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FIGHTING TALK

REGISTERED AT THE G.P.O. AS A NEWSPAPER.

March 1951

Volume IX No. 3

ORGAN OF THE SPRINGBOK LEGION.



Our Word

WE CAN STILL BE SUCCESSFUL!

POLITICAL observers throughout South Africa agree that the campaign which has been mounted by the Civil Rights League to protect the Cape Coloured franchise, as well as the campaigns of the various non-European organisations, have confirmed the worst fears of the Nationalist Party leaders.

It must be obvious now even to such an insensitive man as Dr. Dinges that the mass of citizens of this country, voters and non-voters alike, flatly reject the Representation of non-Europeans Bill.

From the glib platform speaker to the labourer in the factory, the suspicion about the ultimate aims of the Nationalist Party has become a ruthless certainty.

As far as we in the Springbok Legion are concerned, the temptation to say "We told you so" is very strong indeed. We were aware of what would have to be faced from May 26th, 1948 onwards. The present anti-Nat. campaign is a milestone in a long and bitter struggle against fascism, a struggle that we at any rate are determined to continue as long as there is one able-bodied man left in our organisation.

The campaign itself was highlighted earlier this month by a giant demonstration in Cape Town, where about twenty

thousand people were unanimous in one demand — the Coloured vote must stay! And in spite of intimidation by the Minister of Justice, there was not a single disturbance of the peace. Indeed the forces of Law and Order looked somewhat foolish with their rifles and bayonets.

Here in Johannesburg the Civil Rights League has approached the 50,000 mark with its petition. In other words, the equivalent of five constituencies have signed their names to a document which expresses unqualified disapproval of any tampering with the Constitution.

What is even more significant is the unorganised campaign — the thousands of men and women who are becoming alarmed at the road along which the Nationalists are taking the country.

The immediate problem is simple and straight-forward. This campaign HAS GOT TO BE SUCCESSFUL. It may well be successful if the enthusiasm is kept up and the pressure maintained.

What have YOU done so far?

Here is what you can still do:

Write a letter or send a telegram to your M.P.; write a letter of protest to the Prime Minister and to the Min-

ister of the Interior (Dr. Dinges); raise the matter in your trade union or national organisation; write to the Press and above all, talk. Talk to your workmate, your friends, your relations and your neighbours. Play your part in this unorganised campaign until the Government is forced to recognise that the majority of the electorate is fed up to the teeth with the Nats and their policies, particularly the present Bill.

The campaign can still be won! It's up to us and nobody else.



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YOU'RE TELLING US



Letters to the Editor

The Secretary,
Springbok Legion,
Johannesburg.

Dear Sir,

Enclosed is a donation of seven shillings and sixpence.

Thanks for regular copies of Fighting Talk.

For your serious consideration I make this suggestion. In these times most magazines are dated right up to date and some even in advance, to make the recipient feel how up to the mark he is with latest news items, discussions, etc. By comparison therefore when we receive Fighting Talk, its date makes it look like old news. The difficulty in final production is appreciated. If the earliest by which copies can be despatched is near the end of the month, let it continue so, but let a switchover and wiping out of time-lag be accomplished without readers being particularly aware of it. Date the next issue or two double month, e.g. March-April, then April-May, etc., and then jump ahead to the next single month so that say near end June we shall be receiving the issue dated July. The intermittent stages will probably not be noticed and the reader will feel right up to date from that month onwards. Double-monthing in between issues will obviate explanations to any sources for an apparent month skipped.

Best wishes.

Yours faithfully,

L.R.

Pretoria.

(Thanks for an excellent suggestion. However, uniformity in title lines is essential in a publication and the thing to do is to bring out the issue much earlier in the month, and that is what we shall do.—Ed. F.T.)

LETTER FROM AN OLD FRIEND

Dear Jack and Cecil,

I should, of course, have written long ago; my silence however in no way indicates indifference or apathy.

It is merely that, being by nature the worst correspondent ever, and being busy in my job from dawn to dark daily, there simply isn't a dog's chance of my ever being stirred to put pen to paper.

Except of course by an effort so matchless and miraculous as your favour of recent date re Conference. Whoever drafted that soul-searching masterpiece should be capable of rousing the most apathetic to make a momentous decision.

