing hostility towards Native organisations would disappear.

Native Industrial Committees

Lieut.-Colonel Rood has proposed Native industrial committees (i.e. "factory unions") comprising all Native employees in each separate establishment. Such committees are known to experienced trade unionists as "company unions" and are detested. Industrial history has shown that such unions soon become employer-controlled. Where the activities of a union are confined to one particular shop, employees are influenced by fear and favour and the union soon loses all resemblance to a legitimate trade union. With properly constituted trade unions and employers' organisations, differences are discussed at top level in a proper atmosphere. The employer is relieved of the responsibility of handling individual demands and complaints, while the worker is able to have his legitimate demands handled through his Union or Industrial Council.

Lieut.-Colonel Rood, in what appears to be a sincere attempt to arrive at a solution to the problem of recognition of Native workers, has allowed himself to be misled at the outset by wrong premises. He asks: "How could Natives form a trade union? They have no particular trades." Lieut.-Colonel Rood appears to be under the misapprehension that the only kind of workers' union is the "craft" union. The organisation of all kinds of workers into unions has been practised for many years in the Western world. "Trade union" today means any association of workers.

Lieut.-Colonel Rood is also wrong if he believes that Natives still continue to chop and change from one type of work to another. While this was once the case, Natives are tending more and more to remain within one particular class of industry. The legal recognition of Native trade unions would certainly confine greater numbers within the boundaries of each industry. It would help to eliminate the expensive practice of using casual and untrained Native workers, which always forces up production costs. Increasing numbers of Natives are becoming operatives and semi-skilled workers. A recent study of Native factory workers by the Department of Economics, University of Natal, revealed that the labour turnover at Dunlops (where more than 1,000 Natives are employed in semi-skilled repetitive work) ranges between 4 and 6 per cent. As the use of migratory labour lessens, so will the labour turnover be reduced in South African factories. Too many industrialists and politicians retain the old idea of the Native as an unskilled and casual labourer. It is this which causes many of the difficulties in deciding how to deal with the Native worker.

It is suggested by Lieut.-Colonel Rood that the only course open to Natives would be to form "one big union—a Natives' Union," which would be "easy prey of many agitators or communists or self-styled counsellors." This is contradicted by the facts. At the present time there exist many Native trade unions, and not one. In 1944 there were no less than 65 separate Native unions in the Transvaal alone. Non-recognition exposes Native unions more to exploitation by dishonest organisers than to the wiles of agitators. Without the protection of the law and without the support and sympathy of the European, Native trade unions will always be a source of exploitation.

What of the Rest of Africa?

The Union would be well advised to keep an eye upon developments to the north, where trade unionism amongst Natives is not only legal but is officially encouraged and assisted. Following the Philadelphia Declaration of 1944, the Colonial Powers, Britain, France and Belgium, have accepted that "the rights of employers and employed alike to associate for all legal purposes shall be guaranteed by appropriate measures." By letter of 24th April, 1945, South Africa informed the I.L.O. that while it had taken note of the recommendation, it was not in agreement with all the provisions.

The Thirty-first Session of the I.L.O. at San Francisco, in 1948, made it imperative upon all member States to give effect to the decision that:—

"Workers and employers, without distinction whatsoever, shall have the right to establish and, subject only to the rules of the organisation concerned, to join organisations of their own choosing without previous authorisation."

Upon these lines Colonial Governments are assisting in the formation of Native trade unions in Africa. They are encountering many difficulties, but diligently pursuing the task. While the millions of Natives in the north are learning about trade unionism, can South Africa stand aside, and deceive herself that these events will have no effect upon the Union?

Finally, how can we boast of the virtues of Western democratic practices, yet deny their benefits to the Native peoples, simply on the grounds that they are not civilised enough to appreciate such practices? Such an attitude must surely cause the Native to suspect our sincerity and tempt him to turn to communism as his only hope.

THE NEW RENTS ACT: TYPICAL OF CAPITALIST SOCIETY

Government's Indifference To The Masses

THE NEW RENTS ACT, PASSED DURING THE DYING HOURS OF THE LAST PARLIAMENTARY SESSION, CAME INTO FORCE ON JULY 17, 1950. LANDLORDS ARE ALREADY GOING INTO ACTION TO REAP THE REWARDS OF THIS PIECE OF LEGISLATION. MANY OF THEM WILL BE DEMANDING HIGHER RENTALS AND THOUSANDS WILL ASK FOR EJECTMENT ORDERS AGAINST THEIR TENANTS.

The new definitions of "value" and "reasonable rent" will make it possible for the majority of lessors to claim increases in existing rentals. The provision of means for the re-possession of dwellings and business premises exposes thousands of tenants to ejectment.

"Value" and Reasonable Rent

Taken together, as these two definitions must be, "value" and "reasonable rent" have been so extended as to affect almost every rent determination in existence. While it is still left to the Rent Boards to decide what is reasonable rent value for any property, the introduction of new factors for their consideration must certainly affect their approach to rent-fixing.

The tendency is upwards. The Rent Boards have now received a clear indication from Parliament that the landlords are to receive a better return than in the past.

While landlords would have preferred to see the total abolition of ejectment control, they are now extremely happy that the new Rents Act gives them the power to evict tenants. Although the scope for ejectment appears to be limited, in practice it will be found that thousands of families will get notice to quit.

The Act permits a lessor to eject a tenant if he "reasonably requires the premises for his personal use, or that of his parent, or his child, or any person in his employ," or if the premises are required for reconstruction or a rebuilding scheme.

In the former case, the lessor must give three-months' notice, and in the latter six-months' notice.

The Labour Party argued in

Parliament that alternative accommodation should be provided for all such persons ejected. The Government refused to agree to this. As a result, all families which are rendered homeless because of an ejectment order will have to fend for themselves and hope for the best. By some stroke of fortune they may find somewhere to live at a rent they can afford.

It is typical of capitalist society that while property rights are protected, human values are neglected.

Obviously, the Government is not concerned about the fate of those families which are to be thrown out of their homes. If it were concerned, it would have made sure that suitable alternative accommodation is available for these unfortunate people. At the present time there is a building boom; office blocks, flats and business premises are being erected in all the chief towns. Very few houses are being built, however.

Investors prefer to build blocks of flats because the prospects of higher returns attract them. The present high cost of building will make the rents of these premises almost prohibitive. Tenants of these new flats are committing themselves to monthly rentals quite out of keeping with their incomes.

SOONER OR LATER THE CRASH WILL COME.

In the meantime, despite the inflated prices for timber, cement, steel, building hardware and other items, more buildings are being erected, and the owners are looking for a "fair return on their investment."

THE ONLY ITEM IN THE LIST OF BUILDING COSTS THAT HAS NOT INCREASED SINCE DEVALUATION IS WAGES.

Building workers are receiving no more now than they were before the Union's currency was devalued. These same workers are some of the tenants who must contribute towards the penalties of devaluation. Truly, the prospect for the average workers is grim. Those who do not get thrown out will have to pay higher rents.

The Shopkeeper

The outlook for the small shopkeeper is equally grim. The new Rents Act permits the landlord to eject his tenant if he requires the premises for his own use. He must, however, give his tenant six months' notice, which will begin to run from July 1, 1951. If the premises are required for reconstruction or rebuilding schemes, twelve months' notice must be given, effective from any date after commencement of the Act, viz., July 17, 1950. The small shopkeeper's fight against the wealthy chain stores and combines is now to be aggravated by demands for ruinously high rents.

On the Reef especially, landlords are asking their tenants to sign new leases at sharply increased rentals. In some cases shopkeepers are asked to pay four times as much as they paid ten years ago.

I KNOW OF ONE CASE WHERE A SUBURBAN SHOPKEEPER HAS BEEN ASKED TO SIGN A LEASE AT £50 PER MONTH; IN 1940 HE WAS PAYING £12 10s. FOR THE SAME PREMISES.

The small turnover of most of these businesses cannot carry high rents. Many may be forced out of business, while others will foolishly commit themselves to exorbitant rents in the hope that somehow they will be able to pay.

In certain cases where a shopkeeper has built up a reputation and valuable goodwill, he may be ejected so that the landlord may reap the benefit.

The full force and effect of the Rents Act, 1950, will only be felt as the months go by. Tenants will then understand why the Labour Party fought so fiercely against it. It is worth repeating here what Mr. Davidoff, M.P., speaking on behalf of the Labour Party, said on the Third Reading of the Rents Bill:

"This occasion should not be allowed to pass without the strongest possible objection against the tactics and the attitude of the Government in forcing so important a piece of social and economic legislation through the House at the very last stage of the Session, and more so at the fact that at the very end we were not even able to argue the various amendments that were set down. I feel that no objection that can be made is strong enough. . . . During the whole of this Session the Government Party placed the interests of the Nationalist Party over and above the interests of the people. On behalf of the Labour Party — although we always wanted a Rents Bill—I must emphasise the fact that it is deplorable that this Act has had to go through in such an unduly harsh and hasty manner."

