

Mr. Bennett was again the workers' delegate and he declared, "I am aware that exception is taken to criticism of our Government inside our borders, but more especially outside them. While our Government's sensitivity is, perhaps, understandable, any attempt to silence critics can reach absurd proportions when it touches statements made on the subject of industrial laws at a gathering such as this."

This is the very factor that disturbs the Government. ~~It is the very factor that disturbs the Government.~~ and persuades it to break with international agencies. It does not want its laws and actions discussed and criticised, least of all by those beyond its punitive measures.

However, Mr. Bennett himself was in an embarrassing position, for his credentials had been challenged on one of the grounds in his own charge against the Government, viz. racial discrimination.

This brings us to the second of South Africa's difficulties at the ILO, the constant trouble with workers' delegates.

7/..... Before the

Before the Nationalists took over in 1948, it was the practice ~~of~~ for the Government to choose the workers' delegate to the ILO in consultation with the S. A. Trades & Labour Council, the largest federation of workers' organisations in the country.

This procedure was in conformity with Article 3(5) of the ILO Constitution, which provides ~~in~~ that member states must nominate non-government delegates and advisers chosen in agreement with industrial organisations the/most representative of employers or workers.

In 1949, the Nats. decided to change this by selecting workers' delegates from other organisations, especially those sympathetic to its policies.

The first dispute arose immediately. Mr. T. E. C. Maasch, of the Federal Consultative Committee of S. A. R. & H. Associations, was chosen by the Government as the workers' delegate, while Mr. R. M. Haldane, of the S. A. T. & L. C. was made adviser. This was challenged by the SATLC at the ILO. Their objection was upheld and the ILO reversed the order, making Mr. Haldane the delegate and Mr. Maasch the adviser.

Anxious to avoid a repetition the following year, the Government invited the five contending trade union groups to confer and make a choice acceptable to all. These groups were the S. A. Trades & Labour Council (125,419 members), the Western Province Federation of Labour Unions (30,159 members), the Federal Consultative Committee of S. A. R. & H. Associations (69,208½ members), the Co-Ordinating Council of Trade Unions (26,976 members) and a group of four trade unions with 37,000 members.

The SATLC insisted that in terms of the ILO constitution it was the most representative workers' organisation and therefore should be the only one with the right to nominate. In an effort to placate everyone, the Government chose Mr. A. G. Forsyth, General Secretary of the SATLC as delegate and Mr. P. J. Visser of the Mineworkers' Union as his adviser. But this did not help. The rivalry continued year after year and it became the fashion for South Africa's delegation to be challenged at every session of the ILO.

Meanwhile the trade unions were having

plenty of trouble at home. The Government was busy banning trade union leaders from their jobs under the Suppression of Communism Act and giving encouragement to its/^{own} supporters who were ~~an~~ actively campaigning to grab control of some of the leading unions.

The unions rallied temporarily in 1954 when the Government made known the terms of its Industrial Conciliation Act. Practically all the older unions,^{the} /conservative no less than the left-wing, were opposed to this measure, which sought to deny unions the right of political action, extended the ban on strikes and enforced racial separation in the unions. Their opposition brought them together in a Conference at Cape Town in 1954, where attempts were made to establish unity.

As most of the unions supported apartheid, tacitly if not openly, in all other spheres, they found it difficult to fight back in their own defence. The only change brought about by the Conference was that the SATLC went out of existence and was replaced by the S. A. Trades Union Council,

While the SATLC had been open to trade unions catering for workers of all races, the new S. A. Trades Union Council excluded African trade unions and unions having African members.

The homeless Africans and a handful of multi-racial unions thereupon formed the S. A. Congress of Trade Unions, to cater for all workers, irrespective of race.

SACTU immediately entered the lists at ILO. In 1955 it challenged the credentials of Mr. R. Bennett, senior vice-president of SATUC, who had been chosen as the workers' delegate. SACTU declared that Mr. Bennett had been chosen from an organisation which discriminated against more than half the country's workers because they were Africans. It argued that it was the only trade union federation in South Africa which was ~~non~~ non-discriminatory, conforming to the standards of the ILO itself.

Their protest failed, as it did the following year, when Mr. Bennett was again the delegate and made the attack upon the Industrial Conciliation Act, referred to above.

11/..... It is ^{NOT ONLY} against -

It is not only against this background that the Cabinet's attitude to the ILO is manifesting itself. Another factor has arisen to torment the troubled Ministers. It is the increasing ^{INTEREST} the ILO is taking in the affairs of Africa.

Before Senator de Klerk went to Geneva last year, he told the Senate that the Cabinet is extremely worried because the ILO is turning its attention to Africa. He warned that ILO activity in Africa spelt trouble for the Union.

Since his return, Senator de Klerk has not revealed the nature of his report to the Prime Minister, but the Cabinet's subsequent actions indicate that it was an unfavourable one.

On the other hand, both employers and employees are anxious to remain with the ILO and have passed resolutions to that effect. The S. A. Federated Chamber of Industries took a decision in 1957, not only that South Africa should ~~should~~ maintain its membership but that it should increase its delegation by including more advisers and give them better facilities for entertainment and transport.

The Government, however, moved in the opposite direction and has reduced the delegation this year by omitting the advisers.

After unavailing protests, two trade union federations, acting independently, sent their own advisers at their own expense. Fearing comment upon the appearance of two unofficial workers' advisers on the ILO scene, the Government decided to include their names in the official list of delegates. The significant point, however, is that these ~~advisers~~ advisers are there at their own expense and not the Government's, which is contrary to the general practice.

While the S. A. Government moves nearer to a break with the ILO, the latter is accelerating its programme for Africa. It is not satisfied to leave matters in the hands of the Committee for Technical Co-operation in Africa South of the Sahara (CCTA), which it set up in 1959. Nor does it mean to ~~rely~~ rely upon the Inter-African Labour Institute, which CCTA set up in 1952 at its Conference at Bamako, French West Africa. It has now decided to move in and play a leading role in African affairs.

It decided in June to hold its first African regional conference as soon as possible.

This conference will be on the same basis as the ILO itself, with employer, employee and Government representation, drawn from all the countries in Africa.

This is a far different type of Conference to those of the Inter-African Labour Institute, which is concerned/~~mainly~~ with technical matters.

The African regional conference will discuss all the contentious matters which South Africa does not want to argue with the Non-White nations. The Cabinet did not mind participating in discussions with Colonial governments but it is certain to refuse to sit in a Conference where the workers of the emerging Black states, to say nothing of Egypt and Tunisia, will want to attack the policies of colonialism and racial discrimination.

It seems that South Africa is on the verge of getting out of the ILO.

Johannesburg,
28th. June 1958.



THE GARMENT WORKER DIE KLEREWERKER

SAAMTREK

MUST ONLY THE WORKERS MAKE SACRIFICES?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, Mr. J. F. Naude, has warned workers not to ask for wage increases. He says that the granting of pay demands is "one kind of virus which is lethal to the body economic."

He said nothing about profits. It is the old, old story. The workers must tighten their belts but the bosses can carry on with the merry game of making bigger and bigger profits.

Every time the country runs into financial difficulties, the blame falls upon the wage and salary earners. The cry goes up that the workers are not producing enough.

Why is it that the financiers, the industrialists and the merchants are not told to cut a slice off their profits? We are surprised that the Minister picked on the workers and said nothing about their employers.

We would like to remind the Minister and the Government that workers have been making sacrifices for a long time, while most businessmen have been making fat profits.

For many years, workers have been taking lower wages in the form of inadequate cost-of-living allowances. The official allowances paid in terms of War Measure No. 43 of 1942 are less than one-half the amount required to restore the £ to its pre-war level. The wage packet may be heavier today than it used to be, but it contains devalued money.

Since March, 1953, these cost-of-living allowances have been pegged. As the Retail Price Index shows, prices have not been pegged. The Index was 188.9 when allowances were pegged; now it stands at 246.1.

This is nothing less than a reduction in wages, for the £ of 1953 now buys only 17/- worth of goods.

On the other hand, profits remain at a high level. In a wide survey conducted by the S.A. Trade Union Council recently, it was found that profits in many undertakings have never been higher.

While we do not deny that not all industries are making big profits, we are struck by the fact that many are. A survey of 382 public companies shows that over a four-year period these concerns, which have a total Ordinary Share Capital of £172,000,000, have paid out £22½ million in dividends and bonuses and accumulated in their Reserves another £224 million.

These enormous profits have been made during the period that cost-of-living allowances have been pegged. We can only say that while wages were shrinking, profits were going up.

A great deal of South Africa's foreign exchange has been swallowed up by the men who made these profits. The Government itself admits that the motor trade spent too much money overseas once exchange control was relaxed. We would like to add that a large slice of that money went to pay for luxury motor cars. The fat years for the profit-makers created a big demand for millionaire-class limousines.

It is also necessary to remind Mr. Naude and the Government that there has been no wage restraint upon M.P.s, M.P.C.s and City Councillors. Members of Parliament get £3 a day allowance while Parliament is in session, Members of the Provincial Council have had their allowances doubled and now the members of town councils are to be allowed to increase their pay.

This is unjust discrimination. We are sorry that Mr. Naude has told employers to refuse the just demands of their employees for increased wages and salaries. It would have been better if he had told employers that profits and prices would be controlled.

Unemployment pay for workers on short time

The case for help from that £70 million fund

ONE-THIRD of the Transvaal's clothing factories are working short-time and many garment workers are drawing only half their usual earnings.

One form of relief being sought is through the Unemployment Insurance Fund, which now stands at £70,000,000.

The Garment Workers' Union has asked the Minister to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act, so that workers on short time can draw unemployment pay on a pro rata basis.

The request is both logical and reasonable. Workers who are employed only two or three days every week instead of the normal five days, must be counted as unemployed for the rest of the time.

The Slack Fund

At present the Unemployment Insurance Fund provides other benefits in addition to pay for the unemployed. It pays maternity benefits, illness benefits, grants to dependants of deceased contributors, and even expenses for training courses.

In the circumstances, it would not be stretching the Act too far to include coverage for those who are half-unemployed through slackness in trade.

The Industrial Council for the Clothing Industry operates a Slack Fund, financed on a contributory basis, from which workers on short-time resulting from a slackness of trade, can draw a small weekly allowance.

This fund, however, is not of great size and is not nearly strong enough to bear the heavy financial strain of large-scale slackness. Unless there is an improvement in the position soon, the Fund may run into serious difficulties on the Reef.

Normally, the calls on the Fund arise from seasonal declines in production and are of short duration.

Rural factories

Last year, for example, the slackness reached its peak in April and by the end of May more than half the workers who had been on short time were once again putting in a full working week. By the end of June, 1957, employment in the industry had returned to normal.

This year there has been no such improvement. The number of factories on short time on the Reef rose from 74 in April to 107 in May, while the number of workers affected almost doubled.

The trade union believes that this is due to new causes, which aggravate the normal seasonal slackness.

by
ALEX HEPPLER

In its memorandum to the Minister, the union, asserts that the main cause is that the old-established factories in Johannesburg and Germiston are losing trade to the newly-established factories in the uncontrolled areas of rural Natal, where there is no wage control, and African garment workers are being paid from 15s. to 50s. a week.

Lower wages

These rates are one-third (and sometimes even one-fifth) of the rates paid in the controlled areas of the Witwatersrand.

The Wage Board has just commenced an investigation into these rural factories, but it will be some time before the Board will be able to submit its report, or before the Minister is likely to make a new wage determination.

The question at the moment, therefore, is whether the Government will provide some interim relief. Senator de Klerk has indicated that he is sympathetic.

The Garment Workers' Union hopes that as soon as possible during the present session of Parliament he will amend the Unemployment Insurance Act, along the lines they have suggested.

This is not the first time such a proposal has been made. It was considered by the Unemployment Insurance Board in 1952 and again in 1954, but rejected on both occasions.

In 1952 the Tailoring Workers' Union applied to the Board to have the Act amended in order that workers on short-time could be assisted. The Board turned the request down, saying "it found itself unable to support the suggestion . . . for a number of reasons."

4 trade unionists

What those reasons were, they did not disclose.

When the same proposal arose again in 1954, the Board was more specific in rejecting it, the Board said it was only in certain industries that short-time was resorted to as a general practice, and the Board considered that steps to deal with the matter should be taken by the industries concerned.

"Moreover, if benefits were paid in these circumstances, the very heavy payments involved would render an increase in contributions inevitable. The Board was unanimous in its recommendation that the re-

quest be refused," said the Board's statement.

The fact that the Board's decision was unanimous, means that the four trade union representatives on the Board were also opposed to the proposal to protect short-time workers in this way.

Senator De Klerk was quick to seize upon this point in the debate on the Bill to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act last year.

When I asked him to extend the Act to cover workers on short-time, he said, ". . . the matter has been discussed repeatedly by the Unemployment Insurance Board, where it was unanimously rejected, although four representatives of trade union federations sit on the Board."

Contributions

Whatever reasons existed to induce the trade unionists to vote for the rejection of this proposal should be explained to the rank and file, for most workers are strongly in favour of it.

One trade union federation, at least, is now demanding this protection for the members of its affiliates. The S.A. Trades Union Council is supporting the request of the Garment Workers' Union.

Perhaps Senator de Klerk is also ready to change his mind. He was not sympathetic to the idea when he spoke in Parliament last year, arguing that ". . . such a step would lead to abuses . . . it would run into incalculable sums of money and no one can tell beforehand how much it is going to be."

Even if contributions have to be raised to provide this additional form of unemployment insurance in South Africa, it will be well worth it.

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7/58

THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONFEDERATION OF LABOUR.

Last September an announcement was made that four federations of trade unions registered under the Industrial Conciliation Act had come together to form a super-federation, to be called the South African Confederation of Labour.