I had long ago resolved that I should have to give Conference a miss this year. After nine years' absence, a farm, like any other business needs a lot of licking into shape, and taking time off is just the last thing to be thought of on that point I had come to a final and resolute decision long before the above-mentioned reached me.

However all that has gone the way of yesterday's seven thousand years. There are a dozen sound and cogent reasons why I should not go and must not go, but all or any of them will leave me with a conscience ill at ease and the need to make excuses for my failure to attend. And I can think of nothing more barren and less rewarding than making excuses for oneself.

So I shall be there.

You ask me to write for auld lang syne; well, what more can I have to report that the above confession of a sinner saved from back-sliding by the clarion call of the Legion.

We are all fit and happy, and I have never a dull moment on the farm; with you lads battling as you are it seems all wrong that I should find life so good here. However, in one respect its no different from life in the Legion as I knew it — hard work and long hours. Pity none of you people have ever got so far as a holiday down here — you're missing a break that would be mentally and physically just what you need. As I've made plain, Legion types will be sure of a welcome from us here — so any time you feel that way, just say the word.

And now till I see you all my regards to yourselves, Rica, Jock, Vance — and all the others too numerous to mention.

With Legion greetings,

BLIZ.

EMBROIDERED BEDSPREAD COMPETITION.

An embroidered bedspread competition is now being organised by the National War Memorial Health Foundation which will be open to entrants from all parts of the Union.

The bedspread will consist of 24 embroidered panels and each panel will incorporate the design of a South African flower. The South African flowers to be used will be designed by artists.

There will be £770 in prize money for this competition, the first prize being £150, two second prizes of £100 each, three third prizes of £50 each and eight fourth prizes of £25 each. The prize winning bedspread will be exhibited throughout the Union.

The convenor of the competition is Mrs. E. van Niekerk, 16 Morgan Road, Webber, Germiston, from whom designs and further details are available. The closing date will be in approximately one year's time.



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SHE WAS A GOOD GIRL.....

I GUESS, like me, you can remember when our whole town thinks very highly of her. She is so obviously a "good girl" and very lovely. Yes, and when the Big Shot from Nastyville comes with all his Stormjaers and tries to do her dirt the whole town rises to her defence. The Mayor and Councillors and the politicians make speeches about it and call on all the citizens to defend her. They tell everybody she is a nice girl, a credit to the town and if the Big Shot gets away with it nobody will be safe any more. It is up to everybody to do their best for her. Mr. Mayor, himself, said that "she is not a harlot to be picked up and cast aside by any Tom, Dick or Harry" or something like that.

The Big Shot and his Gang are tough and nobody wants to start anything with him. But something has to be done and the young fellows get together. A lot of chaps get hurt and some get killed, including the Big Shot, and the Gang take a trouncing they won't forget in a hurry. It's true that there are a few Hoodlums from our town who join in on the side of the Big Shot and his gang and shout from the side lines when they think he is winning. They also take a beating.

For a while everybody goes around saying "what a good girl she is and what a good job we have all done in saving her and ourselves from the Big Shot and his Gang" but after a little while we don't hear so much about it.

A little later we begin to hear rumours. Maybe she isn't such a "good girl"? Maybe the Big Shot and his Gang were right?

Strange, about this time the Hoodlums become Big Shots in our Town. Then I hear she IS a harlot, that she is ugly and never is as goodlooking as we thought and that in addition she is a "dirty agitator". I don't believe it and tell the guy who tells me so that he is lying in his teeth. He calls me a "dirty red" and says, "anybody who stands up for her is a sucker and a 'dirty red'."

Well, what do you know? In the Big Fight I risk my neck for that dame. I come out of it with only one leg. Now they tell me this!

For a while we still get a glimpse of the girl about the Town but soon the Big Shots run her out and nobody sees her any more.

The few glimpses I catch of her before they run her out leave me wondering. She still looks good to me. Even better and more attractive than before

the Big Fight. She doesn't look like a Troye Street Dame and as for being an agitator! Well, it could be. I am agitated. Anybody who sees her would be. But is that a bad thing?

I get the notion that maybe they are wrong. Anyway the Town doesn't seem the same without her. So I talk to my friends and some of the guys who were my buddies in the Big Fight and we think it is a good idea if she can come back.

We talk to the townfolk and then to the Big Shots about it. They tell us it is no dice. The Big Shots tell us if they let her loose in the town the "dirty reds" will soon be running the place. I am not convinced. I get the idea that maybe she has got something on them and they are scared of her.