The Rents Act is another example of how the present Government is completely indifferent to the plight of the mass of the people, in this age of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer.

THOUSANDS EJECTED UNDER LANDLORD'S CHARTER

Nat. Economic Policy Leads To Inflation

FIRST EFFECTS OF NEW RENTS ACT

BY ALEX. HEPPLER, M.P.

AFTER the new Rents Act came into force on July 17 last, notices to quit began to arrive in many homes in the large towns of the Union. Operating under Section 21 of the Act, landlords are asking their tenants to get out on the grounds that the premises are required for themselves, their parents, their children or their employees. The tenants have immediately sought somewhere to live. In very few cases have they been successful.

To-day there are thousands of families living under the shadow of three months' notice to leave; for many of them the period of notice is due to expire soon. With the acute shortage of dwellings their plight is desperate.

At the present time there is a boom in the building of flats. On the Reef particularly there is an exceptionally large number of blocks of flats going up. But very few houses are being built and certainly no houses for the poor.

As soon as the Rents Act was passed by Parliament at the end of June, financiers and property-owners boasted that there would be a spate of building activity, because the Act gave every incentive to investors to erect new residential and business premises. The boom has certainly come about—but not to the benefit of the tenants or the public generally.

Let us look at dwelling accommodation first. The poor unfortunate householders who have been given notice to vacate their present homes are unable to find other houses, excepting in a few isolated instances. So they are forced to look for suitable flats, even though they may have children, and even though they may strongly prefer a house with a small garden in the suburbs.

The prospect of a brand new, modern flat must surely be a pleasing one to even the most fussy householder. It is—until you are told the rent. Because of the high cost of building, and because all premises erected after October 21, 1949, are exempted from the provisions of the Rents Act, the rentals of new flats are twice and thrice as much as that of similar flats under Rent Control.

In effect, this means that a family occupying a house at, say, £10 per month, is now compelled to pay from £20 to £40 per month for a double flat, if they are fortunate enough to secure one of these flats.

With careful budgeting a family with a moderate income was able to pay £10 to £15 per month for rent. This represented 20 per cent. to 30 per cent. of the family income. A new flat will devour almost half of the family income.

What is the alternative? Most tenants who have received notice are asking themselves this question and cannot find the answer.

Labour Party Was Right

In Parliament, and outside it, the Labour Party's opposition to this Rents Act was severely criticised as being unreasonable. Labour was accused of making political capital out of the question. Their warnings were derided as exaggerated and fantastic. Even the usually placid Minister of Social Welfare, Dr. Stals, became irritated by the persistent opposition of the Labour group and he complained:

"All this talk about the abuse of proprietary right simply aims at creating an unfair and unjust impression in this House with an eye to people outside . . . Of course, the public outside know the purpose of this, but it is nevertheless tragic that responsible people should make use of this platform for party-political purposes."

That was on June 22. The Act was promulgated on July 17. By the end of August so serious a situation had developed that the Minister felt compelled to order an immediate investigation into the effects of the Act.

IF THE GOVERNMENT HAD HEEDED THE WARNINGS OF THE LABOUR PARTY, SUCH AN INVESTIGATION WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN NECESSARY. THE INVESTIGATION CAN ONLY REVEAL THE OBVIOUS.

If the Government was too proud to listen to the warnings of the Labour group, surely the time to make investigations was before passing the Act. The Minister should not be surprised because the landlords are operating under the Charter that has been granted to them.

LABOUR TOLD THEM SO

It has been reported that within the first four weeks after the Rents Act came into force, nearly 400 tenants received notice in Cape Town and over 300 in Port Elizabeth. The figure for the Reef has not been disclosed, but there can be no doubt that it must run into thousands. When the Bill was being debated in Parliament, the Labour Party proposed that the landlord should be compelled to provide alternative accommodation for the tenant before being allowed to eject him. The Minister refused to agree to this.

What Can The Minister Do?

It is important that the country be told of the total number of tenants who get notice to quit. It is to be hoped that the Minister will publish the full figures and disclose whatever information his investigators gather. It is also to be hoped that figures will be published every month, giving the number of persons upon whom notice has been served to vacate either dwellings or business premises.

Such information will be valuable to focus attention upon a serious state of affairs. It is difficult to think of any other use to which the Minister can put this information. He is tied by the terms of the Act. The landlords have been given the green light and there is no way in which the Minister can stop them.

If, however, the Minister is contemplating amending the Rents Act during the next session of Parliament, he should make the fact known.

Business Premises

The effect of the Act upon businesses is alarming.

Many shopkeepers are being asked to sign leases at exorbitant rentals. Within the scope of the Act, others are being given notice on the grounds that the premises are required by the owners for themselves or for rebuilding or reconstruction. Old-established traders are faced with the alternatives of paying up or getting out. By paying up they are committing themselves to a crippling overhead charge, which they will endeavour to collect from the consumer.

THIS IS ONE MORE WAY IN WHICH LEGISLATION IS FORCING UP THE COST OF LIVING.

Our Nationalist Government, so quick to abuse the public for extravagance and thriftlessness, has clearly established inflation as its basic economic policy.

THE COST-OF-LIVING SWINDLE

Big Price Rises Coming: C.O.L. Increases

A Ruse To Beat The Workers

C.O.L. PEGGING MUST BE FOUGHT

THE BELATED DECISION OF THE CABINET TO INCREASE THE PRESENT COST-OF-LIVING ALLOWANCES OFFERS SOME SMALL HOPE TO THE STRUGGLING WAGE AND SALARY EARNERS OF THE UNION. The last time these allowances were increased was in October, 1948, when the official Cost-of-Living Index stood at 151.2; to-day it stands at 161.

During the two years over which the present rates have operated, workers have had to pay more and more for the every-day needs of life. In practice, no sooner had they received higher allowances than commodity prices soared again, making the allowances quite inadequate.

The new cost-of-living allowances are due to be gazetted this week and may become operative from October 1. It is to be hoped that they will be calculated upon the realities of the situation and take into account the fact that we are entering another period of acute inflation.

Despite the repeated assurances of Cabinet Ministers that the Government "takes a serious view of the cost-of-living problem" it is remarkable how easily they find excuses to avoid their responsibilities to the workers.

While Mr. Eric Louw, Minister of Economic Affairs, believes that most workers get into financial difficulties because they gamble on the Stock Exchange, he also disclaims any responsibility for increases in prices due to devaluation.

On the other hand, he joins in the jubilation of his colleagues on the question of the "benefits of devaluation."

Devaluation the Excuse

This cry of "benefits of devaluation" becomes ludicrous in the mouths of those who plead helplessness against the forces of rising costs of imported goods. When there was talk of devaluation early in 1949, the Labour Party found itself in agreement with the Minister of Finance, Mr. Havenga. The Labour Party warned that the workers would have to pay for devaluation and that devaluation was a device to enrich the wealthy at the expense of the poor. Mr. Havenga held strong views on this question and told Parliament:

"Many people argue that when a State encounters financial difficulties it should pursue the course of monkeying about with its currency . . . those who advocate devaluation do not seem to have

kept abreast of international currency development . . . (they) want us to sell our exports more cheaply in order to pretend that we are better off . . . they want us to inject another dose of inflation into our economic veins."

These words may seem strange, coming from a man who now waxes enthusiastic about the "benefits of devaluation." Speaking at Maritzburg on August 14, Mr. Havenga said:—

"The rise in prices of imported goods is an inevitable consequence of devaluation. It is the price we have had to pay for the benefits of devaluation—a price that was well worth paying."

Mr. Havenga, like every other member of the Cabinet, has failed to say who has received the benefits of devaluation. We know who is paying the price of devaluation—it is the large mass of the people, European and non-European, with fixed incomes.

Since last September, when the £ was devalued, their problems have increased considerably. If it has been well worth while sacrificing slices of the workers' incomes

in order to gain the benefits of devaluation, surely the workers should be told whom they are helping. Is it the State, or the farmers, or the Mining Industry, or the Mineworkers (who have received a paltry first instalment of 15 per cent.), or the speculators on the Stock Exchange (whose share prices are back to pre-devaluation levels)? Those who are paying for devaluation are entitled to know where the benefits are going.

Inflation on the Way

While all workers will heartily welcome the crumbs that may fall to them, and accept the new cost-of-living allowances, they know they are falling into a trap.

The old cry of "the vicious spiral of wages chasing prices" has been used to good effect before and will be used to good effect again.

These increased allowances are being granted at a dangerous time. The Union, like most other countries, is entering upon a period of inflation. In the coming months prices are likely to soar to unbelievable heights.

In the first place there is the inflationary policy of our Nationalist Government. Their social legislation is involving the country in crippling financial burdens; their economic confusion is permitting free rein to the avaricious and curbing the progressive industrialist; their "neither capitalist nor Communist" policy confers bounties and favours upon the rich and oppressive burdens on the poor. Whatever inflation they are unable to import, they are manufacturing within the Union.