The federations concerned were the S. A. Trade Union Council (150,000 members), the S. A. Federation of Trade Unions (58,000 members), the Co-Ordinating Council of S. A. Trade Unions (25,000 members) and the Federal Consultative Council of S. A. R. & H. Organisations (80,000 members).

The formation of this unified body came after considerable behind-the-scenes activity and careful canvassing of leading individuals in each of the federations. Following upon several secret meetings, a formal gathering of representatives of the four bodies was arranged in Pretoria on the 7th. September 1957.

Outwardly, this getting together suggests a growing unity in the trade union movement. However, that is not so. The unity is more apparent than real. The Confederation does not weld the four

2/..... rivals -

rivals together, nor have they been drawn closer in a common desire to stand together in the defence of trade union rights. Their fundamental differences on vital issues remain.

At least one of the four federations is making heavy weather over the decision to join the Confederation. Some of its members fear that their organisation has put its head into a noose.

THE RACIAL DILEMMA.

In its first public declaration, the Confederation stated that "...It does not intend to meddle in racial matters... or job reservation".

Yet these are the very issues which torment most trade unions to-day. The older unions are having a bad time because of the disruptive apartheid provisions in the Industrial Conciliation Act.

For more than five years these unions have been seeking unity and workers' solidarity to oppose Government interference in trade union affairs. Their efforts have failed because, as in most other spheres in South Africa, the racial issue makes

unity impossible. In addition, there is a strong difference of opinion between many of the unions as to the functions of workers' organisations.

UNEASY UNITY.

Some members of unions affiliated to the Trade Union Council have been unhappy about the Confederation from the outset. They cannot forget that the other three federations all supported the I. C. Bill, despite its harmful effect upon the trade union movement.

They fear that by going into the Confederation, they are being led to surrender, ~~is~~ and compelled to swallow the repugnant policies which they have strenuously opposed in the past.

They are reluctant to believe that the Confederation will confine itself to non-contentious issues ^{SAVING} ~~and~~ that, if it did, it would have no cause for existence. They suspect, therefore, a sinister aim behind the eagerness to form the Confederation.

Their suspicions are grounded on recent trade union history, particularly upon previous

efforts to establish unity.

THE 1954 CAPE TOWN CONFERENCE.

At the beginning of 1954, when the terms of the Government's proposed amendments to the 1937 Industrial Conciliation Act were made known, the trade unions became alarmed and promptly called a conference to organise united opposition to the Bill.

This conference, held in Cape Town in May 1954 and attended by 73 unions representing 230,000 workers, resolved to form a single federation, embracing all unions, as a first step in the fight they intended to put up against the proposed measure.

Only a small group, mainly pro-Nationalist, dissented. ^{THIS GROUP} ~~They~~ unsuccessfully tried to steer the Conference into a neutral course on the Bill and proposed, as an alternative to a single co-ordinating body, the formation of a Council of Trade Union Federations, i. e. unity of the federations from the top, rather than unity of the unions from below. They did not disclose the purpose of this super-federation.

The Cape Town Conference decided to call a follow-up conference later in the year, to adopt a constitution for the new federation and to elect its office bearers.

THE 1954 DURBAN CONFERENCE.

The formal resolution on unity was submitted to this follow-up conference, held in Durban on the 4th. and 5th. October 1954 and attended by 61 unions with a total membership of 223,000.

Speaking on behalf of ~~the~~ unions affiliated to the S. A. Federation of Trade Unions, Mr. George McCormick, proposed some amendments to the resolution, the most important of which was the irrevocable exclusion of Africans from the "new unity".

Mr. McCormick's amendment included a rider, "Whether or not we succeed in establishing this new body, we believe that it would be in the best interests of the movement for the S. A. Council of Trade Union Federations to be established".

The Conference accepted the amendments and the rider and the amended resolution was carried,

39 unions (184,714 members) voting for it, 19 unions (31,777 members) voting against and 3 unions (6,950 members) abstaining.

By the simple expedient of abandoning African workers, a majority vote for "unity" had been procured. On this note the Conference ended.

In the months that followed the unions discovered that even the jettisoning of African workers did not attract the unity they sought. Not even Mr. McCormick, who scored the greatest success at Durban, ^{came} ~~managed~~ to bring his own union into the new federation. In fact, his own group, the S. A. Federation of Trade Unions, remained in existence, with Mr. McCormick as its President.

(Mr. McCormick is no longer with the Federation, having been appointed on the 1st. November 1956 to the Industrial Tribunal, the body established under the I. C. Act to deal with job reservation. The appointment is for five years at a ~~salary~~ salary of £2,230 per year, plus £234 cost-of-living allowance, plus transport and subsistence allowances, sick leave facilities and 38 days leave annually).

~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

THE "NEW UNITY".

To make way for the new federation agreed upon at Durban, the S. A. Trades & Labour Council took a resolution on the 6th. October 1954, to dissolve as from the 31st. October.

Later, the Western Province Federation of Labour Unions took a similar decision.

The African unions, and those having African members, who had belonged to the S. A. Trades & Labour Council, were now homeless. They had been excluded from the "new unity" and their old federation had gone out of existence. These ~~native~~ unions therefore decided to form their own federation and established the S. A. Congress of Trade Unions as an all-races co-ordinating body.

The "new unity" federation, the S. A. Trade Union Council, ended up as little more than a minor reshuffle of old alliances. Unity was as far off as ever. There were five federations before the 1954 conferences and there are five federations to-day.

Moreover, the issue which sparked the first Conference in Cape Town has been lost in the delusive pursuit of "Unity", which has now become the Lorelei of the South African trade unions.

In their desperate concentration upon "Unity" the unions have forgotten what they wanted the unity for. The I. C. Bill went through Parliament ~~without~~ with hardly a murmur from the unions.

There were no rallies, no public protest meetings, no demonstrations, no counter action of any kind. The small Congress of Trade Unions staged a minor placard demonstration outside Parliament (for which those concerned were later prosecuted), ~~but~~ while the new Trade Union Council contented itself with giving evidence before the Select Committee and issuing a few press statements.

THE SUPER-FEDERATION.

Now the Lorelei "Unity" is enticing the unions once again, this time through the establishment of the S. A. Confederation of Labour, which some fear will break the Trade Union Council, just as the old T. & L. C. was broken. The Congress of Trade Unions

has not been invited to join the new Confederation and would certainly not be welcome if it ~~applied~~ applied for membership.

The danger for the T. U. C. lies in the fact that the other three partners in the new alliance are strongly pro-apartheid and supporters of the I. C. Act. A large section of the officials and members of the unions attached to these federations are active members or supporters of the Nationalist Party.

When the T. U. C. Executive decided last year to join the Confederation, it did so subject to ratification by its annual conference. In March 1958, Conference argued this matter in secret session for more than ten hours. Finally, compromise was reached and the T. U. C. continues as a member of the Confederation, hoping to protect itself against embarrassing commitments by way of a "veto" clause in the new body's constitution.

However, uneasiness prevails amongst members of unions affiliated to the T. U. C., especially those who are suffering the disruptive

effects of the apartheid clauses in the I. C. Act.

THE ROLE OF ELLIS.

The brooding uneasiness which prevails in the older unions is intensified because of the leading role played by Daan Ellis of the Mineworkers' Union. Ellis has been the prime mover in the establishment of the Confederation, and acted as interim-Chairman until its formal constitution.

Ellis has never been friendly towards such unions as the Building Workers^{and} the Garment Workers and has always taken a firm stand on the side of the Nationalist Government.

The journal of his Union, "The Mineworker", openly sided with the Government against the Garment Workers' Union when the latter protested against job reservation in the clothing industry.

NEARER "CHRISTIAN-NATIONAL" UNIONS.

A further development which is arousing anxiety is the persistence of the pro-Government section in the Confederation in urging that it should be registered under the I. C. Act. In this they

have now succeeded. ~~Registration is a~~ In the view of many, registration is unnecessary and merely places undesirable obligations upon the unions. They suspect an ulterior motive in this move.

The three federations which accepted the I. C. Act and favour trade union apartheid are therefore cock-a-hoop. They are confident that from here on they will call the tune. If they do, South African trade unions will soon lose the traditional character of true trade unions. Such a change will be the fulfilment of Nationalist plans.

Sitting in Parliament to-day are at least seven men who can sit back and smile at the turn of events. They are the men who led the Broederbond-inspired movements which tackled the trade unions many years ago. Their unavailing efforts of a decade and more ago are now being rewarded.

These seven men are Senator Jan de Klerk, Minister of ~~Rixikxixx~~ Labour, Mr. B. J. Schoeman, Minister of Transport, Dr. Albert Hertzog, Mr. J. du Pisanie, Mr. J. C. B. Schoeman, Mr. H. L. Van Niekerk and Mr. J. W. Van Staden, the four last-named being "new boys" to Parliament.

END.

29/7/58

30 JUL 1958

IS 47/- A WEEK A LIVING WAGE ?

BY ALEX. HEPPLÉ.

The Council of Reef Municipalities has asked the Wage Board to fix the general minimum wage for unskilled labourers at £2-7-0 a week, inclusive of cost-of-living allowances, and that municipalities be left to fix a wage of £2-14-0 to £2-16-9.

The Wage Board is at present busy investigating the wages of unskilled workers on the Reef and in Pretoria and will be taking evidence in Johannesburg next week.

The wage of 47/- a week works out at £10-7-0 per month. This is no better than the lowest wage now being paid by some employers. It is much less than the present average wage of £12-7-11. Even the top rate ^{of £2-16-9} suggested by the Council of Reef Municipalities is less than the present average.

Who can live on 47/- a week nowadays?
Or on 56/9 a week?

A scientific survey four years ago showed

2/..... that an African -

that an African family of mother, father and three children needed, at the very least, £23-10-4 per month to get the bare necessities of life.

Since then the cost of living, measured by the Retail Price Index, has gone up by 12%. This means that wages have been reduced, because money cannot buy as much as it did four years ago. On the basis of the 1954 survey, the same family would now require £23-10-4 plus 12% (26-6-9) to live on the same ~~level~~ bare existence level.

In the light of these facts, the attitude of the Council of Reef Municipalities is miserly. It reminds me of what happened the last time the Wage Board investigated unskilled wages on the Reef.

In 1948, the Wage Board recommended a few small increases in the pay rates for unskilled African labourers, which had remained unchanged since 1942. The Minister of Labour, however, decided not to enforce the proposed increases. Why? Because the Reef Municipalities objected. They said that if African wages were/^{raised}~~increased~~, they would have to increase their assessment rates.

The Minister's decision to leave the wages of unskilled workers at the low levels of 1942 has been the cause of much of the widespread dissatisfaction in recent years.

His decision condemned African labourers to struggle for existence on poverty wages, so that property owners of the rich towns and cities of the Reef could be spared a small increase in rates.

The pegging of cost-of-living allowances in March 1953 has imposed a further burden upon the lowest paid workers in the country. Although these allowances have been pegged, prices of essentials continue to rise. In the last few weeks, the prices of coal, sugar, and other items have gone up. Tram and bus fares are up. And the Minister of Finance has announced a large increase in taxes as from the beginning of next year.

Let us hope that the Wage Board will not ~~accept~~ accept any proposals that will peg African labourers to their poverty.

30 JUL 1958

JULY
1958

Ashley AH

ALEX HEPPLER on

The SCANDAL of STARVATION WAGES

Unskilled wages are at a disgracefully low level. African workers, especially, are paid starvation rates. Yet employers who are guilty of inhuman exploitation of their African employees are protected by the law. Not only is it legal to pay starvation wages but in many ways it is illegal for African workers to fight for improvements, for there are various laws which prevent them from campaigning for decent wages.

Africans are not allowed to strike, no matter how intolerable their conditions or unjust their employers. If they do, they are bundled into police pickup vans and carted to the

police station, to be charged under the Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act. In terms of this law, African strikers can be punished to the extent of a fine of £500 or three years' imprisonment, or both fine and imprisonment.

The Government frowns upon African trade unions and regards them as subversive organisations and is constantly urging employers to have no dealings with organised Africans.

No wonder greedy and inhuman employers ignore all pleas for wage increases. No wonder unskilled wages for Africans are so low.

The Forgotten Promises

At the beginning of last year, African workers succeeded in drawing public attention to their poverty, when they refused to pay a penny increase in bus fares and boycotted the buses. The boycott revived the forgotten statistics of African poverty and stirred the public conscience. Employers and the Government were compelled to take notice of the plight of the nation's poorest workers.

In the general alarm which the boycott caused, many promises were made, both by employers and the government. The Minister of Labour, Senator Jan de Klerk, while defending the Government's neglect, promised that wrongs would be righted, and announced that he had drawn up a priority list of 45 trades and industries for immediate investigation by the Wage Board.

The Leader of the Opposition, Sir de Villiers Graaff, thereupon observed that the Minister was shirking the real issue and was hiding behind the slow moving machinery of the Wage Act. Obviously, he wanted swift action to raise the wages on unskilled African workers.

Employers, too, were ready to make promises. The President of the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce called for "an urgent official investigation into the economic position of the urban Native".

Amidst this wave of promises the bus boycott ended. That was early in April 1957. More than a year has passed and the promises remain unfulfilled. The public conscience has relapsed into its old indifference, the Government shields itself behind official delays, and

the employers dilly dally in smug contentment. In a few cases, employers have conceded small increases but on the whole wages have remained unchanged. Where increases have been made, they have been either too small or have failed to take into account the continued rise in living costs.

What has happened to the Minister's list of 45 priorities? What progress has the Wage Board made?