By this time a lot of folk are worried about it. It looks as if the Big Shots are making themselves very unpopular. Then the Council of Big Shots pass a town ordinance which they tell us is going to run the "reds" out of town but which makes it an offence punishable with a "stretch in the cooler" for any one to know the dame, to speak up for her or to help her in any way. It gives power to one of the Big Shots to take it out on anybody who he thinks might be doing any one of which. No, he doesn't have to call in the majesty of the law, the beak and all his procedure. He can do it off his own bat and no questions asked! Well, this is a jolt. By this time I'm pretty certain that she is a "good girl" and that they are treating her rough.

The Big Shot, who has got all the muscles, takes a crack at some of the town boys but somehow he hasn't got enough punches. Now they tell me he is asking the Council for more. The Coun-

cil of Big Shots is talking about making it an offence for anybody to have known the dame or to have spoken well about her, or to have defended her in any way. It looks like a lot of folk are going to be in trouble.

Just about everybody who is not a Big Shot or a member of the Gang is in for it. Most of us take part in the Big Fight. We all think highly of her and say so. Most of us still like her and want her back in town.

I've got a feeling that its time we do something about these Big Shots and what they have done to her and what they are trying to do to us. There aren't so many of them but they run the town because they are organised in a big way. Man for man there are many more of us. If we get organised they don't have a chance.

She is a good girl, a swell dame, she can park her shoes under my bed any time. Now, they tell me, its not safe to mention her name. Well, I don't scare so easy. I'm going to holler it out loud . . . Democracy . . . Democracy . . . Democracy . . .

We've only got to win one fight and the slogan is ORGANISE! ORGANISE! ORGANISE!

If you want to help, write to the National Office, P.O. Box 4088, Johannesburg.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR SUBSCRIPTION? WHEN LAST DID YOU ENROL A NEW MEMBER? HOW LONG AGO IS IT SINCE YOU SENT IN A DONATION? DO YOU READ "FIGHTING TALK"? DO YOU LIKE IT? HAVE YOU ANY CRITICISM EITHER OF OUR JOURNAL OR OF LEGION POLICY? WRITE TO US. IN THE MEANTIME MAKE USE OF THE ATTACHED MEMBERSHIP FORM.

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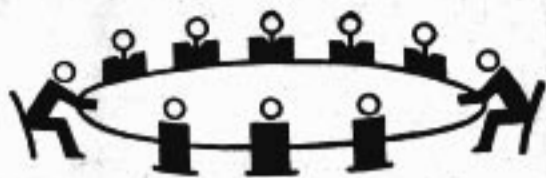
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● **Spotlight on**



A RANK AND FILE-ER

TOM CROSS is an ordinary, rank and file member of the Springbok Legion.

He is a little bigger in appearance than most of us, but then South Africans run to heftiness. His speech is that of an ordinary bloke who didn't go to Michaelhouse, and if Tom attends a meeting he would much rather sit quietly and listen than have to get to his feet and talk with a lot of people looking at him.

Tom was an air-mechanic for five years in the S.A.A.F. He saw service in the Western Desert for longer than he likes to remember, and he was only too pleased to be demobilised in 1945 and see his wife and twin sons who had been born while he was on active service. Tom is a Municipal bus driver and a very good one too — he has a very fine record for safe driving.

Now politics had never meant very much to Tom Cross. True, he had performed a political act when he had joined up to fight against fascism, but now the war was over Tom could concentrate on earning a living for his wife and family, and enjoy himself at the pictures or visiting his friends. When in 1948 elections came along, he turned out and did a job with other members of the Legion, because after all, there was no point in going through a lousy war to stop Fascism, and then have it happen here, but Tom didn't seriously believe that South Africans would elect a Government that had so openly advocated racialism and oppression.

Well, we know the results of that election. Throughout a shocked countryside many people were doing some heart-searching and asking "Did I do enough to stop this?" Tom was one such person, although he had a good deal less with which to reproach himself than most of his fellow-countrymen. Many of these people were asking "What can I do to remedy the situation?" Tom found his answer in the pages of "Fighting Talk".

"Get into the political party which suits you best. Influence its policy to a militant progressive line. Make the organisation in your area efficient."