The recent Rents Act is a striking example. Its full effect upon the economy of the country has yet to be felt. The second danger of inflation comes from the general world situation. The promises of reduced commodity prices as a result of increased production are dissolving in the huge rearmament programmes of the major nations.

War Inflation

With many industries changing over to the manufacture of war materials, the backlog in consumer goods is certain to increase. With demand exceeding supply prices will soar.

America, particularly, will set new high prices for her goods. While a year ago there existed enormous surpluses in the United States (e.g., "enough cotton to make 54 house-dresses for every woman in America, enough wheat to bake 12 loaves of bread for every man, woman and child in the world, enough prunes to give every member of Congress a dish for breakfast until September of the year 3279"), the threat of war has created a shortage of everything. The recent record prices paid for wool are a pointer, to the higher prices of clothing next year.

All this means that the cost of living will keep on moving up. Increased cost-of-living allowances granted now will be of little help next year, when prices will have soared again.

The only fair and just way in which to meet this problem is to tie cost-of-living allowances to the Cost-of-Living Index.

Of course, the Index must be an honest reflected of commodity prices. And no Government should be allowed to peg cost-of-living allowances without pegging prices. This is what our Government has done in the case of civil servants. Since the allowances of civil servants were pegged last November, the official Index has risen 7½ points. This is an injustice that must be remedied.

NATS.' ECONOMIC COUNCIL IS FASCIST IN FORM

Mussolini Set Up One, And So Did Hitler

BY
ALEX. HEPPLER, M.P.

EMERGENCE OF A "LABOUR FRONT"

WHEN Mr. Eric Louw, Minister of Economic Affairs, told the Nationalist Party Congress in Pretoria last week that the Government would soon set up a Central Economic Council, few people realised that he was, in fact, announcing the taking of a most important step toward the fashioning of a Fascist State.

Nationalists become very angry when one associates their policies with Fascism. They complain that this is a technique designed to mislead the public. I believe that there are many good Nationalists who are stout democrats. Their trouble is that they do not understand the policies of their own party. I also believe that there are many good Nationalists who passionately admired the authoritarian Governments of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Nationalist Party policy is in many respects fashioned on Fascist lines.

The purpose of this article is to illustrate the similarity between the Nationalist Central Economic Council, Mussolini's Central Corporative Committee and Hitler's National Economic Chamber. It is a most striking example of how Nationalist professors and economic theorists have engraved their admiration for totalitarianism on the policy of the Nationalist Party.

Purpose of the Central Economic Council

Mr. Louw has stated that Dr. Norval, Chairman of the Board of Trade and Industries, has been appointed to investigate and collect creation of the Central Economic information as a prelude to the Council. According to Mr. Louw, the Council must fall under the Prime Minister's department because of its important ramifications. The Nationalist Party itself describes the Central Economic Council in these terms:

"There must be an authoritative and responsible link between the Government and the economic life of its citizens. The link will be provided by a Central Economic Council.

"In the first place the Council must be in close contact with all the ramifications of the country's economic life, inter alia, through a remodelled system of regulatory board, each board fully representative of its own trade, profession or industry. In the second place and arising from its representative character and its technical resources, the Council must advise the Government on the necessary steps to be taken to develop our resources along pre-determined paths, to co-ordinate the diversified economic interests properly, to maintain social justice and to eliminate usurious activities."

Social and Economic Planning Council

At this point we should be reminded that South Africa already has its Social and Economic Planning Council. It was appointed in 1942 as an advisory body to Government, under the Chairmanship of Dr. Van Eck, following upon the recommendation of the Industrial and Agricultural Requirements Commission. Among other things, it has reported upon Social Security, Regional and Town Planning and Economic Aspects of the Gold Min-

ing Industry. These reports have provided the country with valuable and important data as an aid to the solution of many outstanding problems.

The Labour Party believes that far too little use is made of the Social and Economic Planning Council and that its powers are too circumscribed. We would have preferred that the Council be appointed according to the recommendation of the Commission, viz., on a full-time basis. On the other hand, it would be undemocratic and wrong to confer upon this body powers that belong to Parliament and other elected bodies.

If the genuine purpose of the Nationalist Central Economic Council is to "provide a responsible link between the Government and its citizens," there is no reason why the Social and Economic Planning Council cannot adequately fill that need. Possibly the Nationalists feel that it would not measure up to the standards required of an autocratic, despotic disciplinarian of the community, such as their Central Economic Council must be.

The Nationalists talk of a "remodelled system of regulatory boards." Mussolini had twenty-two such Fascist corporations, and his Central Corporative Committee had absolute power over them all. The powers of the corporations or "regulatory boards" were more apparent than real. So will it be in the Union. The Central Economic Council will become the absolute power in our economy. Every aspect of social and economic life will be subject to their authority.

German "National Economic Chamber"

Hitler also had his Central Economic Council. He called it the National Economic Chamber. It was a policy-making body, controlling the Co-operative Council of Chambers of Industry and Commerce, which enforced its policies. All its members were appointed, never elected. Its leader was a trusted and fanatical party member.

The German Labour Front, which ruled the workers of Germany with a rod of iron, was in turn managed by the Business Office of the National Economic Chamber by the simple device of making the Business Office boss over the Economic Bureau of the Labour Front. In this way the workers of Germany

became the frightened slaves of big business and the Nazi Party.

Nats. Labour Council

Here in South Africa the Nationalists propose that the workers will similarly be controlled. They, too, intend to place their "Labour Front" or Labour Council under the authority of the Central Economic Council. Let me quote once again from their official policy:

"The Nationalist Party considers that the present system of wage control and the regulation of working conditions is ineffective, and proposes that the system of collective bargaining be supplemented by a system of State responsibility, exercised by means of the Central Economic Council and the Labour Council."

Nationalist policy also provides that "The Labour Council will exercise effective control over the appointment of officials by, and the general activities of the trade unions and workers' organisations." IN OTHER WORDS THE LABOUR COUNCIL WILL BE THE BODY WHICH ENFORCES THE POLICY OF THE CENTRAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL (I.E., OF THE NATIONALIST PARTY).

Who Will Be The Members of the Council?

Neither Mr. Louw nor the Nationalist Party have said how the Central Economic Council will be appointed or elected. Mussolini made sure that his Central Corporative Committee toed the party line by appointing to it a few of his faithful Cabinet Ministers, some good party leaders, trusted Fascist merchants and farmers, and a handful of lackeys from the ranks of the workers.

As the proposed Central Economic Council in South Africa will be an instrument of Nationalist policy, it can be expected that it will be similarly composed. This will be the great opportunity to establish in supreme power some of the more important Nationalist professors and economic theorists, who have so far remained behind the scenes.

When the time comes, they will be appointed "for their special knowledge and ability" and not for the real reason that they are the rulers of the Nationalist Party.

These are facts which the rank and file of the Nationalist Party do not know, or do not understand. They believe that the promised "Christian-National State" will be fine and pure and democratic. They fail to realise that the Fascist-minded group within the party is dangerously fanatical and determined. When they wake up to this fact, they, too, may be doomed under a Fascist dictatorship, and silenced by fear.

DREAM IN COURTSHIP, WAKE IN WEDLOCK

National Unity, Natal, Nats.

FORWARD

29/9/50

ALL THIS AND HEAVEN TOO

THE POLITICAL EVENT OF THE MONTH HAS BEEN THE NATIONALIST PARTY CONGRESS IN NATAL. In a supreme effort to win the support of English-speaking people in Natal, Dr. Malan, speaking English, addressed them in a heart-to-heart talk, "as a South African to fellow South Africans."

He said that although it had been decried as racialism and extremism, Nationalism was in fact a unifying force. From that point on he proceeded to point out that South Africa's safety and happiness lie in the unity of the two White races by the creation of common ground between them, and the candid recognition of a realistic approach to colour differences.

He then talked of Republicanism ("it will not be forced upon the country, but will come about by the broad will of the people"), West European Christian Civilisation ("both white races derived from it, with same attachment to democratic institutions") and Apartheid ("the Government's policy of Apartheid has the inward, if not the outward support of the great bulk of the English-speaking South Africans").

This speech has been interpreted as being an offer by the Nationalist Party to create the basis for mutual understanding and goodwill. It is nothing of the sort. It is merely a demand that "all

loyal and true South Africans" should line up behind Dr. Malan and the Nationalist Party, on the basis of Nationalist policy.

Republicanism

The Nats. can afford to be generous on the question of a Republic. In the first place they know it is not an issue today, even among their own supporters. Secondly, they know that everyone accepts the ultimate evolution of a Republican State in South Africa. Most important is the fact that the Nats. themselves are not yet ready to establish their Republic, for which they are preparing the ground work.