Wage Board Investigations

So far, the Wage Board has reported on only one of the 45 undertakings. This single recommendation, for unskilled labour in Port Elizabeth, proposed an increase of 40% on the previous determination, (dated 1941) raising the basic wage from 27/- to 37/6 per week. This new rate, together with the statutory cost-of-living allowance, barely meets the rise in living costs since 1941. A recommendation of this kind merely maintains the status quo of the poverty wages of 1941. It ignores all the factors of changed social and economic conditions.

If other recommendations follow this pattern, workers can expect little relief at the hands of the Wage Board.

Cost-of-Living Allowances

A great deal is made of the cost-of-living allowances paid to workers. It is alleged that these allowances make up for increased living costs. But that is not so.

The statutory c.o.l. allowances paid under War Measure 43 of 1942 do not make up even one-half of the increased costs, as measured by the retail price index. For example, the fixed COLA on 37/6 is 18/3. The purpose of the allowance is to enable the worker to buy the same volume of goods with his £ of today as he could with the £ of 1939. On that basis, the allowance on 37/6 should be 44/- and not 18/3, because it takes £4-1-6 to buy now what 37/6

could buy in 1939. As far as African workers are concerned, the shortfall is probably even greater, for the retail price index is not an adequate reflection of their increased living costs.

Now that c.o.l. allowances have been pegged at March 1953, it should be the duty of the Wage Board to recommend accordingly. The Government has made it quite plain that the allowances are permanently pegged, which makes it imperative for the Wage Board to make up the difference.

Since March 1953, when the allowances were pegged, the retail price index has risen from 188.9 to 217.6 (March 1958), which is an increase of approximately 13%.

If this increase cannot be recovered by workers through c.o.l. allowances, it should be provided in basic wages. The Wage Board cannot ignore this factor in making its recommendations.

A Minimum Wage

Unskilled labourers, our poorest paid workers in industry, commerce, agriculture and domestic employment, are not protected by a legal minimum wage, sufficient to provide the minimum standards of life. Too many workers are living below the breadline. The need is to legislate for a National minimum wage, related to the minimum needs to maintain a decent existence.

Expert surveys in 1953 and 1954 revealed that the essential minimum expenditure per month for an African family of five in Johannesburg was £23-10-4. Since then, the cost of living has gone up by more than 10%, which means that the poverty datum line is now nearly £26 per month. This, in itself, shows that the demand for £1 a day (i.e. £20 to £25 per month) is far from "reckless and irresponsible", as Mr. Lulofs, President of the Chamber of Industries described it.

On the contrary, the demand of £1 a day seems to be inadequate, not only

OUR COVER DRAWING

By PAUL HOGARTH:

"A GREEK MINER"

on the basis of the reliable surveys but also because living costs continue to rise.

Employers' Responsibility

It seems that employers are now trying to escape their responsibility in this scandal of starvation wages. In various ways they are attempting to shift the responsibility.

But they could remedy this unhappy state of affairs on their own. There is nothing to prevent them from tackling the matter independently of the Government and the Wage Board. Employers associations, if they had the desire, could agree now among themselves to increase wage rates, irrespective of Industrial Council agreements and Wage Board determinations. Thereafter, they could incorporate these increased wages in their Industrial Council agreements or advise the Wage Board that they desire such wages to be fixed by law.

As the matter stands, employers as a whole have not fulfilled the promises made at the time of the bus boycott. The S.A. Congress of Trade Unions, (the federation catering for African trade unions), submitted a carefully prepared memorandum on unskilled wages to the Chambers of Commerce, the Chamber of Industry, the Chamber of

Mines and the Transvaal Agricultural Union in July 1957. Only the Chamber of Commerce acknowledged the document, the rest ignoring it. The Chamber of Commerce replied that it would be more appropriate to deal with the wage question by way of "statutory machinery", presumably meaning the Wage Board or the Native Labour Board and its Regional Committees. This would merely leave things unchanged.

The Chamber of Industries subsequently adopted a hostile attitude to the idea of ending starvation wages. In its magazine, "The Manufacturer" of September 1957, it reported a meeting of its Non-European Affairs Committee as follows:-

"The meeting agreed that in many instances Native wage scales were in need of revision, but because the present protection given to South African industry was not as effective as it should be, the Committee decided that it would be against the interests of industry to propose any Unionwide investigation into unskilled Native wage rates until the Government introduced a positive policy for the protection of South African industry."

This decision is as cruel as it is illogical. It is based upon the old fallacy long discredited, that low wages mean cheap production and high wages cause high prices. It ignores the fact that increased wages mean greater spending power and an increase in domestic sales. It would be interesting to know which manufacturers influenced the decision to take the narrower view, favouring a low wage policy and cruelly using poorly-paid unskilled African workers as a stick with which to beat the Government.

The failure of the Stay-at-home, in which the claim for £1 a day was linked with other demands, has encouraged the authorities and many employers to believe that the cry for a living wage no longer warrants their attention. They must be shown that the matter cannot be left there. The demand for a living wage must be pressed with increased vigour. The registered trade unions must be recruited to support the demand, employers must be persuaded to act in a humane and responsible manner and the Government must be continually pestered to take suitable action. The scandal of starvation wages cannot be endured.

CHRISTOPHER GELL

Christopher Gell was a rarity upon the South African scene and his death leaves an aching void.

Stricken with polio while serving in the Punjab with the Indian Civil Service, he came to live first in Rustenburg and then in Port Elizabeth for the warm climate, and all his 11 years in our country he lived out his days in an iron lung. His hours for writing and meeting people were strictly rationed but within them he compressed phenomenal effort, soon coming to be recognised as one of South Africa's most prolific writers. Who has not read Christopher Gell's incisive comment on political programmes and parties, his penetrating analyses of the Group Areas Act, his scathing indictment of apartheid in sport or the nursing profession, his passionate attacks on Nationalist policies and defence of peoples' freedom campaigns?

Christopher Gell's tenacity in fighting his disability, rallying time and again from bouts of more severe illness, was matched by the courage of his political convictions, and over the years those whom he could not join in the conference session or on the public platform came to his bedside to consult with him, ask his advice, keep him in touch, and draw inspiration from him. He was as much part of the Congress movement as any volunteer who went to prison during the defiance campaign, or branch official who participated in the hurly-burly of political activity in the townships.

For Christopher Gell was not one to express high-sounding phrases for liberty and universal rights, and to hold aloof from the harsh struggles about him.

Though he embarked upon journalism partly as therapy and partly to help his wife Norah earn their living, his writing was no hobby-horse. His pen came to be a doughty and invaluable weapon for the causes he espoused, and mercilessly and expertly he set about demolishing race prejudice and discrimination, exposing expediency and blasting false theories.

To Christopher Gell the principle, and not the personality, was the thing and he made common cause with those who fought for the principles he believed in. He was impatient and suspicious of those who temporised and pre-occupied themselves with half-way solutions long rejected by fighters in the thick of the battle for the franchise and equal rights. He was sternly critical of African politicians who voiced differences with the Congress movement to settle old scores or keep themselves out of the line of fire.

There were some who thought he went too far — but they were generally those who themselves never dared go far enough.

As those who visited Christopher Gell's bedside could barely credit that this indomitable and vital spirit was an invalid, so today it is hard to accept that he is no longer in the thick of the movement he enriched by his participation. The tens of thousands who were stirred by his example will go on fighting his fight.

the path the party intends following on the colour issue.

Is it to continue with its domination pose at elections, or is it to drop that and move gradually but unashamedly towards co-operation?

If it decides on the latter course, it will continue to lose elections, but it will

be able to refute the charge of speaking with two voices.

It will, moreover, become an alternative party for voters to turn to when they come to realise that it is impossible to keep a people in a strait-jacket for all time. In a multi-racial country a policy of sectional domination must eventually fail.

The ban imposed upon the Natal Witness by the Natal Provincial Council is of special significance. In South Africa the responsibility of the Press as watchdog for the public is tremendous.

Ban On Natal Witness Has Wide Implications

By Alex. Hepple

THE ban imposed upon the Natal Witness by the Natal Provincial Council is a matter of special significance at the present time. The country anxiously awaits the report of the Press Commission, for there is a widespread fear that it might contain proposals for the curtailment of the freedom of the Press.

The affair cannot be dismissed as trifling, or no more than a fleeting act of retaliation. Its implications are wide enough to arouse general concern.

Let us take the facts of the case first. On May 27, the Natal Provincial Council debated a motion condemning the teachers' protest on the salary question. In the course of the debate, the Councillors who spoke were all strongly critical of the teachers and all voted in favour of the motion.

"Lamentable Display"

On May 29 the Natal Witness published an editorial, taking the Councillors to task. Among other things, the Witness said:

"Seldom, if ever, can there have been a more lamentable display of ignorance, tolly, hysteria and sheer disingenuousness than was revealed by most of the speeches made on Tuesday about the dispute over teachers' salaries . . . not a member got up to say that, while he joined with his fellows in deploring

the action of the protesting teachers, he nevertheless could not associate himself with the more outrageously absurd and extravagant assertions which emerged through the wild and whirling words of most of the speakers in the debate. . ."

The editorial added that Mr. P. W. J. Groenewald, M.E.C., who is a former teacher, could not be commended for his silence, "since a man of his intelligence and particular experience of the teacher's lot must have been acutely aware that he was listening to a lot of pernicious nonsense."

On June 2, the Natal Witness published a further editorial, welcoming the news that the newly-appointed Administrator, Mr. A. E. Trollip, and the Provincial Executive had agreed to meet a joint deputation from the Natal Teachers' Society and the Natalse Onderwysersunie.

In this editorial the newspaper admitted that it had commented "perhaps a little forcefully" in the first instance but maintained, "After an interval for cooler reflection, and no longer under the immediate impact of the debate, we still cannot retract a tittle of the substance of our criticisms. . ."

Then followed this further comment: "If the spirit and tone of that debate represented the best that the Provincial Council is capable of, it would be difficult, if not

impossible, to retain any confidence in its fitness to control primary and secondary education for Europeans in Natal. . .

"Happily it is not necessary to react so pessimistically to last week's debate. Those who know what excellent work is normally done by our Provincial Councillors, both corporately and in their private capacity, will be ready to regard the debate as what it was—a deplorable, but we trust temporary, aberration from the Provincial Council's usually high standards."

Two days later, on June 4, the Acting-Chairman of the Council, Mr. Lester Hall, informed the Natal Witness that the paper would no longer be allowed to have a representative attending sessions of the Council to report its proceedings, "because the two editorials reflected upon the dignity of the Provincial Council and brought it into ridicule and contempt."

Extended

The following day the ban was extended to cover all official press statements from the Executive Committee and all the departments of the Province. Explaining his action, Mr. Lester Hall said:

"I do not want to interfere with liberty, freedom of the press and all that sort of thing, but if a newspaper goes too far then some steps must be taken. It is my responsibility as Chairman of the House to protect the dignity of the House and its members. The action which I took was because I was satisfied that the articles went beyond all reasonable bounds. Some method had to be found to bring that fact forcibly to the notice of the newspaper concerned."

That is a summary of the facts. Let us now consider their implications. Several questions arise. First, what are "reasonable bounds" in criticising the speeches made in Parliament and the Provincial Councils? This is not always easy to define but in the present case the Natal Witness stresses the fact that it did not misrepresent, either by addition, omission or distortion, what was said. It imputed no corrupt motives to anybody. It neither asserted nor implied that either the Provincial Council as a whole or its individual members were unworthy in general of their position. All it did was to make some forceful comments upon a particular debate.

Secondly, what brings any House into ridicule and contempt—the speeches of its members or the newspapers which report those speeches? Must public representatives be immune from public criticism when they

do their job badly? In the many years I have spent in the Provincial Council and Parliament, I have learned that nothing alerts a public man more than the critical attention of the Press.

Politicians, once elected to office, have a tendency to become patronising and pompous. They often suffer from delusions of greatness and become intolerant of criticism, expecting praise and resenting adverse comment upon even their worst efforts.

The public must guard against what Walt Whitman called "the never-ending audacity of elected persons." This brings us to a third point. The Press fulfils an



GAMBLING IS WICKED

—Winder in the *Sunday Times*.

important and necessary role in any Parliamentary system of government. Here in South Africa, where only one-fifth of the population has the right to elect our Parliament and Provincial Councils, the responsibility of the Press is tremendous.

That responsibility is not to do as the ruling parties demand but to act as the watchdog for all the people. The Press has a duty to bring our lawmakers under constant, critical review.

The fourth aspect of this matter concerns the responsibility of government towards the Press. The English Press is constantly under fire from the Government party. On the slightest pretext it is abused and accused. Should not the Press be protected from attacks by members of Parliament and Provincial Councillors, made in the House under the protection of privilege? Take, for example, the speech made in Par-

liament last year by Mr. J. C. Greyling, M.P. for Ventersdorp, who said:

"... the contemptible English Press is an evil spirit, which stops at nothing, whether it is murder or crime or manslaughter or sabotage . . . to break this party. . . The English Press concentrates on telling untruths, falsehoods and "distortions . . . to blacken South Africa's name overseas as well as here. . ."

These are strong words, far stronger than those used by the Natal Witness. I am not suggesting that the privilege of Parliament should be curtailed but I think public representatives should be aware of their responsibilities, too.

The ban on the Natal Witness was not a blow against that paper alone. It was also a blow against the people, especially those who had elected the council and needed to know what their elected representatives were doing. When newspapers are banned from reporting the proceedings of Parliament or the Provincial Councils, the people are deprived of an essential weapon in the armoury of democracy.

The Press must have the right of freely examining public individuals in the performance of their public duties on behalf of

the public. Mr. Lester Hall believed that he was protecting the dignity and reputation of the Council but obviously overlooked the wider implications of his action.

The Natal Provincial Council is controlled by the United Party. The overwhelming number of Councillors are United Party. I have no doubt that the Nationalists will seize upon the Natal Witness affair in order to justify their own attitude towards the English Press. They may use it as an excuse to place restrictions upon the Press.