Tom lives in the Parliamentary Constituency of Koedoespoort, which is a Nat. seat. The U.P. Branch in his area was at its weakest possible level, and you probably know just what that means. Tom went out and worked. He canvassed from door to door, night after night, and when he called a branch meeting in his house, over 80 people attended — they couldn't get them all in the house! Today Tom's branch is one of the strongest in the country. As much as Tom hates to make himself conspicuous, when he feels that it is necessary he advocates his point of view with vigour in both the General Council of his district, and at their executive committee meetings. And because Tom is such an honest worker in his Party, he is listened to with respect.

On one occasion, a member of the Party who must have been reading the wrong propaganda attacked the Legion. Tom's defence of his organisation was spirited and pointed enough to prevent a recurrence of that. "What I know I have learned from "Fighting Talk", he told them. "The Legion made me feel that I had to get out and work to stop the Nazis from ruining our country." Every time the Legion gives its members a job of work; fund-raising or sending telegrams to Parliament or collecting signatures on Petitions, Tom gets down to

it with a will; and don't forget that he lives in a Nat.-infested district.

Tom is just one Legionnaire. There are lots like him, ordinary down-to-earth men and women who have come to realise that they are the people who must save Democracy in South Africa. To those of you who have been hanging back, rationalising your fear and apathy with a variety of excuses which range from sick wives to overwork, the Tom Crosses will tell you "Forget your worries, don't be shy, and start working. Once you make a start, it's easy. If we aren't going to fight to make this a decent place for ourselves and our kids, who is?"

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E D B L O

The Day I Cried EUREKA!

WHEN Archimedes discovered some scientific principle which vitally affects our everyday life — I can't remember what it was — he leapt out of his bath and, covered in soapuds, yelled to the world "Eureka!" Well, that's how I felt last Wednesday, except that I wasn't in the bath and I don't know any Greek, but on Wednesday afternoon something hit me like a sledge hammer — can't think why it hadn't hit me before. You want to know what it was? O.K. sit back and I'll tell you.

For over two-and-a-half years I in common with a great number of other people have got used to the government, whom it has introduced some legislation or other, offensive to my political ideas. I soothed at the release of the war (criminals) voted at the Citizenship Bill; fumed at the Government's attitude to UNO; gasped at the Population Registration Act and generally went purple at a great many other retrogressive policies. I even had sufficient strength of indignation left to groan at the Suppression of Communism Bill.

POLITICAL WICKEDNESS.

But why didn't someone tell me the truth I discovered last Wednesday? The plain fact of the matter is this:

against the Suppression of Communism Act the whole world should have roared, open-throated and loud-mouthed, its savage indignation and protest because this enactment towers above everything else in its political wickedness. I am now completely convinced that among all the unpopular, distasteful and retrogressive legislation of the Nationalist government, this one act stands out luridly as the greatest danger to every civil liberty, to every democratic principle and to every sincere hope we have had of making South Africa a happy, decent, far-sighted and profitable place to live in. Let me here tell you that by the time

you have finished this article, you will have found that I haven't said one word about communism, as such. I'm not here concerned with the question as to whether communist doctrines should or should not be permitted full discussion and propagation. That is quite aside from the purpose I have. I am dealing with how the Act affects every single soul in this country, who has been no nearer communism than to have blushed a fiery red at some social injustices that affronted his ordinary decent conscience.

STRUGGLES OF THE UNDERDOG.

You will agree, I think, that the history of the ages reveals a steady struggle of the underdog for something better out of life, not merely a better material life but a life in which the total personality of the individual may achieve fulfilment. The slaves, the medieval serfs, the 19th century factory workers, the modern industrial workers have all striven for material improvements in their standard of living. They have struggled equally for the benefits of education and intellectual liberation. Men and women have fought and died for religious freedom; they have conscientiously objected to Noody warfare; they have endured persecution in their fight for the franchise.

This series of struggles forms the very pattern of history. But now, tell me, if you were to sift through all the rights that have been fought for and won — democratic rights, civil rights, human rights, call them what you will — could you pick out the fundamental rights? Out of interest — and to see how much you know about this subject — before reading any further write down on a scrap of paper what you consider to be the **FOUR MOST IMPORTANT RIGHTS**. Pause for a couple of minutes.

YOUR SELECTION.