According to Dr. Malan, the Christian-National Republic "will not be like the state we have at the moment, in which the liberalistic, British Parliamentary system obtains." The Republic for which we shall live or die will not be corrupted by democratic practices. Towards this goal South Africans are asked to

follow ex-Greyshirt leader, Mr. L. T. Weichardt, the Nationalist Party organiser, into the ranks of the Nationalist Party.

In these exhilarating days of courtship, English-speaking South Africans should forget the past declarations of the Nationalists; they should resist all desire to examine Nationalist Party policy too closely.

BY

ALEX. HEPPLER, M.P.

Swallow This and That

To make national unity something real and practical all South Africans must blindly accept Apartheid, with all its vagueness and costly confusion. Christian-National education, with English and Afrikaans-speaking children strictly segregated, must be a cornerstone of national unity. The Central Economic Council, even though it may be patterned on Hitler's National Economic Chamber, and Mussolini's Central Corporative Committee, must be accepted as the basis of our economic system.

The Labour Council, which will control the appointment of officials and the affairs of trade unions, should be acclaimed by every worker in the Union.

This is what, in fact, Dr. Malan has proposed. At no time during his speech did he declare that the Nationalist Party had abandoned any part of its policy or its aims.

Economic Problems

Most remarkable of all, at no time during the speech-making at the Nationalist Congress was there any serious thought given to the economic problems of the country. This fact alone exposes the basis of Nationalist strength. It rests upon discrimination and prejudice.

It is in this light that all sections of the community must consider the speech of Dr. Malan. If it pleases him and his party to divide the population into two sections, "each with its own cultural and language interests," let them not forget that along such a path lies disaster for the whole nation.

ALARMING DEFECTS IN THE RENTS ACT

Forwarded 6/10/50
Advantage Being Taken Of Rushed Legislation

MINISTER SHOULD MAKE A PUBLIC STATEMENT

NOW that the landlords and their legal advisers have had an opportunity to study the Rents Act, some surprising, if not ingenious, meanings are being read into some of its clauses. The Labour Party, when opposing this and the two previous Bills of 1949, warned the Government that once the gates were opened to the landlords, the tenants would be stampeded by demands for higher rentals and orders for ejection. These warnings were treated as exaggerations.

To-day thousands of tenants throughout the country are discovering that the Labour Party was right, when it described the Rents Bill as a Landlords' Charter. The Rents Act is also fast becoming a steady source of revenue to lawyers who are being inundated with enquiries from harassed tenants.

Two Loopholes

There are two major loopholes in the law. The first is the question of reconstruction. The second is the repeal of the Rents Act of 1947 and the Rents Act of 1948.

Reconstruction

Sections 21 and 22 of the Act provide that owners may recover possession of their premises from their tenants if "reasonably required for the purpose of a reconstruction or rebuilding scheme." In terms of this proviso landlords are putting forward trivial and unnecessary schemes as a pretext to eject tenants and later to replace them with other tenants who will pay considerably-increased rentals.

Stayed Ejection Orders

Section 34 of the Act repeals the Rents Act of 1942, 1947 and 1948. The Act of 1947 provided that no warrant for ejection from business premises could be executed before the 1st November, 1948; the Rents Act of 1948 extended this date to 1st January, 1951. The repeal of these Acts has been interpreted to mean that ejection orders granted before the 1947 Act may now be put into operation. As a result, several tenants have found themselves faced with orders to leave immediately, instead of receiving the normal six or twelve months' notice.

These two loopholes illustrate how quickly shrewd individuals take advantage of careless and rushed legislation. It will be remembered that the Rents Bill was delayed for many months while the Government pursued its social legislation and concentrated its efforts upon such propaganda measures as the Immorality Act, Population Registration Act, Group Areas Act and Suppression of Communism Act. All this time the Rents Bill was relegated further and further down the Order Paper.

Finally, in the dying hours of the Parliamentary Session, the Rents Bill was rushed through. It is not surprising, therefore, that there are loopholes in the Act.

The Effect of Fear

Although the law provides a certain amount of protection for the

tenant, the element of fear has been overlooked. Its effect upon the decisions and actions of both landlord and tenant is important.

Take, for example, the position of a business tenant served with notice to quit because his landlord wishes to carry out a reconstruction scheme. The law stipulates that if the landlord fails to carry out the reconstruction scheme in accordance with his undertaking, he shall be liable to pay compensation to the tenant for any loss that the latter may suffer. In practice, however, this provision is virtually useless to the tenant.

In the first place the tenant cannot face the risk of contesting the notice to quit right up to the point of the court order for ejection. That would mean that he could suddenly be ejected on losing the case. Rather than that, the tenant immediately seeks other premises. In so doing, he probably abandons valuable goodwill, pays higher rental and exposes himself to new business risks. Once he departs, without forcing his landlord to obtain a court order of ejection, there is no obligation upon the landlord to comply with any part of the law, let alone pay the tenant compensation.

Tenants of business premises are in a desperate plight. If they are not given notice to quit they are being asked to sign leases at fantastic rentals. Generally, the scales are loaded in favour of the landlords. It is time that the Minister of Social Welfare made a public statement on this serious matter.

He should assure the harassed tenants of dwellings and business premises that the Rents Act will be amended during the next session of Parliament. He should also make it quite plain that such amendments will be retrospective, so that those who now seek to take advantage of the position may know that they will have to forfeit their gains.

In view of the Minister's recent action in appointing an inspector of the Rent Control Board to investigate the effects of the Rents Act, it is to be expected that something will be done soon. Only Parliament can amend the law. But the Minister can ease the position considerably in the meantime by making a public statement indicating what relief tenants may expect.

BY

ALEX. HEPPLER, M.P.

Malan's Fair Words

On National

NATAL
9/10/50

Unity Policy

Articles
A.H.

By ALEX HEPPLÉ, M.P.

[To give the Labour Party an opportunity of putting its views before the public, "The Natal Mercury" is placing this space at its disposal once a month. "The Natal Mercury" does not necessarily associate itself with the views expressed. This is the seventh article.]

THE recent Nationalist Party Congress in Durban was remarkable for two things. The first was the honeyed appeal to Natalians to support the ideals of the Nationalist Party, and the second was the complete absence of any detailed reference to those ideals.

Dr. Malan in his "heart-to-heart talk as a South African to fellow South Africans," described Nationalism as a unifying force, and said that the English and Afrikaans-speaking groups must become united by common sentiment.

He did not say that the Nationalists were willing to make concessions, nor did he say that they would abandon any part of their policy, in order to establish the basis for national unity.

In the circumstances, it would be well to examine the policy of the Nationalist Party in order to determine whether all sections of the community could fall in line as supporters of that policy. Such examination is also necessary because Dr. Malan complains that a large section of the community is not in the favourable position of being able to hear his policy impartially.

The Christian-National State

THE opening paragraph of the official policy of the Nationalist Party demands that "the life of our State and Nation shall be based on Christian and National principles."

The linking of Christianity and Nationalism creates grave doubts in the minds of most people, especially practising Christians.

They ask if it is Christian to deny feeding to Native schoolchildren, on the pretext that their parents become lazy or that the children lose all desire to work and feed themselves; they ask if it is Christian to write into our legislation powers for inspectors and police to enter homes at any time during the day and night and terrify peaceful and law-abiding families; they ask if it is Christian to discriminate against the poor, because of their colour, as was done by the Amendment to the Unemployment Insurance Act of last year.

Malan's Statement

IT is the form and character of the Christian-National State, however, that must cause anxiety.

According to Dr. Malan himself: "Our Republic shall not be like the State we have at the moment, in which the liberalistic British Parliamentary system obtains."

He made that forthright declaration in September, 1941, but did not repeat it in Natal in 1950. But has he changed that opinion?

Dr. Malan argues that both sections of the European community are derived from Western European Christian civilisation, and are therefore basically democratic. "Therefore," he concludes, "our accusers of Nazism and other undemocratic tendencies may rest in peace."

His peculiar reasoning is hard to follow. Hitler and his fanatical followers were descended from good German democrats. That did not prevent them from oppressing and destroying all their domestic opponents and endeavouring to inflict their despotism upon the rest of the world. It is no secret that there were a large number of ardent Nationalists who openly admired the philosophy of Fascism and hoped for its victory.

Afrikaner Party

THERE are some people who believe that the Afrikaner Party exerts some degree of moderation on their Nationalist allies. Where does the Afrikaner Party stand on this question of the Christian-National Republic? Let me quote the words of Dr. J. F. J. van Rensburg, Commandant-General of the Ossewa-Brandwag, and member of the Head Committee of the Afrikaner Party:

"The State must be a Christian-National Republican authoritarian State with a strong government made possible by the elimination of nationally harmful and liberal attitudes and so-called democracy . . . in the place of these must be a stronger co-ordination and disciplining of the folk . . . the emphasis must be laid on the health and welfare of the families in the folk as carriers of Afrikaner blood . . ." (Die Vaderland, April 22, 1942.)