Let us hope that when the Report of the Press Commission is released, the United Party members of Parliament will not find themselves compromised because of what has happened in Natal.

Finally, I must say that I was surprised that the Press itself took the matter so calmly. Although the S.A. Society of Journalists lodged a strong protest with the Council and some newspapers took up the challenge, on the whole there was not the outcry from newspapers that one might have expected.

Let us hope, too, that the South African Press is not wavering in the defence of its freedom.

The republican debate in the Nationalist Party has been marked by a singular paradox—the lead has been taken by the Cape Nationalists while the Transvaalers are hanging cautiously back.

Republican Birth-Pangs

By Scrutator

THE republican debate, opened hotly in haste after the Nationalist election victory and rapidly promoted to the head of the agenda, has been marked by a singular paradox. Behind the republican urge, it has always been understood, was the unquenchable longing of the old republicans for the restoration of the lost republican institutions filched from them by British imperialism. On the prevailing Nationalist assumption that the reborn republic to-day was not only in sight but actually there for the taking, it should have followed that the Transvaal republi-

cans, the men with the most vivid memory of the old order, would form the spearhead of the final drive towards the long-desired goal.

The irony is, however, that it is not they but the Cape Nationalists, republicans at second-hand, who have taken the lead in the offensive, whereas it is their brethren in the Transvaal who have hung back and, officially at any rate, spoken the language of caution. With the Burger in the propaganda van, the Cape has been pressing on the accelerator, while the Transvaal has been applying the brake, with a stern warn-

A CALL TO THE WAGE BOARD: NO NEED FOR A MISERLY POLICY

THE Council of Reef Municipalities has asked the Wage Board to fix the general minimum wage for unskilled labourers at £2 7s. a week, inclusive of cost-of-living allowances, and that municipalities be left to fix a wage of £2 14s. to £2 16s. 9d.

The Wage Board has been investigating the wages of unskilled workers on the Reef and in Pretoria, and started taking evidence in Johannesburg last week.

The wage of 47s. a week works out at £10 7s. per month. This is no better than the lowest wage now being paid by some employers. It is much less than the present average wage. Even the top rate of £2 16s. 9d. suggested by the Council of Reef Municipalities is less than the present average.

WHO CAN LIVE ON 47s. A WEEK NOWADAYS? OR ON 56s. 9d. A WEEK?

COSTS GO UP

A survey four years ago showed that an African family of mother, father and three

All political comment in this issue, unless otherwise stated, by C. L. Eprlie, of 16 Troys Street, Johannesburg.

By Alex. Hepple

Former Labour Party M.P. for Rosettenville, Mr. Alex. Hepple, won recognition from political friends and foes alike as a fearless fighter who always goes to the point.

He represented Rosettenville for 10 years, and his defeat in this year's General Election—by the United Party—is a real loss to the Opposition's strength in Parliament.

Before going into Parliament, Mr. Hepple had been on the Transvaal Provincial Council for five years. For years Mr. Hepple has been recognised as a specialist in labour and industrial matters. He is at present, among other things, chairman of the Treason Trial Defence Fund.

children needed, at the very least, £23 10s. 4d. per month to get the bare necessities of life.

Since then the cost of living, measured by the Retail Price Index, has gone up by 12 per cent. This means that wages have been reduced, because money cannot buy as much as it did four years ago.

On the basis of the 1954 sur-



vey, the same family would now require £23 10s. 4d. plus 12 per cent. (£26 6s. 9d.) to live on the same bare existence level.

In the light of these facts, the attitude of the Council of Reef Municipalities is miserly. It reminds me of what happened the last time the Wage Board investigated unskilled wages on the Reef.

OFFICIAL OBJECTIONS

In 1948, the Wage Board recommended a few small increases in the pay rates for unskilled African labourers, which had remained unchanged since 1942.

The Minister of Labour, how-

ever, decided not to enforce the proposed increases. Why? Because the Reef Municipalities objected. They said that if African wages were raised, they would have to increase their assessment rates.

The Minister's decision to leave the wages of unskilled workers at the low levels of 1942 has been the cause of much of the widespread dissatisfaction in recent years.

His decision condemned African labourers to struggle for existence on poverty wages, so that property owners of the rich towns and cities of the Reef could be spared a small increase in rates.

The pegging of cost-of-living allowances in March 1953 has imposed a further burden upon the lowest paid workers in the country. Although these allowances have been pegged, prices of essentials continue to rise. In the last few weeks, the prices of coal, sugar, and other items have gone up. Tram and bus fares are up. And the Minister of Finance has announced a large increase in taxes as from the beginning of next year.

Let us hope that the Wage Board will not accept any proposals that will peg African labourers to their poverty.

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POVERTY WAGES ARE CRIPPLING THE AFRICAN

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HEPPLE

C.o.l. allowances quite inadequate

TO-DAY, almost everyone agrees that the wages paid to unskilled African workers are far too low. For some time, there has been a general feeling that increases are overdue. Yet, for one reason or another, the wages remain at their disgracefully low levels.

Because of the reluctance to raise their wages, African labourers in most occupations are condemned to an unending struggle for existence, on starvation incomes.

by
ALEX HEPPLÉ

It is no exaggeration to describe their earnings as starvation wages. The facts back the description. Take the case of unskilled workers on the Witwatersrand and in Pretoria, whose wages are at present being investigated by the Wage Board. The legal minimum rates of pay for these workers has remained unchanged for sixteen years—the most inflationary sixteen years in the Union's history.

Wage Determination 105 of 1942 conceded slight improvements on the then existing position and fixed the minimum wage at 27s. per week. A further investigation took place in 1948, when the Wage Board recommended another small increase.

Miserable rate

The Minister of Labour (at that time Mr. B. J. Schoeman) decided to ignore the recommendation, and allowed the wage to remain at the miserable rate of 27s. Mr. Schoeman defended his action on the grounds that cost-of-living allowances had recently been increased. This argument is a favourite one of those who defend low wages. Let us examine it in the present case.

In 1942, the minimum wage for unskilled workers was fixed at 27s. per week. At that time the cost-of-living allowance was 3s., making the total wage 30s. per week. Today, the basic minimum is still 27s. but the c.o.l. allowance has been increased to 13s. 9d., making the total wage 40s. 9d. per week.

On the face of it, this appears to be a substantial improvement in earnings. But it is not. The c.o.l. allowance of 13s. 9d. bears no comparison with the real increase of living costs. Actually, it is less than half of what is needed to maintain the purchasing power of the 30s. which the worker received in 1942.

C.o.l. yardstick

To be fully compensating, the c.o.l. allowance should be £1 12s. 3d. per week. This amount is based upon the retail price index, the accepted yardstick of living costs. The index in June 1958 was 219. This means that, in order to earn the same real wage as he did in 1942, an unskilled worker must receive £2 19s. 3d. per week.

These calculations show two things. One is that c.o.l. allowances are so inadequate that it is wrong to argue, as Mr. Schoeman did, that these allowances obviate the necessity of increasing basic wages. The other is that wages have not only not been increased

but have been reduced. The real wages of 1958, quite clearly, are far below those of 1942.

Not only the retail price index reveals the poverty of African wages. Their inadequacy is illustrated also by family income and expenditure surveys, conducted in recent years amongst Africans in the urban areas.

The Institute of Race Relations has correlated the results of these surveys, proving that family incomes fall far short of the minimum needs for the maintenance of health.

The most recent survey, conducted by the Institute in Johannesburg in 1954, showed the average family income to be £15 18s. 11d., while their essential minimum expenditure was £7 11s. 5d., leaving a shortfall of £7 10s. 4d., leaving a shortfall of £7 11s. 5d. Since that survey was conducted, the cost of living has gone up by more than 10 per cent,

so the gap has widened to almost £10 per month.

Admittedly, there are some employers who pay more than the legal minimum rates. But they are few indeed. At the recent sitting of the Wage Board, the evidence showed that the vast majority of unskilled workers are being paid sub-1942 rates, i.e. rates which are less than the £2 19s. 3d. quoted above.

Worst offenders

The municipalities appear to be the worst offenders. Most of them pay the legal minimum of 27s. plus c.o.l. allowance, making 40s. 9d. in all. Johannesburg municipality pays a total wage of £2 12s. 9d. and Vereeniging £2 14s. 3d.

This is bad enough. What is worse is the general attitude of these public authorities. Many of the proposals put to the Wage Board were shameful.

The Council of Reef Municipalities suggested that the wage be fixed at £2 7s. per week, inclusive of c.o.l. allowance. The Johan-

nesburg City Council proposed a total wage of £2 12s. 9d. and the Peri-Urban Areas Health Board £2 11s. 9d.

The Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce was more generous, proposing £3 2s. 6d., with the explanation that "the proposed figures would still fall considerably short of minimum family subsistence expenses, but the Chamber is endeavouring to take a practical view of this matter".

The trade unions asked for a considerable improvement. The S. A. Trades Union Council proposed £5 7s. per week, while the S. A. Congress of Trade Unions put in their claim for £1 per day as a national minimum wage.

Final decision

It is now for the Wage Board to consider all the evidence and then make a recommendation to the Minister of Labour, who has the

final decision. The investigation into unskilled wages on the Witwatersrand and in Pretoria is something of a test case in the whole question of African wages. The decisions of the Wage Board and the Minister will have far-reaching effects upon the economy of the Union.

Intelligent step

Meanwhile, it is interesting to note that a group of Johannesburg businessmen have formed an "Association for the Improvement of Wages and Productivity of Bantu Workers" and have appealed to employers to give a lead in the raising of African workers' wages. They are to be congratulated upon this intelligent step. It is possible that they may persuade many employers to break with the present policy of low wages.

Unfortunately, experience has shown that progressive wage policies can be frustrated too easily by a minority of bad employers. Therefore, in the long run, the responsibility must be the Government's. The Government will have to protect good employers and all employees by fixing the legal minimum wage, at a rate which will provide a decent existence for the poorest worker.

Cheap labour

Poverty wages have always been the basis of apartheid. The callous exploitation of cheap African labour has been the greatest incentive to maintain white domination and racial discrimination.

Intelligent people are beginning to realise that South African society cannot endure on that basis.

FORUM
AUGUST
1958

Must South Africans have two moral standards—one for home and one for abroad? In their international associations, must South Africa approve Nationalist racial policies, even though disapproving of them at home?

The Archbishop and South Africa's Good Name

By Alex. Hepple

OVER the past several years, Parliament has spent much of its time listening to bitter tirades against those who "besmirch South Africa's good name overseas." When Parliament is not sitting, the politicians and the editors of pro-Government newspapers (and sometimes others, too) carry on the crusade.

The new Parliament has returned to this popular pursuit. Speakers from the Government benches have been demanding that the United Party "repudiate men like Huddleston and de Blank." Sir de Villiers Graaff, the leader of the U.P., impatiently reminded them that both Mr. Harry Lawrence and Mr. Henry Tucker had repudiated Archbishop Joost de Blank for what he was reported to have said in a sermon in New York.

Easily Intimidated

It is unfortunate that the U.P. is so easily intimidated into supporting the Nationalist campaign against the critics of baaskap apartheid. It is sad, too, that Sir de Villiers is so eager to placate his political opponents that he does not mind offending the Christian leaders who believe that the brotherhood of man is more important than vote-catching.

Sir de Villiers apparently did not know, or had quickly forgotten, that his colleagues had been overhasty in their attack upon the Archbishop. The Sunday Express disclosed,

in a front-page interview with the Rev. Joost de Blank on July 6, that the Archbishop had not said the things which created the storm in South Africa. Speaking from Lambeth Palace, the Archbishop said:

"I did not attack the Dutch Reformed Church. The only time the D.R.C. was mentioned by me was in a sermon in New York, a sermon of about 3,000 words. I was dealing with the failure of the Church in the country—the whole Christian church—to live up to its Christian profession and in the course of the sermon I said that the Anglican Church had failed to be true to the faith of its fathers, and that other English reformed churches had failed to live up to the faith of their forefathers.

"I said that the Dutch Reformed Churches, too, were giving more generously to missions than any other church; that their Calvinistic faith believed in the principle of separate development and that they supported much of the apartheid legislation. Now, that one sentence is the only sentence that ever referred to the D.R. Churches. It was no attack. It was no accusation; it was just a statement on the situation in which I said that the church had failed . . ."

Talking Outside South Africa

So far, no spokesman of the United Party has taken the trouble to rectify the wrong that was done to the Archbishop in the first place. At the time, Mr. Harry Lawrence said, "It would be more in the interests of the country if de Blank would talk a little less outside South Africa."

Why? Because he embarrasses the

Government? Or because he embarrasses the United Party? Or because he frightens away foreign investors?

Must the Archbishop abandon his great responsibilities as a Christian leader because those responsibilities bring him into conflict with the political aims of the Nationalist Party? Must he remain silent for fear of creating awkward situations for a timid Parliamentary Opposition?

Exhibitionist Patriotism

The exhibitionist patriotism that parades with cries about "defending the good name of South Africa," is an essential part of Nationalist policy. It is a tactic designed to frighten its opponents into silence. The technique of blaming one's political enemies is as old as politics itself.

The way the Nationalists argue, the trouble is not with apartheid but with the critics of apartheid. From their point of view, it is essential to silence or discredit all critics, otherwise baasskap apartheid will never get a fair chance to work.

Their aim, therefore, is to line up the whole nation behind them. In addition to the active assistance of those who support them, they want the passive acquiescence of the rest of the community. Public criticism or open dissension cannot be tolerated.

In order to sell the policy of baasskap apartheid at home and abroad, the Nationalists realise that they must present it as the unanimously approved policy of the nation. They want it believed that everyone is for it, except "that insignificant group of troublemakers, the leftists and liberalists."