What did you put down? religious freedom? freedom of speech? the right to use your own language? the right to employment and health? education? social security? the right to associate and organise? the right to fair and immediate trial in the courts? sanctity of your home? freedom of movement? the right to the protection of the police? the right to own property? to conduct a business for profit? the right to marry whom you choose? the right to stand for the council or parliament? the right to the vote? the right to strike? What did you put down?

This is what I put down:

A STRONG LETTER TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

22nd March, 1951.

The Minister of Education,
Cape Town.
Dear Sir,

BANNING OF SPRINGBOK LEGION ADULT EDUCATION PAMPHLETS FROM ADULT EDUCATION EXHIBIT AT RAND EASTER SHOW.

Shocked by the arbitrary and bureaucratic action of your official, Dr. Van Zyl in connection with the Springbok Legion Adult Education pamphlet, my National Executive Committee has no alternative but to protest in the strongest terms to you direct.

The Springbok Legion is affiliated to the Adult Education Council (Witwatersrand). We were a Foundation Member. Over the years we have made a big contribution in the field of Adult Education.

The Adult Education Council, acting in good faith, invited the Legion among its other affiliated bodies, to submit samples of Adult Education literature together with a pamphlet describing the organisation and the nature and extent of its adult education work, for exhibition and distribution at the Adult Education Stall in the Government Pavilions.

In good faith and at a cost of £30.0.0, the Springbok Legion produced a pamphlet which conformed to the specifications of the Council. This together with a sample pamphlet used by the Legion for Adult Education purposes was submitted to the Council.

Both of these were approved and accepted by the Council and contain no political or objectionable matter.

The arbitrary and bureaucratic action of Dr. Van Zyl in forbidding the display and distribution of these pamphlets on the grounds that the Legion has engaged in political activity has resulted in a financial loss to the Legion but even more important, his action has prejudiced certain vital principles.

In the first place, his action questions the right of organisations to associate with each other on common grounds for common purposes. Secondly, it prejudices the right of Free Speech and the dissemination of information and finally, it jeopardises the right of properly constituted organisations to carry out their lawful functions without bureaucratic, unreasonable and biased interference from minor or other Government officials.

My National Executive Committee would welcome an assurance from you that this action does not reflect Government policy and that the official responsible has been reprimanded for exceeding the limits of his duties.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

P. J. HODGSON,

National Secretary.

- i. freedom of speech (to hold and express an opinion; freedom of the press; freedom from censorship, etc.)
- ii. freedom of movement (within my own country; freedom to leave and return to my own country).
- iii. freedom of association (getting to-

gether in a friendly way with other people to discuss our common interests).

- iv. freedom to organise (forming a set-up with committees and branches in order to expound our views to other people and to have our views accepted by other organisations,

even by the government of the land.

Now we'd better have another pause to see if you will approve my list.

YOU COULDN'T MOVE A STEP

I have selected these four freedoms because they are absolutely essential to the STRUGGLE TO GAIN ALL THE OTHER LIBERTIES. Supposing, for instance, you didn't have the vote or you were being persecuted for your religious beliefs, or supposing you wanted to start a Social Security Organisation or you wanted to start a new political party—

YOU COULDN'T MOVE A STEP WITHOUT ALL FOUR OF THE FREEDOMS I HAVE LISTED ABOVE. Just think about it. If you were put in gaol every time you expressed to your friends and casual acquaintances your opinion that you should have the vote or that the government should provide social security; if you were confined to Wolmaransdorp and forbidden to move away from that area; if the police forbade your friends from entering your home when you intended to discuss certain ideas; or if the government said it would arrest anyone who wished to join your organisation, if the police raided your offices and seized your books and arrested your organisers, then it is obvious that you would get absolutely nowhere.

Your original wish to make things a bit better for yourself and the rest of the people would be stifled, frustrated, locked up in your mind, still-born.

Do you agree with me? Can you think of any means by which you could carry on a struggle for the preservation, extension, implementation of your honest, well-meaning ideas, if you are forbidden the rights to hold an opinion, to travel around freely, to associate with other people with similar ideas, to organise yourselves into a machine for making your views known and accepted by other people? Can you? I don't think so, because these **FOUR FREEDOMS** are basic to every struggle. Take away even one of them and you are stymied.

THE CONSEQUENCES.