Many people believe that South Africa must inevitably become an independent Republic. The majority, however, are opposed to the Christian-National, undemocratic, herrenvolk Republic which appears to be the goal of the Nationalist group.

The action of the Durban Congress of the Nationalist Party in appointing the ex-leader of the Greyshirts, Mr. L. T. Weichardt, as National Organiser of the Party, was a positive declaration that Fascism has its place in the Nationalist Party.

Central Economic Council

ANOTHER striking example of undemocratic principles in the policy of the Nationalist Party is the proposed Central Economic Council.

Recently Mr. Eric Louw, Minister of Economic Affairs, announced that it had been decided to proceed with the establishment of the Central Economic Council, as laid down in the official policy of his party, viz.:

"There must be an authoritative and responsible link between the government and the economic life of its citizens. The link will be provided by a Central Economic Council. In the first place the Council must be in close contact with all the ramifications of the country's economic life, inter alia through a remodelled system of regulatory boards, each board fully representative of its own trade, profession or industry.

"In the second place, and arising from its representative character and its technical resources, the Council must advise the Government on the necessary steps to be taken to develop our resources along pre-determined paths . . ."

These last few words partially reveal the purpose of the Central Economic Council. The "pre-determined paths" will be those laid by the Nationalist Party.

In Nazi Germany Hitler had his National Economic Chamber, which also controlled the economic life of its citizens. As a policy-making body it controlled the Co-operative Council of Chambers of Commerce and Industry and indirectly managed the German Labour Front, which ruled the workers of Germany with a rod of iron.

Remote Control

STRANGELY enough, South Africa's Central Economic Council will also manage the workers by remote control. Among other functions, the Central Economic Council will concern itself in the affairs of trades unions and employers' associations.

The system of collective bargaining will be supplemented by State responsibility exercised by means of the Central Economic Council and a Labour Council.

Nationalist policy also provides that "the Labour Council will exercise effective control over the appointment of officials by, and the general activities of, the trades unions and workers' organisations."

In this manner normal democratic practices will be abolished and replaced by the strict discipline of the Corporate State. In course of time the aims of the self-styled Christian-Nationalists will be achieved and the "liberalistic British Parliamentary system" will disappear.

The Moving Finger Writes

IN the space of this short article I have been able to deal with but two features of Nationalist policy which contradict Dr. Malan's fair words on national unity.

The historical path of the Nationalist Party is strewn with anti-democratic declarations and racial prejudice.

Their record is deeply engraved in their policy and attitude over the past two decades. If they have changed their beliefs and their policy, they do not admit it.

As Natal recovers from the political hangover of the Nationalist Congress, it may well wonder whether to place its trust in the soothing words of Dr. Malan or in the official policy of the Nationalist Party.

DONGES' "FINE-MESH SCREEN"

Few Immigrants: Many Emigrants

ESCAPE TO THE NORTH TELLS

ITS OWN STORY

FORWARDED 13/10/50

Article 10/11

MANY FOREIGNERS FIND SOUTH AFRICAN POLICIES EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND. SO DO MANY SOUTH AFRICANS. THOSE WHO COMPREHEND THE MOTIVES BEHIND NATIONALIST PARTY ACTIONS ARE IN A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT POSITION — THEY UNDERSTAND, BUT THEY SHUDDER TO THINK ABOUT SUCH THINGS.

The sound economist, for instance, dreads to contemplate the outcome of Nationalist economic policy; the true democrat trembles for the future of democracy in South Africa; the worker wonders how long free trade unions will continue to exist; the industrialist gropes for some light in the darkness of Nationalist Native labour policy. And so, in some way or another, every section of the community flounders in confusion or fear.

In these circumstances, it is not surprising that numbers of South Africans are leaving the Union, most of them for the Rhodesias.

On the other hand, because of deliberate Government policy, fewer settlers are being allowed into the Union. The peculiar outlook of the Government on immigration is reflected in the recent statements of Dr. Donges, Minister of the Interior, and those he made two years ago.

Last week Dr. Donges declared that "the natural and healthy development of South Africa's industry must not be hindered by the lack of manpower," and he promised, on the eve of his departure overseas, that he would discuss with Union immigration officials and Press attachés ways of getting the necessary skilled immigrants.

It was just two years ago, shortly after the Nationalists came into power, that Dr. Donges explained their immigration policy, and said:—

"... We are making the mesh finer in regard to labour efficiency. If you take as your test of labour efficiency the possession of a trade union card, that by itself is not a very good test... we want to see that there must be as far as possible a close scrutiny of the labour efficiency of the men who come out here... As long as there is a legitimate, genuine labour requirement which cannot be satisfied from our own manpower resources, no objection will be raised against importing that labour. The point is just this, that we are not pressed by the same sense of urgency as the leader of the Opposition."

To-day, we are feeling the effects of that attitude of "no urgency." When that statement was made, immigrants were pouring into the Union at the rate of over 3,000 per month. Of these, more than 75 per cent. came from Britain. Now the monthly average is 1,000, of whom one-third are British and two-thirds Continental.

To Dr. Donges that may mean the fulfilment of his theory of "the maintenance of the existing composition of the European population and its way of life." To South Africa it means the loss of urgently needed people. Immigration statistics do not reveal to what extent this "existing composition" is being maintained, or even how it is calculated. Nor do they reveal how many of the Germans arriving were ardent Nazis, or how many of the Hollanders were collaborators.

Skilled Artisans Leaving

Among the large numbers of South Africans emigrating to the Rhodesias are many skilled and able artisans. They are seeking peace of mind and freedom from fear. Many of them openly declare that they are getting out before life under the Nationalists becomes unbearable.

While Dr. Donges talks airily of his "fine-mesh screen," the policies of his party are driving good citizens out of the country.

Instead of talking in terms of foreign workmen alone, the Government should follow policies which will keep our own people here.

Dr. Donges' concern over the shortage of skilled artisans conflicts with Nationalist propaganda that immigrants shove South Africans out of jobs, grab all available housing and gobble all our food. As a party which stands firmly behind the profit system of private enterprise, the Nationalists are forced to make some remarkable pronouncements in their endeavours to placate the Afrikaner worker.

BY

ALEX. HEPPLER, M.P.

Unemployment

They warn South African workers that an "open-door" policy of immigration will mean unemployment for South Africans. But they know full well that unemployment is not governed by the size of the population and that unemployment is one of the diseases of capitalism for which there is no cure.

If the Nationalists are right and unemployment can be cured by shutting out immigrants, then surely they should also advocate strict birth-control as a means to minimise competition in the labour market.

Bring Them In

While the Nationalists may be pleased to see the striking reduction in the number of British immigrants, let them heed the migration to the north. Instead of putting obstacles in the way of those who wish to settle in the Union, the Government should open the doors and bring them in. Now that the fine-mesh screen of immigration is clogged, let us throw it away and follow the sane and rational example of other Commonwealth countries.

THE MALAN-HAVENGA PACT

Political Conscience And The Coloured Vote

BY

ALEX. HEPPLER, M.P.

NATS. FORGET CHICKENS COME HOME TO ROOST

THE general tendency throughout the world is to extend the benefits and rights of democracy to all people. In a desire to protect the European minority, it has been the accepted policy in South Africa to withhold these privileges from the non-European. An exception was made in regard to the Coloureds in the Cape Province. In terms of Sections 35 and 152 of the South Africa Act, Parliament could not disqualify any person from the right to vote by reason of his race or colour, if such persons were qualified to vote in terms of laws existing in the Cape prior to the Act of Union, excepting by passing special legislation with a two-thirds majority of both the Assembly and the Senate, sitting together.

The Nationalist Party has aimed for a long time at taking away these rights from the Coloureds. Ever since the 1948 General Elections they have struggled to secure the support of their allies, the Afrikaner Party, to attain this end. As a result of the delays in reaching agreement, an impression was created that Mr. Havenga and his Afrikaner Party would eventually break the Nationalist Party.

Now that Dr. Malan and Mr. Havenga have issued their joint declaration on the Coloured Vote, many wishful thinkers must be disappointed.

All along Mr. Havenga has been careful not to commit himself needlessly. At the same time he cannot be accused of misleading

his suitors or the public. Mr. Havenga is an experienced politician and it is worth looking back to his statements on this issue.

At the Congress of the Afrikaner Party held at Brakpan in December, 1948, he declared that "in view of the present composition of Parliament and the slender majority held" it was desirable not to resort to measures which could not be regarded "as a clear and unequivocal expression of the will of the people."

Dr. Malan's reply to this was that the impending Provincial Council elections would be the test of the "will of the people." The Afrikaner Party decided to keep out of the Provincial Council elections.

In February this year, when pressed in Parliament, Mr. Havenga said that he stood by the preservation of existing political rights, and that if the placing of the Coloureds on a separate roll was a deprivation of existing rights, he would oppose it.