The Nationalists have no illusions about their difficulties. They know that they are running against the tide of world opinion in racial matters. They know that the policy of baasskap apartheid is repugnant to the rest of the world.

To escape the opprobrium of other nations, the Nationalists need to dress up their racial policy in attractive clothes. That is not easy when South Africans from all walks of life constantly repudiate their actions. They become infuriated when churchmen, social workers, educationists, trade unionists and others take a forthright stand against them and openly attack their laws and administrative measures.

Every apartheid law which the Govern-

ment passes, sweeps around the world, to upset new groups and more people. Apartheid frustrates the lofty aims of the United Nations Charter and violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It embarrasses both the Commonwealth and the nations of the Western alliance. Countries which support racial discrimination in South Africa alienate the support of non-Whites everywhere in the world.

International organisations, even if they wanted to do so, cannot escape the impact of events in South Africa. That is not, as the Nationalists aver, because they delight in poking their noses into South Africa's domestic affairs, but because South Africa's domestic affairs intrude upon their activities.

Barriers Between Nations

Every time the Government passes a new law to enforce apartheid, some international organisation or other is drawn into a controversy. The application of racial separation and discrimination in South Africa conflicts with every international effort to break down barriers between nations and peoples to foster international amity and co-operation.

The current Lambeth Conference in London, for example, has an item on the agenda, "the reconciling of conflicts between and within nations." This is sure to provoke discussion on the racial situation in South Africa and the position of the Anglican Church in relation to apartheid. Inevitably, the Archbishop of Cape Town and the Bishop of Johannesburg will have to take their stand on the side of those who reject baasskap apartheid and all that goes with it.

If they do not, or if they remain silent, they would be counted amongst those who give tacit approval to racial discrimination. If they take either of the latter courses, they would please the South African Government and its timid Opposition but they would be guilty of juggling with their spiritual and moral faith.

This is the crux of the whole question. Must South Africans have two moral standards—one for home and one for abroad? In their international associations, must South Africans approve Nationalist racial policies, even though disapproving of them at home?

Should our educationists, professors and students denounce Bantu Education and the

University Bill inside South Africa but defend these measures when questioned by their fellows beyond our borders?

Should our Christian leaders express horror at the closing of Church schools and the implications of the "Church Clause," but refuse to talk about these things overseas?

Should our nurses who sincerely reject apartheid in the nursing profession, try to persuade the International Council of Nurses that this is purely a domestic matter, knowing full well that it offends the great humanitarian concept of the profession?

Should our trade unionists, knowing full well that the Industrial Conciliation Act violates the basic principle of workers' solidarity and curbs the freedom of association, remain silent in the International Labour Organisation or tell the international trade union movement to mind its own business?

Similar questions could be asked in relation to most of our "Native" laws, the Group Areas Act, and many other measures.

South Africans must not allow themselves to be bullied into silence, just because the Nationalists cry "Traitor!" If every South African remains silent and says not a word of criticism against laws and deeds which they believe to be wrong, the attitude of the world will harden against South Africa.

If we surrender to the Nationalist demand for approval or silence, we shall be guilty of gross disloyalty, not only to South Africa, but to mankind. And the Nationalists should have enough sense to know that such a general attitude would excite new curiosity about South Africa, for intelligent and progressive people everywhere would realise there was something radically wrong.

Press Gallery impressions of the new Parliament.

My Parliamentary Notebook

By J. R. Neame

THE United Party made a poor start to the first Session of the Union's twelfth Parliament. The traditional motion of no confidence was introduced by a let's-get-together speech that got the United Party nowhere.

Surely Sir de Villiers Graaff should have been aware of the reaction his offer to co-operate on "fundamental issues" would arouse among Government members still gloating over their general election victory. With 103 seats in the new Parliament it was inevitable that they would scorn any co-operation proposals. Sir de Villiers did not have to wait long to find that out.

When he sat down, the Prime Minister, Mr. J. G. Strijdom, was on his feet—sneering at co-operation and demanding capitulation.

A number of United Party members have made no secret of their disappointment at the tactics used in the debate. They

had hoped that their party would, in the first major debate of the Session, show that it was, in spite of the set-back it had suffered at the polls, prepared to fight more vigorously than ever for its principles.

I'm pretty sure that the sound I heard rising from the floor of the House to the Press Gallery when the debate ended was a gigantic sigh of relief from the United Party benches.

Warning

THE excitable Nationalist member for Groblersdal, Mr. Hans Abraham, who hammers home every platitude with a vigorous waving of his arms, warned Sir de Villiers Graaff of the middle-of-the-road policy he was following.

Nearly dislocating his right arm in a particularly wild swing, Mr. Abraham roared: "In the middle of our roads there

A Workers' Alliance Breaks Up

By ALEX HEPPLE

THE decision of the Trades Union Council to break from the S.A. Confederation of Labour is of great importance to the labour movement.

It brings to an end the uneasy unity between four rival federations of trade unions, which has lasted for one short year.

The four federations are the S.A. Trades Union Council (34 unions with 144,000 affiliated members), the S.A. Federation of Trade Unions (12 unions, 60,000 members), the Ko-Ordinerende Raad van Suid-Afrikaanse Vakverenigings (13 unions, 16,000 members), and the Federal Consultative Council of S.A.R. & H. Staff Associations (7 railway unions with 77,000 members).

These groups decided to ally themselves as the S.A. Confederation of Labour in September last year, after considerable preliminary negotiation.

It was hoped that the alliance would eliminate rivalry in dealings with the Government, especially on the appointment of trade union representatives to public bodies and the selection of workers' delegates to the International Labour Organisation.

The Trades Union Council joined the Confederation on a decision of its National Executive Council, which was subject to ratification by annual conference.

Safeguards

This conference took place last March. After ten hours of debate in secret session, the conference decided to continue its membership of the Confederation—if certain safeguards could be secured.

One was that a "veto" should operate in the Confederation to enable any one of the four affiliated federations to kill any proposal with which it did not agree.

This was intended to ensure that the Confederation acted only upon unanimous decisions, and should be applied only on matters of vital principle.

The necessity for the veto arose from the fact that there is a sharp division in the trade union movement—a division caused by the same racial issues which bedevil nearly all South African problems.

The division is aggravated by the attitude of the Government, whose interference in the affairs of the unions is forcing workers into one camp or the other.

Two Opposing Camps

On the one side, the Trades Union Council is in open conflict with the Government on such questions as the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1956, the enforcement of apartheid in the unions, and the reservation of jobs on racial lines.

In contrast, the other three federations support the Government

on these issues and approve its attitude to the trade unions. *In the circumstances, the T.U.C. has been in an embarrassing position in the Confederation. It was constantly exposed to the danger of being committed to the majority decisions of the three pro-Government federations.*

This was the T.U.C.'s reason for seeking the "veto" safeguard. Recently, the other members of the Confederation declared that the T.U.C. must remain a member unconditionally.

At the conference just concluded in Durban, the T.U.C. decided that it would be surrendering its principles if it accepted such terms.

Mr. T. C. Rutherford, President of the T.U.C., pleaded with delegates not to make the break. Such a move would result in a clear-cut split in the forces of the trade unions registered under the Industrial Conciliation Act, he warned.

The break would leave the unions about equally divided in two camps and thereby present the Minister of Labour with an excuse to make himself the final arbiter in all matters affecting labour, he argued.

But the delegates were adamant. In spite of the risks, they voted almost unanimously against remaining with the Confederation.

A Clear Stand

As if to underline its disagreement with the Confederation, the Durban conference reaffirmed its absolute opposition to job apartheid and to the Industrial Conciliation Act and its further amendments which the Minister now proposes.

These will tighten up the restrictions upon the unions; they will also give the Minister unfettered power to enforce job apartheid as he chooses.

Trade unionists are always dis-

tressed when efforts at unity fail, since workers' solidarity is a permanent ideal of trade unionism.

In this case, however, the politics of apartheid have made unity through the Confederation quite impossible.

Unity could have been achieved only by surrender to Government policy.

The Nat. Target

Many unions affiliated to the T.U.C. have long been the target of the Nationalist Party. They have had to bear the brunt of disruptive interference by the Government in trade union affairs.

Mr. D. E. Ellis, general secretary of the Mineworkers' Union, who was largely responsible for the setting up of the Confederation, has never made a secret of his support for the Nationalist Party.

His union's journal openly sided with the Government against the Garment Workers' Union when the latter protested against job reservation in the clothing industry.

The Air Cleared

The T.U.C.'s break with the Confederation was the inevitable end of an uneasy alliance.

The three federations which remain have their other problems. While they may agree to accept Government interference in the trade unions generally, they are not sure when it will affect them in particular.

The T.U.C. still remains the strongest federation of registered trade unions. It is strengthened by the fact that it has not surrendered its independence.

If the Government should ignore this body and favour the remnants carrying on as the Confederation, it will be guilty of gross contempt towards the largest group of organised workers in the country.

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Nationalist intellectuals at the most venerable of Afrikaans seats of learning, this was good going.

The Transvaler was on more congenial ground when it accused the United Party, in its own inimitable style, of itching to "wring the neck of the great majority of young White people in South Africa." For full measure—it would hardly have been the Transvaler if it had not done so—it dragged in the "Milner education policy of anglicisation and denationalisation of the Afrikaans-speaking people." This added to the argument just the right touch of racial venom as an antidote to the milk and water stuff dispensed by the Burger, Dagbreek and the Stellenbosch intelligentsia. That crack at the ignoramus plainly showed that the Transvaler's patience was sorely tried but the situation called for self-restraint and the Transvaler was not found wanting.

On this as on other occasions since the election it had to content itself with veiled allusions to the goings-on in "certain quarters." As the official mouthpiece of the

dominant group in the Nationalist Party, the Transvaler had reacted sharply to the vagaries of "certain quarters" on republicanism, and the irresponsibilities of "certain quarters" in speculating on the succession to the premiership the moment Mr. Strijdom's serious condition was disclosed. On the 18-year-olds its exasperation with "certain quarters" must have been stretched to breaking point when, contrary to all the rules, it allowed a reader to denounce in so many words, as a "mockery of God," the Burger's references to Mr. Strijdom's possible successor while prayers were being said for his recovery.

"Dog eat dog" tactics of this description are not usual in polite newspaper circles, certainly not between Nationalist stable companions. The Transvaler could only have indulged in them under stress of great provocation. It was all the more maddening because "certain quarters" went on their way imperturbably dropping political bricks in a manner quite unbecoming to well-drilled party henchmen.

On the refusal of the Johannesburg City Council to allow Black Sash meetings on the City Hall steps. This article was written before the lifting of the ban on African gatherings.

Silence on the City Hall Steps

By Alex. Hepple

THE story of how the Black Sash was prevented from holding meetings on the Johannesburg City Hall steps should be written in neon lights for all White South Africa to read.

It shows the fragility of basic civil rights in a land ruled by a minority. It reveals the inevitable fate of all democratic freedoms in a baasskap society.

The sorry facts of the case are as follows. Early in July the Black Sash applied to the Johannesburg City Council for permission to hold a public meeting on the City Hall steps, to protest against the Special Criminal Courts Amendment Bill (the Treason Trial Bill), then before Parliament.

The Town Clerk, following normal procedure, referred the application to the police for their opinion. The police objected to the holding of the meeting on the grounds that, "because of the controversial nature of the Bill, the meeting would be bound to attract many non-Europeans whose temper once aroused might soon rise to a pitch beyond the control of the organisers."

The Black Sash, receiving this information shortly before the chosen day, was placed in a quandary and so decided that the safest course was to call off the meeting.

In a public statement, the leaders of the Sash said that they were angry at the objection of the police, which amounted to "the denial to citizens of Johannesburg of

the right to use the City Hall steps as a forum."

On July 21, the Black Sash made a second application to the Council, asking to be allowed to hold a meeting on the steps to protest against the increase in Native Taxes, announced a few days earlier by the Minister of Finance in his Budget Speech.

This time the General Purposes Committee of the Council refused to grant the required permission, because the police had again objected.

The Sash then asked the Deputy Commissioner of Police to meet a deputation and explain why he was opposed to their holding meetings outside the City Hall. The Deputy Commissioner declined to meet them.

A question was then asked in Parliament to which the Minister of Justice, Mr. C. R. Swart, replied that the police had evidence that trouble was expected at the meeting called for July 18 but that it was not in the public interest to divulge that evidence.

The Black Sash then made a third attempt to call a meeting on the City Hall steps. Early in August they applied to the Council for permission to hold a meeting to protest against the Bill extending the vote to 18-year-olds.

Native Commission

The Council gave its permission but pointed out that it might also be necessary for the Sash to obtain the sanction of the Native Commissioner, in view of the fact that meetings of more than ten Africans are illegal, and there was a likelihood that the proposed meeting would attract more than the legal number of Africans.

This ban on African meetings had been imposed on April 11, four days before the General Election, because of a threatened stay-at-home demonstration by Africans, and was still in force in Johannesburg. A contravention of the ban is subject to a fine of £300 or three years' imprisonment.

It was directed purely at Africans and was not intended to affect gatherings of Whites. The Native Commissioner correctly stated that he did not have the power to grant or refuse permission to a White organisation to hold a meeting, as his jurisdiction was confined to Africans.

However, there was a clear possibility that if Africans attended the meeting on the City Hall steps, the Council, the Black Sash and the Africans would be liable to prosecution.

Once again the Black Sash was in a dilemma. Apart from the risk to the Council and themselves, the Sash feared that the police would swoop down on curious African bystanders and arrest them for violating the ban. The Sash was not prepared to expose innocent people to this risk and so decided at the last moment to abandon the meeting.

Sorry Record

The experience of the Black Sash is not altogether unique. The Johannesburg City Council has a sorry record in regard to public gatherings. Over the past ten years, the Council's attitude has been shameful.