Without these freedoms there would be no opposition political parties; no religious denomination except the govern-



Mr. CECIL WILLIAMS,
author of this article

ment-approved religion; no free trade unions, no ex-servicemen organisations; no Quakers; no Sons of England; National Council of Women; Boy Scouts; no Africans Taal en Kultuur Vereniging; no Institute of Race Relations; no Chambers of Commerce; no African National Congress; and so on.

Now, if you cast your mind back over the Nationalist government's legislation, I don't think you will find — however much you may dislike a lot of their legislation — I don't think you will find any enactment which deprives the citizen of the four basic freedoms. (The newspaper can be recalled at any time, thereby interfering with freedom of movement outside the Union. I can't think of any thing else.)

BUT, the Suppression of Communism Act gives the Government power TO TAKE AWAY ALL FOUR FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, not only from communists, but — so wide is the definition of a communist — from any and everybody.

I propose in the next issue to take the Act and show you point by point why it is the **REAL DANGER** to democracy in South Africa. (May I suggest you keep this article until the next issue arrives, so that you can refresh your memory, before going on with the analysis of the Act.)

In the meantime, the Amendments to this malicious Act are before Parliament. Write now to your M.P. or the Minister of Justice and demand the repeal of the law in its entirety, for as long as it remains the law of the land, so long are you and your children in danger, in **REAL DANGER**.

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Our 8th National Conference

ON April 7th and 8th the Springbok Legion is holding its annual National Conference. It will be our eighth conference. A great deal of work goes into the preparation of a conference of this nature and a lot of work flows from conference deliberations and decisions. It will be profitable to reflect a little on the value of such conferences.

The first point to emphasise is that the holding of a National Conference is the logical consequence of founding the organisation on a democratic basis. At National Conference the views of the organisation's rank and file members can be made known, discussed, sifted, amended and finally adopted or rejected. The most obscure member of a Johannesburg Group, for instance, may have brought forward an idea at his Group Meeting. Perhaps the Group accepted the proposal and forwarded it to the Johannesburg Branch Executive Committee, who in turn referred it for final decision to the National Conference. At any stage of the 'idea's' progress, of course, a majority of the members might have voted against the proposal and we would hear no more of it, until and unless the member feels so strongly about the matter that he brings it up again in his group.

It is easy to forget the democratic safeguards that operate automatically in an organisation such as ours. Every member has the right to air his views—indeed the Legion welcomes this sort of initiative. I can recall Conferences where a lone voice has had the effect of throwing new light on a subject and completely changing Conference voting. Phyllis Altman, for example, backed up by Greg Royle, in 1946 shocked Conference, just as it was on the verge of passing a resolution of congratulation to the Directorate of Demobilisation on a fine programme, well carried out. Phyllis Altman pointed out that such congratulations could not be endorsed by our African members, whose share in demobilisation benefits had been scanty and obtained only with great difficulty. Conference hastily added an amendment.

From experience I would say that one of the benefits of Conference springs from the Chairman's annual report. In the past we have always had the pleasure of listening to Jock Isacowitz's usually brilliant analysis of the general

political situation, his commendation of worthwhile Legion actions and his probing into deficiencies and weaknesses.

The National Secretary's report crystallises by means of statistics the multifarious activities of the year. Changes in the number of members on our records, changes in the number of branches, fluctuations in the financial position, the number of welfare cases handled all become more comprehensible, when reduced to bare figures. Problems of organisation and fund-raising find a new place here for detailed discussion.

Without doubt the most valuable part of Conference is the discussion and voting on resolutions. First of all, we have to remember, hours of discussion have already passed, as group members and branch committees have thrashed out the pros and cons of the resolutions. At Conference the best advocates put forward their proposals and are often opposed by equally able advocates and sometimes it is not the most able speaker, but the most sincere, who wins the day. Was it in 1946 or 1947 that we had that big debate on amendments to the Legion's 'Aims and Objects'? John O'Meara, I remember, moved the deletion of the phrase 'Liberty, Fraternity, Equality' and we all argued fiercely for a long time, till suddenly an African delegate proposed as a substitution 'The Four Freedoms'. We all gasped with delight and felt a little ashamed that we had overlooked the perfect amendment.