Asked who would decide that, Mr. Havenga declared: "Mr. Speaker will decide."

In the joint statement just issued, he and Dr. Malan have anticipated Mr. Speaker's ruling in saying that "they are convinced that the arrangement . . . will in no way constitute a reduction in the existing political rights of the Coloureds . . ."

The road has been cleared.

During the next session of Parliament the necessary legislation will be enacted to remove the Coloureds from the common roll, and to provide for the election of four Europeans to represent the interests of the Coloureds. As far as the rights of these four M.P.'s are concerned, Mr. Havenga told Parliament on February 15, 1950, that he would not support the Nationalist proposal that these members should be debarred from voting on matters of confidence, declarations of war and the political rights of non-Europeans. In other words, he wants them to have exactly the same rights as all other members of Parliament, excepting of course, the South-West members, whose powers are limited.

Piebald Parliament

The Union Parliament is becoming a complicated array of peculiar representatives. Firstly, there are 150 members representing the 2½ million Europeans of the Union; secondly, the three European members representing the 8 million Natives; thirdly, there will be four European members representing the one million Coloureds (the 280,000 Asiatics do not elect any representatives); fourthly, the six new members to represent the 30,000 Europeans of South-West Africa (the 300,000 non-Europeans do not elect any representatives.)

A House of this kind must surely create new administrative problems and involve the country in needless conflict. This splitting up of elected representatives into groups and factions may have grave results in the long run.

Political Victories

Judging by the press of the two Government parties, the agreement over the Coloured vote will achieve two things: First of all, it will cost the United Party at least five seats in the Cape; secondly, it will cause the conservative element in the U.P. to hive off and thus lead to the break-up of the U.P.

It would almost seem that this was the prime object of this attack upon the existing rights of the Coloureds. Not even by spectacular political acrobatics can one arrive at the conclusion that the removal of the Coloureds from the common roll is not a diminution of existing rights.

In their elation at having weakened their political opponents, the Nationalists appear to have forgotten that chickens come home to roost.

Articles A.H.

AN ATTACK ON LIBERTY

FREE SPEECH BANNED IN JOH'BURG

DURING ONE LUNCH-HOUR IN JULY THE LABOUR PARTY HELD A SOAP-BOX MEETING ON THE CITY HALL STEPS. Its purpose was to enable the local Labour M.P.s to report back to the people, and to tell them about the Parliamentary session which had just ended.

For all the audience could tell, this was just another open-air meeting, such as have always been common in Johannesburg. Little did they know how difficult it had been to obtain permission to hold that meeting.

GONE ARE THE GOOD OLD DAYS OF FREE SPEECH. GONE ARE THOSE IMPROMPTU LUNCH-HOUR GATHERINGS WHICH DID MUCH TO ENTERTAIN, AS WELL AS INFORM THE PUBLIC OF THE GOLDEN CITY.

Since the early days, the Market Square, where the City Hall and Gardens now stand, has been the obvious place to hold a public meeting. Anyone with an axe to grind, or something to say, was free to make use of the public square. Later, the City Hall steps became the forum of the people.

As far back as I can remember, the precincts of the City Hall have been used for all kinds of gatherings. I have seen arguments, fights and many amusing incidents at these meetings. The soap-boxers took their chances, just as did their audiences.

BUT TO-DAY WE LIVE IN A DIFFERENT WORLD. No longer are the soap-boxers allowed to risk their foolish lives by standing before critical audiences. No longer are they to be left to the mercy of public intelligence. Our moralists and political bosses have decided to stop this sort of thing. It is their habits, their likes, their opinions that must be the standard for all men. None other are tolerated.

How to Hold a Meeting

In order to hold its public meeting in July, the Labour Party had to:

1. Apply to the Town Clerk in writing seven days before the date of the meeting.
2. Submit a requisition signed by 25 registered municipal voters (with their full addresses and voting numbers).
3. Declare the date and time of the meeting.
4. Specify the purpose of the meeting.
5. Supply the full names and addresses of the convenors of the meeting.
6. State how long the meeting would last.
7. State if loudspeakers would be used.

All this was done. The Town Clerk, although vested with the right to grant or refuse permission for the holding of the meeting, considered it advisable to refer the application to the General Purposes Committee. Eventually permission was granted.

This Was Forbidden!

On the day of the meeting, officials removed the Labour Party's loudspeakers from the pillars of the City Hall and said that this was forbidden. Standing by was a large number of

BY

ALEX. HEPPLE, M.P.

uniformed police, apparently to keep peace and order.

THE WHOLE AFFAIR WAS REMINISCENT OF A POLICE STATE, AND MORE IN KEEPING WITH TOTALITARIAN DISCIPLINE THAN WITH FREE SOCIETY.

As if all this were not enough, the City Council, at its monthly meeting on October 17, decided to amend the by-laws, by requiring fourteen days notice of meetings instead of seven days. It also empowered the Town Clerk to refer applications to the General Purposes Committee for their absolute and final decision (without stating their reasons).

Councillor Reg. Smith took this opportunity to oppose the by-laws as an attack upon the long-established right of free speech. He said:

"I am recording this protest on behalf of the whole Labour Party, and not just its members in this Council."

Indeed, he was speaking for all those who value free speech. He was protesting as a defender of democracy.

The Labour Party believes that the only hope for mankind is the maintenance of democracy and its defence against those who seek to diminish the rights of the people.

What the By-law Means

In effect, this Municipal By-Law confers extreme powers upon the General Purposes Committee.

It gives them the right to silence their political opponents. It gives them the right to decide who shall speak in the public forum and who shall not.

In these days of expensive halls and lack of suitable meeting places, where shall be the poor man's forum?

**Chisellers
At
Work
On
PEOPLE'S
RIGHTS**



For the wealthy, this is no problem. The rich and powerful political parties may see no harm in these restrictions. But to the poor man, the poorer political parties, the less-favoured groups, it is a serious blow. Not only does it place them at the mercy of their political opponents; it creates new obstacles to free speech in a world where all freedoms are in danger.

Does the Public Care?

Except for one small item in the English morning paper, I have seen no publicity in the press on this important matter. Is it of so little concern?

I have spoken to dozens of people about it and none of them had the slightest idea of what was taking place.

YET ALL OF THEM WERE SHOCKED THAT SUCH LAWS WERE BEING PASSED.

In the interests of democracy these by-laws must be opposed. The principle of freedom of opinion is endangered. Soon the Commission of Inquiry into the Press will begin its work.

HERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE DAILY PRESS TO DEMONSTRATE ITS VALUE AS A DEFENDER OF HUMAN RIGHTS BY GIVING FULL PUBLICITY TO THIS ACT OF RESTRICTING FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.

APARTHEID: MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Group Areas Act Will Apply Only To 10 Per Cent., Says Donges

ON his arrival in New York, Dr. Donges, Minister of the Interior, said to a Press reporter: "The process of keeping the various sections of the community separate was an old one, and the Group Areas Bill merely assists that process. This process has been welcomed by Natives and Coloureds."

This is another instance of how the adroit turning of a phrase can give a new meaning to political attitudes. Knowing that outside South Africa there is a dislike for the Nationalist Party, and a deep suspicion of its policies, it is quite natural that Dr. Donges is anxious to create as favourable an impression as possible.

On a previous occasion Dr. Donges had made the same claim. That was during the time when the Bill was being debated in Parliament. Then, too, his claim was refuted. That was during the time when the Bill was being debated in Parliament. Then, too, his claim was refuted. The Cape Malay Association, the African People's Organisation (speaking for the Coloureds), and the African National Congress (speaking for the Natives), all denied that they had expressed any support for this legislation and declared their strongest opposition to it.

But Dr. Donges said in New York that "Natives and Coloureds" had welcomed it — not "all" Natives and Coloureds, nor "the" Natives and Coloureds. One may, therefore, take his statement as one wishes.

Now let us look at his further assertion: "I do not think that the Act will mean any movement in respect of 90 per cent. of the Union's population."

These words are almost apologetic. They certainly do not display that same arrogant confidence of the Minister when he sneered at the "liberalistic" spirit which pervaded the ranks of the United Party. In his Third Reading speech on the Group Areas Bill he said:

"I would have been glad if we could have faced the country, if we could have faced the world, with a united front as far as the Europeans in this country are concerned . . . One thing stands out clearly. There are members on the other side who are heartily and fully in accord with members on this side . . . They have been swamped by another spirit, the liberalistic spirit . . ." There are many delegates to UNO who may ponder over this dangerous "liberalistic spirit" which threatens South Africa.

Who Are The Ten Per Cent.?

There are many people in the Union, both supporters and opponents of the Government, who were surprised at the Minister's statement that the Group Areas Act

BY

ALEX. HEPPLER, M.P.

will cause the movement of only ten per cent. of the population. Government supporters believed that this was the complete plan for apartheid.