The steps have been a popular public forum almost since the days when the City Hall was built. They have been the scene of hundreds of meetings, many peaceful, some rowdy and a few riotous. In this, the meetings have been neither better nor worse than those held in public halls.

Unfortunately, in recent years the United Party City Council has shown a strong aversion to meetings outside the City Hall and has made much effort to prevent them.

In 1950, the Council adopted a stringent by-law for the control of meetings in open places.

The nature of the regulations can be illustrated by a case of my own experience.

In July 1950, at the end of the Parliamentary Session, the Labour Party decided to stage a "report back" meeting by its Members of Parliament, to be held on the City Hall steps.

This was in the best tradition of democracy and should have been welcomed by the City Fathers, as guardians of the citizens of their town. But the City Fathers, apparently believing that public meetings are one of the excesses of democracy, had enacted a by-law to discourage such gatherings.

Before the Labour Party could hold its meeting, it was compelled to apply for permission more than seven days in advance, submitting a requisition signed by 25 registered voters, giving their full addresses and voting numbers, stating the date, the time and the purpose of the meeting, its expected duration, the full names and addresses of the sponsors and the speakers, and specifying whether loudspeakers would be used.

After complying with all these requirements, the Labour Party had to wait for

permission, which the Council would not grant without the approval of the police.

When permission was eventually obtained and the meeting held, a large force of police was in attendance and Council officials removed our loudspeakers from the large concrete pillars of the City Hall, saying that the use of the pillars was not permitted.

Anyone who wishes to hold meetings on the City Hall steps must expect the same difficulties. As a matter of fact, I see that the Town Clerk has now said that in future meetings will be limited to the area in front of the fountain and the gardens will be roped off.

It is well known that when the gardens were first suggested a few years ago, several Councillors jumped at the idea as a solution to the problem of how to put a stop to meetings there. By roping off the gardens, the Council will deprive the public of more than three-quarters of their forum.

So much for the City Council.

We now come to the police. A puzzling aspect of this whole affair, is the claim by the police that they had knowledge of expected trouble at the meeting the Sash hoped to hold on July 18.

Who was planning to make trouble? At that stage only three parties knew of the intention to hold the meeting — the Sash executive, the Town Clerk and the Police.

Could it be that the Black Sash itself was plotting to stage a riot and not a meeting? Or that the Town Clerk was hatching something? Or that the police themselves intended to make trouble? Of course, the whole thing is ridiculous.

The police referred to the danger of uncontrollable non-Europeans, but how could they have evidence of plans to make trouble, in view of the fact that the non-Europeans did not even know that the meeting was to take place?

The Minister of Justice, Mr. C. R. Swart, would do well to remember his own past attitude on the question of prohibiting meetings.

In 1936, he complained bitterly in Parliament because a magistrate had prohibited a meeting of Greyshirts in Burghersdorp, organised by the Greyshirt leader, J. von Moltke, now M.P. for Karas.

Mr. Swart then asked, "Why should this particular group of persons be persecuted and not allowed to address meetings? . . . It is not at all to be taken for granted

that at such meetings unrest and uproar will take place . . . The Minister should not go and prohibit people who support a certain policy, from holding meetings. That is a threat to the liberty of the individual . . ."

Perhaps Mr. Swart might rise again in defence of the liberty of the individual, by now lecturing the police in the same powerful terms.

The whole affair of meetings on the steps of the Johannesburg City Hall is a grim reminder of the road on which South Africa is travelling. The processes of democracy are being increasingly stifled, while petty despotism and authoritarian rule assume complete control over our lives.

The fact that a proclamation, issued in terms of a Native law, prohibiting gatherings of more than ten Africans, can curb the right of White citizens to meet, recalls Lincoln's dictum that no nation can endure half slave and half free.

The conflict between democracy and baasskap apartheid is so sharp that one must kill the other.

The Prime Minister

(Continued from page 5)

as a result of working sixteen hours a day because "I never have the nagging doubt of wondering whether I might be wrong."

Because of this fanaticism and authoritarianism, Opposition Members believe that Dr. Verwoerd will wreck the Nationalist Party within two years. They pin their faith on Dr. Dönges and his supporters (who showed unexpected strength in the Parliamentary caucus) breaking away from the Verwoerdian dictatorship. Opposition Members who believe this look no further than Parliament. But it is not there that Dr. Verwoerd's strength lies. He represents the militant and dynamic Afrikaner nationalism that swept through the country at the last two general elections. That is his strength and any Nationalists in Parliament who might be tempted to oppose or break away from him would receive little support from those outside. They would find themselves in the same political wilderness as did those who defied Malan and later Strijdom.

The election of Dr. Verwoerd has in fact made the task of the Opposition more difficult. He is a far more formidable opponent than Strijdom. The Opposition must not sit back waiting for the Verwoerd government to crack—it won't.

The United Party Member for Orange Grove answers criticisms of the U.P. which, he says, are based on a faulty conception of what an Opposition is.

Duties of a Responsible Opposition

By Etienne Malan, M.P.

THE United Party is carrying out its duty of being a responsible Opposition in the finest tradition of Parliamentary democracy. In refusing to be provoked into irresponsible action or futile obstructionism the party is showing breadth of vision, balance of view and a profound sense of history.

Much of the criticism of the United Party—the articles by Dr. Bernard Friedman and Senator J. H. Grobler in the August issue of the *Forum* are examples—arises from a faulty conception of what an Opposition is and should do.

Alternative Government

The duty of an Opposition is not, as Tierney stated, “to propose nothing, to oppose everything and to turn out the Government.” Its task is more difficult, its responsibility much greater. The United Party in Parliament is not only Her Majesty’s Opposition, but also Her Majesty’s Alternative Government. Sir Ivor Jennings in his great work on Parliament stated:

“The Opposition is compelled by the logic of the Parliamentary system to adopt a responsible attitude. . . . It presents itself to the electorate in that capacity; it asks for a mandate to govern. It must, therefore, show its capacity to govern in the Parliamentary area. Promises sown broadcast produce a harvest that has to be reaped. Wild obstruction frightens the timid into calmer waters.”

If the United Party were to oppose the Government on all issues merely for the sake of opposition it would be shirking its duty. It is not generally realised that most of the legislation passed by Parliament is of a non-contentious nature. For every teenage vote Bill or apartheid Bill there are measures such as the Atomic Energy Bill, the Business Names Bill and the Animal

Protection Bill which the United Party would be foolish to oppose.

The task of the Opposition is not only to attack Government proposals, to secure concessions on Government Bills and to educate public opinion with a view to the next election; it must also take part in Parliamentary government itself.

The Opposition decides the scope and content of the motion of criticism at the beginning of each Session. In fact, the Government deliberately gives time for such a debate. During the many days in Committee of Supply and Committee of Ways and Means it is the Opposition that launches the attacks and lays down the main line of debate, with Government concurrence. In the important Select Committee on Public Accounts the highest officials in the Public Service are called to account and to give evidence, Opposition members being allowed complete freedom of interrogation and criticism.

Sense of Continuity

An alternative government, when it is returned to power, does not break down everything its predecessor did. That way chaos lies. If we want to keep Parliamentary democracy alive we have to preserve a sense of continuity in Government. Even the Nationalists after 1948 left ninety per cent. of the United Party Government’s legislation intact. In Britain the Conservative Government wisely decided not to undo completely the social welfare and nationalisation measures of its Labour predecessor, however bitterly it had opposed the Bills introducing them. It did, however, try to amend those

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From the Government's point of view, South Africa's position as a member of the International Labour Organisation is rapidly becoming untenable.

Union's Uncomfortable Position in the ILO

by Alex. Hepple

SOUTH AFRICA'S uneasy membership of the United Nations is not the Cabinet's only concern in the field of international relations.

Even more uncomfortable is the Union's position in the International Labour Organisation. The latter body is constantly upsetting the Government by adopting Conventions and taking decisions which, in effect, are a denunciation of the fundamental policies of the Nationalist Party.

Discussions on freedom of association, forced labour, trade union rights and similar issues have repeatedly embarrassed South Africa's delegations and put them and the Government on the defensive.

Since coming to power in 1948, the Nationalists have carefully studied the question of membership of the ILO and have sought a way to withdraw without attracting too much unfavourable criticism.

Two Cabinet Ministers, Mr. B. J. Schoeman and Senator Jan de Klerk, have specially attended ILO conferences for the specific purpose of finding a way out.

Black Mark

The Cabinet would pull out of the ILO to-morrow, were it not for the fact that they realise that withdrawal would mean another black mark against South Africa.

Leaving the ILO would be condemned, either as an admission that South Africa refuses to conform to generally-accepted fair labour practices, or as proof that the official policy of *baasskap apartheid* is incompatible with the sentiments of justice and humanity which the ILO strives to uphold.

From the Government's point of view,

South Africa's position is rapidly becoming untenable. At almost every session the Union delegation finds itself in the humiliating role of abstaining or dissenting on issues favoured by the overwhelming majority of members.

At its forty-second session, held in June this year, the ILO struck a serious blow at the Government's key industrial and labour policies.

The Conference adopted a Convention and a Recommendation on "Discrimination (Employment and Occupation)," designed to eliminate distinction, exclusion or preference in the field of employment, on the basis of race or colour.

Entire Fabric

The Convention was adopted by 189 votes to 24, with 13 abstentions, while the Recommendation was adopted unanimously. Both affect South Africa more than any other country in the world. They assail the entire fabric of employment in this country.

Particularly, they are a denunciation of job reservation and trade-union apartheid, which are now being imposed upon industry and labour through the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1956.

The Convention requires each member State ratifying it to agree "to declare and pursue a national policy designed to promote by methods appropriate to national conditions and practice, equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of employment and occupation, with a view to eliminating any discrimination in respect of such employment or occupation."

"Discrimination" is defined as "any adverse distinction which deprives a person of

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equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation (including access to vocational training, access to employment, and the terms and conditions of employment) and which is made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin."

Many of our labour laws are a clear violation of this Convention. Naturally, South Africa will not ratify it, as she could not bind herself to such provisions without smashing the colour bar completely.

The problem of ratification is not new. Twenty-seven years ago, when South Africa had ratified only three of 33 Conventions adopted at that stage, the explanation was offered that "there are certain race problems peculiar to the Union which preclude ratification of many Conventions otherwise eminently suitable if viewed solely from a European standpoint."

Regular Reports

However, the matter does not end there. Like all other countries, South Africa will have to submit regular reports to the ILO, stating the position of its laws and practices in regard to the matters contained in the Convention.

The Recommendation on "Discrimination (Employment and Occupation)" imposes a similar obligation. It penetrates the usual defence of "peculiar race problems" and "the domestic affairs of Member States" by requesting members to consider the Recommendation "with a view to effect being given to it by national legislation or otherwise."

Section 19 of the Constitution of the ILO requires member States to "bring the Recommendation before the authority within whose competence the matter lies for the enactment of legislation or other action . . . to inform the Director-General of the International Labour Office of the measures taken to bring the Recommendation before the competent authority and the action taken by such authority . . . to report at appropriate intervals to the I.L. Office of the position of the law and practice in their country, showing the extent to which effect has been given, or is proposed to be given, to the provisions of the Recommendation . . ."

This Section imposes a responsibility upon South Africa which will be like a running sore.

How will South Africa explain her failure, or refusal, to comply with the request to eliminate racial discrimination in the employment of her workers of several races and many colours?

How will she meet the requirement in the Recommendation that "all persons should, without discrimination, enjoy equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of access to training and employment of their own choice on the basis of individual suitability; . . . advancement in accordance with their individual character, experience, ability and diligence; remuneration for work of equal value"?

The Industrial Conciliation Act, the Native Labour Regulation Act, the Mines and Works Act, the Native Building Workers' Act, the Natives (Urban Areas) Act come to mind immediately as offending against these principles.

South Africa's employers and trade unions are also called upon to declare themselves on the Convention and Recommendation.

Employers and Trade Unions

Employers are asked "not to countenance or practise discrimination in engaging for, or training for, or advancing or retaining in employment any person or in fixing his terms and conditions of service . . ."

They therefore would have to renounce job reservation and the practice of excluding non-Whites from apprenticeships. They would have to call for the repeal of such laws as the Mines and Works Act and Section 77 of the Industrial Conciliation Act.

The Recommendation calls upon trade unions "not to countenance or practise discrimination in respect of admission to trade unions . . . or participation in trade union affairs."

South Africa's trade unions, to comply with this demand, would have to abolish the colour bar in the trade unions and begin building a multi-racial trade-union movement, in which workers would be organised on industrial or occupational lines, irrespective of colour.

The unions would also have to call upon the Government to repeal all laws which obstructed such non-racial organisation.

The conflict between South Africa and the rest of the world on this issue is reflected

TRANSVAAL ABOLISHED FREE HOSPITAL SERVICES.

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The Hospitals Ordinance (No. 14 of 1958), which came into operation on the 15th. September, ended free hospital services in the Transvaal.

The system of free hospitalisation, which was introduced in 1946, was thus abolished after a life of less than twelve years.

The new scheme is based upon a means test, in terms of which patients will be classified ^{and will pay} according to their incomes ~~and pay accordingly.~~ There will be four categories - (a) full-paying patients, (b) private patients, (c) part-paying patients and (d) free patients.

FULL-PAYING PATIENTS.

As previously, full-paying patients will be those for whom medical treatment is provided at the expense of some public authority, in terms of such laws as the Workmen's Compensation Act, the Public Health Act, the Motor Vehicle Insurance Act and the Defence Act.

In addition, labourers whose employers are responsible for their medical care in terms of the Native Labour Regulation Act, convicts and others in the care of the State, are included in this category.

THE MEANS TEST.