A reading of the speeches of Nationalist members of Parliament made on the occasion of the passing of the Act will confirm that. Natalians, particularly, believed that here was the solution to their Indian problem. In the large towns, such as on the Reef, citizens expected the large-scale removal of "black spots" and, within a reasonable space of time, the complete separation of all racial groups.

Too Easy

The honeyed words of the Nats. made this gigantic task appear simplicity itself. In the enthralling promise of racial harmony, the enormous financial cost melted to a mere petty expense. The complex problems of re-housing, social justice and town and country planning faded to insignificance.

When the Labour Party raised these matters in Parliament, they were dismissed as quibbles and obstructions. Replying to Labour's demand for compensation, and the provision of alternative accommodation, the Minister said:

"This is not a question which is before us now. It would not fit into this Bill. This Bill is not a social welfare Bill nor has it anything to do with housing."

Schoeman's Figures

Subsequently it appeared that the Minister of Labour also had some wrong ideas about the implications of the Act. At a meeting in his constituency during September he said that he was urging the Cabinet to begin the application of the Group Areas Act on the Witwatersrand, and he estimated that the cost of the scheme for that area alone would be about £14,000,000.

This in itself suggests that there is confusion even in the Cabinet.

If Dr. Donges is correct, and not more than ten per cent. of the population will be moved in the application of the Act, why does the Minister of Labour estimate that the cost on the Reef alone will be £14,000,000?

When the Bill was introduced in Parliament, the Labour Party insisted that a full and thorough investigation into all aspects should have been made as a prelude to such a Bill, and that it was opposed to such important legislation being left to trial and error.

Severe Headaches

Since the implications of the Act have been explained to municipal associations by members of the Land Tenure Advisory Board, many local authorities have developed severe headaches. The Advisory Board has promised that a detailed explanatory pamphlet will be issued for the guidance of local authorities.

In the interests of all concerned this pamphlet should be issued over as wide a field as possible. It could be sent, with advantage, to all branches of the Nationalist Party, and even to members of the Cabinet.

★
**THE
IDEAL
AND THE
REAL**
★

TOO, TOO CLEVER

★
**HOW NOT TO
 ENCOURAGE
 IMMIGRATION**

★

BOOMERANG EFFECT OF NAT. PROPAGANDA

BY
ALEX. HEPPLER, M.P.

AS WAS TO BE EXPECTED, THE NATIONALIST PARTY IS FINDING THAT CLEVER PROPAGANDA HAS A BOOMERANG EFFECT.

At the present time they are endeavouring to disentangle themselves from the "fine mesh screen" of their own immigration policy.

Gone and forgotten are the tough fighting speeches of Dr. Malan, Mr. Eric Louw and others, made in support of the Nationalist anti-immigration motion during the Parliamentary session of 1947. Forgotten, too, are the oft-repeated propaganda speeches on immigration made during the election campaign of 1948. A silence has fallen upon the policy of restricted and regulated immigration, as brought into effect by the Nationalist Government shortly after its accession to power.

Instead, we hear the protests of Dr. Geyer, who complains that much-needed skilled artisans are being frightened away from South Africa by misleading Press reports.

"Judging by these," he said, "my country must be one to avoid like the plague, a country tyrannised by a crowd of ruthless anti-British scoundrels, a country where freedom no longer exists, or is on the point of extinction."

Dr. Geyer's descriptive ability surpasses that of the most bigoted enemy of the Nationalist Party. But it does not match up to his misunderstanding of the immigration question. If he believes that would-be immigrants have been frightened away because of misleading Press reports, he has forgotten the events of the past three years.

The Nationalists have a genius for interpreting their policies to suit all occasions.

Allowing for this elasticity, one can nevertheless sum up their general attitude on immigration as follows: Keep immigration going, but keep it down to a trickle.

On this basis it is possible to declare that immigration has not been stopped; it is also possible to say that immigration has been restricted to only the most desirable people. It is possible to say, as Dr. Donges does, that immigration is now better controlled, and that undesirables are now shut out.

All this is useful from a propaganda point of view, but it does not help the country in its present difficulties. There is a grave shortage of skilled workers in the Union and we are experiencing the greatest difficulty in obtaining these men from overseas. There are no signs that the Government has embarked upon a bold scheme to increase the number of South Africans learning skilled trades. Apparently they are allowing this great opportunity of raising the skill of our youth to slide.

FINE-MESH SCREEN

On the other hand, they were quick to construct their "fine mesh screen" of immigration while other Commonwealth countries were collecting the cream by means of generous State-aided immigration schemes.

South Africa is now trying to scrape the bottom of the barrel to get 25,000 skilled artisans. To achieve this it whines that misleading Press propaganda has driven would-be immigrants away. The fact of the matter is that the Government is now reaping the reward of its own propaganda.

For years the Nationalists have condemned large-scale immigration as a threat to the employment, health and morals of the Union. As a device to win votes it succeeded.

To-day, however, the Nationalists are faced with the responsibility of maintaining our economy, and so they speak like go-ahead businessmen. They complain that industrial development is being retarded because of the lack of skilled workers. They refer, in a vague way, to the shortage of locally-trained men, but say nothing of what steps are being taken to remedy that state of affairs. In a desperate attempt to attract skilled workers from overseas they begin a campaign of window-dressing.

FRIGHTENED AWAY

Unfortunately, the much-needed artisans are no longer keen to come to South Africa. Not only the immigration policy of the Nationalists, but their general policy has been responsible for frightening away prospective immigrants.

Apparently the Nationalists did not realise that their propaganda would reach far beyond our shores. It is not surprising that many skilled workers decided not to come to South Africa when they read Mr. Schoeman's declaration of policy in October, 1948, viz., that if retrenchment of artisans becomes necessary, immigrants would be the first to go.

Nor is it surprising that many British would-be immigrants changed their minds when they saw how greatly their status was reduced by the South African Citizenship Act.

EMIGRATING

Many skilled artisans overseas must also wonder why so many South African workers are emigrating to Rhodesia. The latest figures shows that during the first nine months of this year 7,680 South Africans settled in Rhodesia. Of these, 6,263 were born in the Union.

Surely it is time for the Government to take stock? Brave words of boasting, and fixing the blame on the Press, will not keep the wheels of industry turning.

What is required is a complete change in policy. Firstly, there must be an end to unnecessary and discriminatory legislation; secondly, there must be a bold and imaginative plan for the large-scale training of our own youth in the skilled trades; thirdly, immigration must be not only encouraged, but assisted by the Government.

Unless this is done, South Africa will continue to flounder while she should be prospering.

ALEX. HEPPLER, M. P.,

PRINTED IN *Mercury*
16 Nov. 1950.

72, York Road,
Kensington S.,
Johannesburg,
14/11/50.

Mr HEPPLER REPLIES TO MR SULLIVAN

The Editor,
Natal Mercury,
DURBAN.
Natal.

ARTICLES A.H.

Dear Sir,

I have read the report in your issue of the 11th. inst., in which Mr. J. R. Sullivan, M. P. expresses his disagreement with my views on the Rents Act.

Mr. Sullivan places his confidence in Section 15 of the Act and regulations which he hopes will be framed thereunder. I am unable to conceive how the Rent Control Board will be able to prevent the many hardships and injustices which are being caused by the Rents Act. In the first place, the Act was ~~passed~~ passed in order to permit increases in rentals of dwellings and business premises and to enable owners to get possession of their premises, either for occupation or rebuilding or reconstruction. In the second place, the very "elasticity" of the Act which pleases Mr. Sullivan, is the cause of widespread abuse.

Take the case of "reconstruction", for example. In terms of Section 3 of the Act a landlord asks his tenant to sign a lease at a considerably increased rental; the tenant refuses; shortly thereafter the tenant is given notice to quit as the premises are required for "reconstruction"; The tenant, rather than live through the twelve worrying months of the notice and force his landlord to obtain an ejection order thereafter, seeks other premises. He vacates the premises on or before the expiration of the notice. The landlord is then free of all obligations under the Act and has no need to file any undertaking or to provide any security for the fulfillment of the "reconstruction" scheme. He immediately finds another tenant willing to sign a lease ~~at~~ at the high rental which the previous tenant refused to pay. Meanwhile the previous tenant has forfeited his goodwill as well as any rights to compensation. This is happening to many tenants of business premises to-day. Should the tenant contest the notice to the bitter end, it is a simple matter for the landlord to proceed with some minor interior alterations or redesign of the frontage. There is nothing illegal, merely elastic.

Landlords are entitled to a fair rental for their premises. In these inflationary times, however, greed is driving many landlords to make the sky the limit. The result is a callous indifference to the hardships imposed upon the tenants. I am firmly of the opinion that the Rents Act is loaded in favour of the landlords and will be the cause of much misery. I have given but one example of abuse. I could give others. For the sake of tenants throughout the Union I hope that Mr. Sullivan's optimism is justified.

Yours faithfully,

ALEX. HEPPLER, M. P.

JUST A MOMENT MR. LOUW!

What Is The Government Doing To Protect The People From Inflation?

RREAL INCOMES ARE SHRINKING, AND MONEY-MAKERS ARE ON THE RAMP-AGE. Announcements of price increases are made every week. There was a time when our Minister of Economic Affairs, Mr. Eric Louw, boasted that he had pegged the cost of living. To-day, he despairingly tells his audiences that prices are on the way up, mainly because of the higher cost of imported goods. Lamely he promises: "As far as possible the Government will resist any further increases in the cost of living, but it cannot be held responsible for what happens overseas."

He says not a word about what steps the Government proposes to take to protect the workers against the serious effects of this painful situation.

Inflation

Before the people have been able to discover whether or not there was truth in the Government's promise that there would be "benefits in devaluation for all sections of the community," we have been catapulted into inflation.

Its first effects are now being felt, and, as the days go by, the process will be accelerated.

Mr. Louw is correct when he says that the Government is not responsible for the increased cost of imported goods. But it was quick to seize upon devaluation as a welcome buttress against depression, which threatened South Africa in 1949.

The stepping up by the United States of its rearmament programme may have aggravated the effects of devaluation on the price of imported goods. But the Government has not scrupled to grant price increases to manufacturers and merchants who demand the passing on of every single extra cost to the consumer.

Meat products have lately been raised in price; an official warns that meat itself is to cost more. Buns and confectionery are being reduced in size as a device to increase their price. Rents are going up as a result of the Rents Act. Higher wool and cotton prices augur sharp rises in the cost of clothing. These are but a few of the new burdens for the consumer.

Cost-of-Living

Allowances

The recent niggardly increases in the cost-of-living allowances are farcical as an offset to ever-rising prices. These new rates present about half of the increase in the cost-of-living reflected in the official Retail Price Index. And now it would appear that these revised cost-of-living allowances were gazetted as a prelude to granting manufacturers and merchants increases in the prices of their goods!

At the present time the annual accounts of public companies are being published, and it is interesting to note how many of them have increased their nett profit on the year's trading. The saying, "the rich grow richer and the poor poorer," was never as true than to-day.

While Cabinet Ministers are pleased to refer to any discussion of this problem as "political propaganda," and "a political stunt," they show no desire to protect the mass of the people from the serious effects of inflation.

The poor people, European and non-European, find the struggle

for existence growing harder and harder. They earn more than they did ten years ago, but they lack more of the essentials of life. Not only are they becoming more ragged, but there are increasing signs of a drift towards virtual starvation.

The so-called middle-income group endeavours to resist the effects of inflation by assuming rigorous austerity. Clothes are made to last longer by clever and constant patching and repairing; all tasty titbits and delicacies are eliminated from the table; the car remains in the garage most of the time, and Sunday pleasure trips are over; sport, and visits to the bioscope are severely limited. By these and other means the family income is made to stretch further.

Last year, Post Office Savings Bank withdrawals exceeded deposits by £2,230,000, and repayments of Union Loan Certificates exceeded new issues by £4,735,000.

That was when Mr. Louw boasted that he had pegged the cost-of-living. What will be the position this year, when Mr. Louw admits that not only have prices risen but will go higher?

Is There a Plan?

The present serious state of affairs demands drastic action by the Government. Whether the Government, with its strong Pro-Capitalist outlook, will risk offending the moneymakers by taking action remains to be seen. Perhaps Mr. Louw's regulation reducing the profit margin on new cars to 17½ per cent, is the first step in some positive policy in that direction. He should remember, however, that to-day only the rich can buy cars. Popular American makes which cost £250 pre-war are now sold at £1,000, and petrol and oil prices are prohibitive.

The majority of people would like to see something done to bring down the prices of everyday necessities. Subsidies on foodstuffs must be increased with money drawn from taxation on profits; rents must be pegged; luxury goods must carry a purchase tax; real wages must be raised to pre-devaluation standards, if not to pre-war standards.

In other words, the time has come for the Government to stop making the rich richer. It must begin actively to help the poor.

ALL THIS, AND APARTHEID, TOO

Eiselen Blue-Prints Native Utopia

NOW LET THE GOVERNMENT BACK HIM UP

AT the annual Convention of the Federated Chamber of Industries in Pretoria recently, Dr. W. W. M. Eiselen, Secretary for Native Affairs, delivered a speech on how to achieve "a contented, efficient Native labour force." It is a speech that should give many ardent Nationalists food for thought.

Dr. Eiselen said many things that would surprise leading Nationalist propagandists. Presumably it was not the intention of the Secretary for Native Affairs to embarrass the Government, and it can therefore be taken that what he said had the full approval of the Government.

PERMANENT LABOUR FORCE

Dr. Eiselen agrees with the Fagan Commission that the Stallard Commission was wrong in declaring that the Native population in the urban areas cannot be regarded as permanent. He says that the Native is there to stay and that the Government's problem is how to ensure the well-being of the Native and make the best use of his capabilities. He summarised his views in the following words:

"Our present economic life bears the stamp of very expensive cheap labour, expensive to the employer and even more expensive to the country as a whole. In order to create a contented, efficient labour force four major steps, none of them requiring legislative machinery, are required:

1. A clear realisation of the diverse aptitudes of our Native population.
2. Selective canalisation of labour into appropriate channels of occupation.
3. Recognition of continuous efficient service by progressive grading within each labour category.
4. Promotion of building schemes enabling bona fide urban natives to invest their savings in home ownership.

"I trust that, by adopting these measures, we shall not only be able to overcome many of our labour and production problems and secure a more balanced and beneficial distribution of labour, but that we shall at the same time lay a sound foundation for the development of stable and self-disciplined communities."

MANY PROBLEMS

Dr. Eiselen proposes a plan for housing urban Natives, the permission of controlled squatting, assisted home-builder schemes, town planning, and the provision of recreational facilities. Most local authorities have themselves to blame, he says, for their besetting problems of Native housing, because they went out of their way to attract industries, without considering how to accommodate the Native workers.

But housing is only one problem relating to the industrial worker; there are many others. It is a well-known fact that our capitalist system of free enterprise concentrates upon exploiting the worker and leaves his welfare to fate or philanthropy.

In the scramble for profits the human factor too often is forgotten, and nobody wants to be saddled with the moral or financial responsibility of social welfare. Dr. Eiselen's four points touch only the fringe of the problem. Besides housing, opportunity and modified training, the industrial Native worker requires health services, education and many amenities.

HOW LARGE A LABOUR FORCE?

In considering Dr. Eiselen's proposals it is necessary to know what bearing they may have on industry. Latest statistics show that there are 313,000 non-Europeans engaged in industry, as against 144,000 Europeans. This means that nearly three-quarters of our industrial labour force is non-European, mostly Natives. This army of industrial workers is constantly growing and land, houses and social services, as well as transport must be provided for them.

Dr. Eiselen and Dr. Jansen have both appealed to industrialists to establish their factories in, or near, the reserves, in order not to aggravate the problems of the towns. Whether that is feasible or not remains to be seen. What has to be settled is the future of the Native workers in existing industries. The country needs a clear-cut and positive policy to provide the urban worker with the things which Dr. Eiselen says are desirable. In addition, some assurance must be given to these workers that they will not be driven away from their source of livelihood, that their future as urban dwellers is secure, and that they and their families have the hope of decent homes and a better way of life.

WHAT A WORKER WANTS

The Native worker is no different from any other worker anywhere in the world. He wants a decent job, decent pay and fair treatment. He finds the impact of the profit system harsh and cruel. He stands in fear of unemployment, poverty, and all the other evils of the capitalist social order.

In the highly-industrialised countries of the world, the lowly-paid workers have won, after much agitation and dispute, a great deal of legal protection.

Here in South Africa, the Native

BY

ALEX. HEPPLER, M.P.

worker does not enjoy the same rights as the European worker. Our present Government is opposed to Native trade unions; it has excluded the majority of Natives from the provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Act; and it is opposed to a policy of equal pay for equal work. In short, it offers the Native worker a policy of no hope.

A ROUND-TABLE CONFERENCE

In complimenting Dr. Eiselen upon his speech, the Federated Chamber of Industries points out that "most Europeans in South Africa have still to be convinced that there is any need at all for the progressive and forward-looking policy which the Secretary for Native Affairs has advanced."

The Chamber recommends that there should be a round-table conference at the highest possible level to determine a line of action. A preliminary to such a conference would be a clarification of the Government's own policy. Talking about a "contented, efficient labour force" will achieve little. What is required is a change of heart on the part of the Nationalists, and a sincere endeavour to give effect to some of the principles expounded by the Secretary for Native Affairs.

But if South Africans continue to look upon Native workers as different from other workers we are heading for trouble.

Collection Number: A3393

Collection Name: Bob Hepple Papers

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand

Location: Johannesburg

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