All others will be subjected to a means test. Before being accepted for treatment, patients will be called upon to disclose their total family incomes, in cash and other benefits. The penalty for giving "false, incorrect or misleading information", is £50 or three months' imprisonment.

From the total family income is deducted a fixed amount in respect of each dependant, ~~and according~~ the rates differing for in-patients and out-patients, and for Whites and Non-Whites.

IN-PATIENTS.

The allowance for dependants in the case of those applying for treatment in any public hospital, is £200 for each dependant (White persons) or £100 (Non-White persons).

After making these deductions, the patients are then classified. Free patients (Whites) are those whose net incomes are less than £300 per year; free patients (Non-Whites) those whose net incomes are less than £150 per year.

Part-paying patients are those falling within the income group £300 - £550 per year (Whites) and £150 - £275 per year (Non-Whites).

~~Exceeding~~ Private patients are all those whose incomes are higher than the maximum for each race as quoted above.

OUT-PATIENTS.

For out-patients, the qualifying incomes and allowances are set at half the rates for in-patients. The allowance for each White dependant is £100 ~~xx~~ and for each Non-White £50.

Free patients are those with a net income of less than £150 per year (Whites) or £75 (non-Whites).

3/..... Part-paying -

Part-paying out-patients are those with net incomes of £150 - £400 per year (Whites) and £75 - £200 (Non-Whites). All White persons who are computed to be earning more than £400 per year and Non-Whites earning more than £200 per year, will be classified as private patients.

No private patients will be treated at the out-patients departments of any public hospital. They will be sent away to be treated privately by their own doctors. The only exception will be in the case of emergency, if an admitting officer is of the opinion that treatment cannot be deferred without danger or detrimental consequences.

HOSPITAL CHARGES.

Once a patient has been classified, he will be charged accordingly. Private patients (White) will have to pay 15/- per day plus £3 theatre charges. For Non-White private patients the charge will be 7/6 per day plus £2 theatre charges.

Part-paying patients will be charged 10/- per day (Whites) or 5/- per day (Non-Whites).

Treatment at the out-patients department will cost Whites 2/6 per attendance if they are classified as part-paying and 12/- per attendance if private. Non-Whites will be charged 1/- and 8/- per attendance, respectively.

WHO WILL BE MOST AFFECTED ?

That, briefly, is a summary of the new hospital scheme which is now operating in the Transvaal.

On the face of it, the plan appears to have been worked out with great care, in order to protect the very poor and place the burden upon those best able to pay.

In practice, it is doubtful whether the benefits of medical treatment will be provided fairly to those who need it most. The means test that is applied, confers a special favour upon large families, and ignores the crippling cost of illness to ordinary families in the middle income groups.

Take the case of a spinster, widow or ~~typist~~ divorcee, without dependants, who earns £45 per month. Not a very handsome income nowadays. She would be classified as a private patient and would have to pay the top scale.

As the means test is applied to her income for the twelve months immediately preceding her application for hospitalisation, no account is taken of her position thereafter. What happens if her illness prevents her from earning even £45 per month after treatment, which may continue for several weeks or months?

Wage and salary earners who do not belong to a Medical Aid Society or Sick Benefit Society (and they are the majority) will have to suffer the full burden of the new hospital charges, as determined by their incomes. But even those who belong to Medical Aid and Sick benefit funds are not covered for all contingencies; many of these funds apply only to the employee and not to their families.

From the administrative point of view, the new system calls for a considerable increase in the clerical staffs at all public hospitals. Reports already appearing in the press show that there has been a slowing down and many frustrating delays, while the public goes through the aggravations of form-filling and questioning.

THE LOST NEW WORLD.

The abandonment of free hospitalisation is a sad reminder that we are drifting back to the bad old ways of the pre-war years. One by one, the promises of a "brave new world" are being broken, on some pretext or another.

The introduction of free hospitalisation in 1946 was not an accident or a political manoeuvre. It came as a result of widespread conviction ~~that~~ that it was a desperate necessity for the nation.

In 1942, when the needs of war clearly exposed the grim fact that there was a ~~grave~~ grave deficiency in the general health of Whites, no less than of Non-Whites, experts were frantically summoned to prescribe the remedy. The Government appointed the National Health Services Commission, "to inquire into, report and advise on the provision of a National Health Service..... which will ensure adequate medical, dental, nursing and hospital services for all sections of the people of South Africa".

After thorough investigation the Commission stated that "The health of the people is far below what it should and could be. On balance, it is probably deteriorating....."

6/v..... Among its many -

Among its many important recommendations, the Commission stressed that "..... personal health services - curative and preventive alike - should be freely available to all sections of the people, not according to their means but according to their needs".

In the Transvaal, the Provincial Secretary, Mr. H. F. Pentz, as a one man Commission, also produced a report on hospitalisation in 1942, in which he said, "It is advisable and feasible to extend the field and scope of free hospitalisation so as to cover all classes of the community".

This led to the passing of the Transvaal Public Hospitals Ordinance in 1946, in terms of which hospital services were to be ~~made~~ provided to everyone, free of charge.

At the time, the Medical Association ~~xxx~~ criticised the scheme on the grounds that it left the heart of the problem entirely untouched, viz. the prevention of ill-health and the effective treatment of the unavoidable residium. The Medical Association also emphasised that hospital accomodation and facilities were so inadequate that free hospital services could not be made available to all, "now or in the realisable future", ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~
~~xx~~

By 1950, the scheme was considered to be a failure, mainly because of a shortage of beds in the public hospitals and because of a shortage of nurses and other staff. In an attempt to overcome these difficulties, the "free hospitalisation" scheme was partially modified.

7/..... In 1951 -

In 1954, the Administrator appointed a Hospitals Commission of Inquiry, with Mr. (now Judge) P. M. Gillie, as Chairman. This Commission reported that the increasing demand for hospital services by the public indicated that the overall cost to the Province would reach £22,000,000 per year by 1966.

In spite of this, the Commission said, that with all its defects, the free hospitals system was "desirable from the medical point of view, from the social point of view and from the political point of view".

A minority report expressed the opposite view and advocated the abolition of free hospitalisation. Their alternative is the scheme which is now being applied.

It is pertinent to ask what is being done to overcome the real difficulties - the shortage of accomodation and of nursing staff? Admittedly, there has been considerable expansion in hospital accomodation, but the demands continually increase. The greater difficulty is the shortage of nurses. In this the authorities have failed lamentably to attract South Africans to the Nursing profession.

Among the non-Europeans, especially, there is a vast reservoir of available talent - of young people who are keen to enter the profession if they were given the chance.

From here on, it will be for the White electors of the Transvaal to decide whether they are satisfied with the decision to abolish free hospital treatment for all.

18
11
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S T R I K E S.

PART II.

In our last article, we said that there is a difference between a strike, as workers understand it, and what the law says it is.

In law, there is a strike whenever workers, in order to compel their boss to do something or not to do something, by agreement or understanding between themselves -

- (a) refuse or fail to continue working; or
- (b) work slower or prevent work being done; or
- (c) refuse to re-start work, or to accept re-employment; or
- (d) all give notice at the same time.

SOME EXAMPLES.

Let us take a few examples.

No. 1. Workers in a factory ask the boss for higher wages. He takes no notice. They stop work, to compel him to listen to them and consider their demands, that is, to compel him "to do something". That is a strike.

No. 2. A boss orders some of his workers to stay

2/..... late and work -

late and work overtime. They say he has told them too late and has not given them long enough notice, and so refuse. He sacks them. As a protest, all the other workers stop work. They are trying to compel the boss "not to do something", that is, not to sack the men who refused to work overtime.

That is a strike.

No. 3. The foreman in a factory bullies the workers and shouts and swears at them. The workers decide to work slower (that is, to do less work) until the boss makes the foreman change his ways, or hires a new foreman who will treat them better. That is a strike.

No. 4. Or, in the example above, instead of working slower, the workers decide to give up their jobs. They decide that they cannot suffer the bullying any longer and all go to the boss and ask to be paid off. They all give notice. That is a strike.

These are but four examples. We could give many others. They would show that almost all stoppages of work are strikes. African workers are not allowed to strengthen their demands upon their employers by means of

a strike. The law makes a difference between strikes of African workers and those of other workers.

The Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act, which applies to Africans only, makes all strikes of Africans illegal. Those who go on strike can be punished with a fine up to £500, or with three years' imprisonment, or with a fine and imprisonment.

The Industrial Conciliation Act, which applies to all other workers, except Africans, makes strikes illegal only in essential services, supply or distribution of perishable foodstuffs, petrol and other fuels, or while and industrial council agreement is in operation. Those who go on strike in violation of these provisions, or incite others to do so, are liable to a fine up to £100, or one year's imprisonment, or both fine or imprisonment, or imprisonment without the option of a fine.

LABOUR ACT'S COMPLICATED MACHINERY.

The Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act provides complicated and involved machinery, which is difficult for even experienced people to understand. It is supposed to help African workers when they have a dispute with their bosses. In practice, however, workers find that it is merely another law to compel them to

accept apartheid in wages and working conditions.

It is important for every African worker to know what he can and cannot do in his fight for better wages and in his struggle for better conditions.

WHAT TO DO WHEN THERE IS A STOPPAGE OF WORK.

It is impossible to prevent disputes between workers and their employers. All sorts of people, even policemen, bank clerks and doctors have been known to strike.

If there is trouble in your factory and there is a stoppage of work, this is what workers must do:-

- (a) they must immediately contact their trade union office. (If they do not have a trade union, they must get in touch with the nearest SACTU office) They must tell the Union that there is a stoppage of work and that someone from the Union must come out immediately.
- (b) If a trade union official is coming, tell the police and the Labour Officer that you want the trade union official to be present at any discussion and that you want to wait for him.
- (c) When the trade union official arrives, the

~~XXXXXXXX~~

workers must explain the trouble to him privately, before starting discussions with the officials and the bosses.

- (d) If there is any danger of a baton charge by the police, or other action by the police, workers must not wait to be attacked. They should disperse immediately and arrange to meet at some other place, where they can consider the situation calmly, and if necessary, call in advice.

PROSECUTIONS FOR STRIKING.

If you are charged for taking part in a strike, your first duty is to arrange with your own trade union, or with any workers' organisation you know, or any progressive organisation, to assist you with your defence.

Get a suitable lawyer. Call on other workers to stand by you and take an interest in your case.

ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT WORKERS MUST STAND TOGETHER.
AN INJURY TO ONE IS AN INJURY TO ALL.

6/11/58
8/12/58

THE NEW REPUBLIC
U.S.A.

Treason in South Africa

SOUTH AFRICA's treason trial, which began two years ago, still drags on. Speculation as to the fate of the 91 accused of opposing racial segregation—following the sensational withdrawal of the indictment on October 13—ended recently when the Attorney-General announced that he will make a new attempt to obtain a conviction. But this time, only 31 of the accused will stand trial. Commencing January 19, they will appear in the same Special Court in the Old Synagogue, Pretoria, before the same three judges. If the Crown succeeds with this trial, the remaining 60 accused (of the original 156 arrested) will be tried in April, an entirely new procedure in South African law.

One of the accused, Alfred Hutchinson, grandson of a White man who married a Swazi woman, has disappeared over the border and is reported to be seeking asylum in Ghana. Shortly before he left the country Hutchinson was picked up by the police and charged for not having a pass. He was able to prove that he is colored (*i.e.* mixed blood) and not pure Negro, and therefore exempted from the pass laws.

The Attorney-General's decision to persist with the treason trial brings a bleak prospect for Christmas and

the New Year for the accused and their families, who have already lived in uncertainty and insecurity for two years. While standing trial, the accused cannot continue their normal occupations and most of them have lost all sources of income. Very few employers, even if they have casual employment to offer, will give it, for fear of incurring the displeasure of the government.

The Treason Trial Defense Fund gives what financial help it can but legal costs, although at cut rates, devour considerable sums. The Fund has so far spent \$225,000 (\$30,000 having been donated by Americans) and estimates that as much again will be needed to see the case through.

Nov
1958

ARTICLES AH

In every sphere the pressure on South Africa to modify its racial outlook is steadily mounting. The country's sport and theatre are threatened by influential bodies objecting to colour bars; international scientific, religious and medical institutions have refused to send or receive delegations from a country that insists on "White only" conferences.

Increasing Pressure

The indications are that this increasing pressure from the world outside will merely harden White South Africa's attitude, and that the Nationalist Government will become more determined not to bend its knee to world opinion. It will accelerate its policy of "*Wit baasskap*."

In these circumstances, there seems to be no way out, no escape from the disaster that lies ahead . . . at least, not politically.

A United Party Government is no solution. I cannot see it wresting the reins of

government from the Nationalists, but even if it should its racial policy would be based on White domination. Political parties without this basis have made little headway in South Africa, and are unlikely to do so until disaster shakes White South Africa out of its racial smugness.

What is necessary is a change of heart among White South Africans. That, and nothing else, can save the country.

But time is running out. A change of heart must occur before Black nationalism is so embittered and revengeful that it will refuse to accept the co-operation of the Whites when they are compelled to offer it.

I have said that South Africa cannot be saved by political action. No political party on its own can bring about the change of heart that is necessary.

That task must be carried out by all South Africans who accept that the inherent human qualities that they seek in friends have nothing to do with the colour of a man's skin.

Dr. Verwoerd has included in his Cabinet a coterie of enthusiasts, who have been chosen to fit the job of implementing the theories of apartheid.

The Economics of Verwoerdism

By Alex. Hepple

DR. VERWOERD has included in his recently-appointed Cabinet a coterie of enthusiasts, who are eager to help with his racial experiments.

Like the Prime Minister himself, these men are obsessed with some plausible theories for the maintainance of White supremacy generally, and Afrikaner Nationalism in particular, offered to the public as a policy guaranteed to preserve "White Christian Civilisation" in South Africa.

Dr. Verwoerd is an inspiring leader for the Nationalists. He has an amazing belief in chimerical apartheid schemes. While other Nationalist leaders, faced with the mounting problems of their apartheid policy, hesitated in doubt and uncertainty, the passionately

inspired Dr. Verwoerd leaped to the forefront with zest and confidence. Not even facts or logic could dismay him.

This is the only spirit on which *baasskap apartheid* could extend its span of life. It requires a hierarchy of race-crazy, mixed-up theorists, obsessed with the belief that they are entrusted with a divine mission, to sustain White domination.

Ever since the Nationalists came to power in 1948, the overwhelming majority of industrialists and trade unionists have persuaded themselves that apartheid is a political issue and therefore none of their business.

They are now discovering that apartheid brooks no neutrality. Their domain has

been invaded and the Government demands their allegiance and support — or else. Nationalist experiments with the lives and the livelihood of all sections of the people are compelling everyone to declare himself.

Take the burning issue of the moment in the industrial field, that of job reservation. It will have a serious effect upon both employers and employees; it will impose artificial restraints upon employment, productivity, workmanship and enterprise. In spite of that, Dr. Verwoerd and his party refuse to give the matter second thoughts.

They have worked out the theory and they will make it work, no matter what the odds. And, to their way of thinking, failure is only possible if their opponents are allowed to interfere. The error is not in their theories but in the evil of their enemies.

Die Transvaler made this attitude clear in an editorial on October 11, which is worth quoting at length:

“ . . . There are people who for a century have made it their point of departure that simply everything—even the survival of White civilisation—must be made subordinate to their so-called economic laws . . . It is fortunate that under a Nationalist government these worshippers of economic laws have never had their way but that a higher and nobler goal has been striven after—the maintainance of White civilisation. These people can rant and rave as much as they like against Dr. Verwoerd. His policy is that their aspiration for riches must also remain subordinate to the survival of civilisation.”

Warning

What does this mean? That the Government is opposed to capitalism? Of course not. It is merely a warning to industrialists that if free enterprise threatens to break down the colour bars, commerce and industry will be brought under control of the Government, in a pattern similar to Mussolini's Chamber of Corporations or Hitler's National Economic Chamber.

This is not guesswork. The Nationalist blueprint for control of this kind is fully set out in the Party's "Road to a New South Africa," issued just prior to the 1948 elections. The controlling authority was described as "The Central Economic Council."

Further light on this matter will be found in a speech made in Parliament on September 9, 1958, by the Minister of Labour, Senator Jan de Klerk. He read a specially-prepared statement, which should be studied by all industrialists and workers, for it ex-

presses the economic doctrine of job reservation.

The statement contains four specific points (a) that the Government's policy is to decentralise industry, to which end all industries which employ large numbers of Natives, should be moved away from White areas (i.e. existing industrial centres); (b) that the Government reaffirms its policy of reasonable protection for all workers, "and especially European employees" in the established centres of production; (c) that a committee, appointed by the Minister of Native Affairs, is investigating the locational possibilities of the areas near the Reserves and the industries that can best be attracted there; and (d) in the near future the Government will establish an Economic Advisory Council, to advise it on general economic co-ordination and physical planning.

There are a thousand and one questions which arise from this statement. One cannot resist the temptation of asking whether the Witwatersrand and Free State gold mines are to be moved to the borders of the Native Reserves, for they employ more African than any other industry and are responsible for "the massing of large numbers of Bantu workers in our largest urban centres."

Complementary Question

A complementary question concerns the employment of Whites in the factories adjoining the Reserves. The clothing factories which have already migrated there, have taken with them a number of Whites—visitors, managers, office workers and others who are needed there, just as they were in the White areas. Will not these "White spots" constitute a threat to apartheid, creating new points of racial contact?

Equally important is the question of inter-racial competition, which Section 2 of the Industrial Conciliation Act aims to prevent. In his statement in Parliament, Senator De Klerk emphasised that wages will be lower in the Black factories on the borders of the Reserves, because African workers would be living more cheaply in their areas.

Does the Government expect work in the urban areas to believe that the employment of non-Whites in the existing factories at equal wage rates is a threat to their livelihood, but that it is no danger at much lower wage rates in the rural apartheid factories?

Does the Government expect industrialists to believe that manufacturers in the "White" areas, faithfully obeying Nationalist policy by employing White workers, and paying them much higher wages, can comfortably compete with manufacturers in the "Black" areas, who pay their workers one-third and even one-fifth of the wages paid in the "White" areas?

Of course, Dr. Verwoerd sees no such problems. Questions of this kind are merely the mischief of those whom Die Transvaler describes as "the worshippers of economic laws."

As far as the Prime Minister is concerned, he will not allow his genius to be thwarted by the ebb and flow of trade. He has geared his machine to grind through all obstacles. His new men have been chosen to fit the job of implementing the theories of *baasskap apartheid*. They will give substance to the moonbeams of the Nationalist planners.

The new "Inner-Cabinet" for Native Affairs, which will co-ordinate the activities of the separate Ministries of "Bantu Administration and Development" and "Bantu Education" and the Native Affairs Commission, includes Dr. Verwoerd's personal gladiators, dedicated to experiment to the last ditch. This coterie of enthusiasts will be forti-

fied by the strong men in the Labour portfolio, who will take all the necessary steps to manipulate the country's labour forces into Dr. Verwoerd's scheme.

The Minister of Labour, Senator Jan de Klerk, is himself one of the designers of the new pattern. He was co-founder of the *Blanke Werkersbeskermingsbond*, and co-inventor of job reservation.

His deputy, Mr. Marais Viljoen, served his apprenticeship under Dr. Verwoerd in the early days of Die Transvaler, and won his spurs as the leading propagandist for Verwoerdism.

From the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Dr. Verwoerd's "Bantu Affairs" coterie will receive the inspired assistance and collaboration of Dr. Nico Diederichs. He was the architect of Nationalist economic policy, diligently working with his brothers of the Broederbond in the days when things were not so bright for the Nationalist Party. His activities in the Economic Institute of the F.A.K. and the Reddingsdaadbond are now being rewarded. His days of impatient waiting are over.

These are the men who now hold South Africa's economic destiny in their hands. These are the men who will show South Africa and the world the true meaning of *baasskap apartheid*.

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SOUTH AFRICA'S TIMELESS TREASON TRIAL.

South Africa's treason trial, which began two years ago, still drags on. Speculation as to the fate of the 91 accused, following upon the sensational withdrawal of the Crown indictment on October 13th., ended last week, when the Attorney-General announced that he will make a new attempt to secure a conviction.

This time, he will send only 31 of the accused for trial. Commencing January 19th. 1959, they will appear in the same Court in the Old Synagogue, Pretoria, before the same three judges.

If the Crown succeeds with this trial, the remaining 60 accused (of the original 156 arrested) will be tried in April. This procedure is entirely new in South African law and is the subject of considerable private criticism in legal circles.

One of the accused, Alfred Hutchinson, grandson of a white man who married a Swazi woman, has disappeared over the border and is reported to be seeking asylum in Ghana. Shortly before he left the country Hutchinson was picked up by the police and charged for not having a pass. He was able to prove that he is Coloured (i. e. mixed blood) and not pure African, and therefore exempted from the pass laws.

The Attorney-General's decision to persist with the treason trial brings a bleak prospect for Xmas and the New Year for the accused and their families, who have already lived in uncertainty and insecurity for two years.

While standing trial, the accused cannot continue their normal occupations and most of them have lost all sources of income. Very few employers, even if they have casual employment to offer, will give it to the accused, for fear of incurring the displeasure of the government.

The protracted court proceedings have imposed a severe mental, physical and financial strain upon the accused. Their ordeal is worsened by the constant harrassments of the pass laws and labour control.

The Treason Trial Defence Fund gives what financial help it can but legal costs, although at cut rates, devour considerable sums. The Fund has so far spent 225,000 dollars and estimates that as much again will be needed to see the case through. Americans have subscribed about 30,000 dollars and have also sent three bales of second-hand clothing.

Only the Government can raise African wage rates

But they don't seem to care

FOR the past year and more we have seemed to be on the verge of a general increase in the wages of all unskilled workers, the overwhelming majority of whom are Africans. But the promise remains unfulfilled.

It is left to a handful of employers to make the gesture to their employees, while the rest make no effort "to bring about a sorely needed improvement in

by ALEX
HEPPLE

the standard of living of Bantu workers in the interest of the economic and social welfare and stability of our entire population."

The words I quote are those of Mr. Harry Goldberg, chairman of a small group of public-spirited businessmen, who are seriously seeking to remedy the evil of low wages. Mr. Goldberg is justified in asking others who are interested in this matter to adopt a constructive and encouraging attitude.

Unfortunately, because the months, and now the years are passing without results, many people are becoming impatient. The fact that a few employers have taken the lead by giving their African employees small increases, does not help the many thousands of workers whose own employers have not followed suit.

What is needed is some official or concerted action, to achieve a general improvement in the wage levels of all unskilled workers. Isolated action by individual employers, although praiseworthy, cannot bring about any improvements for the mass of African workers.

Those in close touch with Africans see only too clearly the disappointment, the frustration and the growing resentment at the failure of White authority to provide this expected relief from struggling poverty.

Some employers, who might otherwise raise wages, hang back until all their competitors agree to toe the line. The result is that nobody moves.

In a competitive market, such as is now developing in South Africa in most commodities, few employers will risk placing themselves at a disadvantage by making their wage bill higher than those of their rivals.

Matter of legislation

Obviously, this obstacle can be overcome only by some legal enforcement, making it obligatory upon all employers to increase the wages of lowly-paid workers.

This can be done through Wage Determinations. The onus is on the Government to take the necessary steps. There is nothing to prevent the Minister of Labour from bringing recalcitrant employers into line.

A RECENT exchange of letters in the columns of the "Rand Daily Mail" between Mrs. N. M. Pijper, of Pretoria, and Mr. Harry Goldberg, chairman of the Association for the Improvement of Wages and Productivity of African Workers, prompts a former Member of Parliament to ask "What is the Government doing about African wages?"

The Government, however, will not intervene unless compelled to do so. In all other things the Government cannot resist interfering in industry and commerce; but in the case of African wages it sticks strictly to a policy of laissez-faire. In this way it cleverly throws the responsibility upon employers.

If they are wise, employers should make it plain to the Government that they cannot handle this problem alone.

They should demonstrate their goodwill towards their workers, by asking the Government to

apply legally enforceable wage rates to all employers.

At the same time, employers should insist that wages are fixed at decent levels, to ensure that even the lowest-paid worker receives enough to maintain the minimum standards of living.

It is nearly two years since the Minister of Labour announced that he had ordered investigations into 45 undertakings. So far, only about half-a-dozen recommendations have been published. None of these indicates a fulfilment of the promise to raise African wages.

In some cases, the Wage Board has actually recommended lower wages than those now being paid by employers; in others the rates fall far short of what is generally accepted as the minimum required to maintain the barest standards of health and decency.

The Wage Board appears to be wedded to a wage of £2 to £2 10s. for unskilled workers. This, with cost-of-living allow-

ances added, makes a total income of £12 to £15 per month, which is far below the poverty datum line of £23 10s. 4d., which the Institute of Race Relations established in their Survey of 1954.

Since that survey, the cost of living has risen by more than 12½ per cent., so that the poverty datum line can now be taken as being nearer £26 10s. per month.

If Government were serious

Much of the suffering of poorly-paid workers is caused by the gross inadequacy of cost-of-living allowances. If the Government were at all serious about improving African wages, they could put things right to-morrow by gazetting amendments to War Measure 43 of 1942, which fixes C.O.L. allowances.

Taking all things into account, it is quite clear that the Government is shirking its duty in regard to African wages. Only the Government can effectively improve the present unhealthy situation.

While Mr. Goldberg and his committee are to be congratulated on their efforts to persuade employers to step up African wages, they should not make themselves the shield for Government prejudice and stupidity.

1958

SWART'S SUCCESSOR.

South Africa's Minister of Justice, Mr. C. R. Swart is in indifferent health and not expected to continue his Cabinet duties very much longer.

The setback he suffered over the Premiership earlier this year has depressed him more than he shows, but at the recent Transvaal Congress of the Nationalist Party he broke down and was ordered to bed for a few days and had to cancel engagements in the Eastern Cape.

Groomed as his successor is forththree year-old Advocate Balthazar Johannes Vorster, recently brought into the Cabinet as Deputy Minister for Education, Arts & Sciences, Social Welfare and Pensions.

Onetime leading member of the Ossewabrandwag, Vorster was arrested during the war and held in prison without trial. Before that he was active in his student days at Stellenbosch University as Leader of the Junior Nationalist Party. His wartime imprisonment has left him with a bitterness that reveals itself in many of his Parliamentary and public speeches. His enthusiasm for National-Socialism made him a tireless worker for the Ossewabrandwag until the members of this organisation

2/..... were absorbed -

were absorbed by Havenga's Afrikaner Party, which later merged with the Nationalist Party.

In 1949, Dr. Malan, as leader of the Nationalist Party, refused to accept Vorster as the Afrikaner Party candidate for Brakpan, under the pact between these two parties. Dr. Malan told the Afrikaner Party that Vorster's Ossewabrandwag membership and record made him unacceptable.

Vorster fought back, however, and in spite of this humiliation, secured the nomination for Nigel at the 1953 general elections as the official Nationalist Party candidate.

During the recent trial of the 91 persons on charges of high treason in the Old Synagogue, Pretoria, Vorster sat in the court for days in wrapt attention.

~~XX~~ His interest is said to spring from his own expectation that, sooner or later, the trial will become his responsibility as the new Minister of Justice.

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