As resolution after resolution battle their difficult way along, we are all learning. The resolutions may deal with pensions or politics, psychiatric services or import permits. Our experts are on the job. How much we have learnt from Henry Pereira about the intricacies of letting control and rents acts. How much from Llewellyn Ncwana about the disabilities of African ex-servicemen. How valuable this expert knowledge is in helping us to make up our minds.

The resolutions are, of course, tremendously important in this respect — they represent the directives to the whole organisation for the activities of the ensuing year. The National Executive Committee sees in the resolutions the trend of policies that it must implement. Moreover, when voting is close on particular resolutions, the N.E.C. must remember the minority vote and frame its programme accordingly.

National Conference presents an opportunity to members through their delegates to ensure a selection of the most able bodies for election to the N.E.C. The outgoing members can be re-elected or thrown out and bright newcomers can be voted in. Here is the opportunity to express our confidence or lack of confidence in the National Chairman and National Secretary . . . valuable opportunities.

Finally, one of the most valuable features of Conference is the opportunity it presents for members from different parts of the country to get together, to get to know each other personally. And how often that personal contact has smoothed over hostilities, produced greater understanding and thereby greater co-operation and solidarity! Ask "Pop" Allen in Pietermaritzburg!

And so there comes another Conference in the year 1951. We shall meet in a political situation that holds great threats to Legionnaires, to our organisation, to all democrats. We shall have the opportunity to analyse and assess those threats: to gain confidence and courage from each other: to plan the expenditure of our manpower, our money and our idealist energies in the most gainful manner. We shall have the opportunity to ensure that the ex-servicemen and women in the Springbok Legion continue to make their maximum contribution to the preservation in South Africa of the very ideals which made us ex-volunteers.

THE BIG SQUEEZE

FOR a long time the Legion felt that ex-servicemen were able to stand on their own feet in the economic sphere. Most of them had settled into jobs or business, or were established in professions. But now that the full blast of rising costs is hitting S. Africa, it is apparent that ex-servicemen are still vulnerable.

The "Landlord's Charter" the Rents Amendment Act of 1950 has exposed many of us to rents rackets. Small firms paying fairly low rent in old buildings, find themselves ejected and faced with much higher rentals in new buildings. This has been enough to put many people out of business. Many ex-servicemen are affected, since they had to take what they could get during the post-war boom, often without a lease.

Small businessmen are being hard pressed because customers cannot afford to pay cash for their purchases. They go under in the face of competition from big companies which offer almost unlimited credit. The small master builder is finding it very difficult to finance his jobs, with increased costs and restricted credit, while the big construction companies are working flat out, on the luxury flats and offices which seem to be the main form of building today. When the steel shortage becomes more pronounced than it is now, the small timers will be the ones to suffer most.

The re-armament programmes are going to do terrible things to the cost of all essentials of life, and with the squeeze on small traders, I am willing to predict that South Africa and the Western countries will emerge from these years of rearmament (assuming there is no war) with monopoly capitalism entrenched to a degree never before seen. At the same time the workers will have been pushed back to pre-war levels of poverty and want — except that a wage of twenty or thirty pounds per week will represent the pre-war wage of five or six pounds.

The middle class, for the reasons outlined above stands to be squeezed to death, and early casualties are likely to be ex-servicemen who have had neither time nor opportunity to build up economic reserves.

It is the duty of the Legion, in terms of the "six points" to take action whenever and wherever possible to cushion the blows, and to ensure at least, that ex-servicemen are in no worse position than anyone else.

THE NATIVE BUILDING WORKERS BILL

When the Native Building Workers Bill was first published, the Legion made certain recommendations in the form of a memorandum. None of the fears that we expressed at that time has been eased in any way during this session of Parliament.

Furthermore, in August 1950, there appeared in Fighting Talk an article analysing the reasons for the constant delays in actively solving the non-European housing problem. Apart from these passive measures of protest the Legion has sat on bodies that have dealt with the problem from time to time, and has been the foremost in the demand for more houses for non-Europeans.

At this stage it is important to look at this Bill as dispassionately as possible (if that is at all possible with any Nationalist legislation). Our primary concern still remains this:-

"Build houses for non-Europeans now and build them fast."

With this in mind the idea of training vast numbers of skilled artisans has tremendous potentialities. For with a large body of trained personnel, it is possible that facilities can be created in order to increase the output in the mass production of new houses. But the problem is not solved by the organisational procedure laid down in the Bill. It was hoped that the definition of A Native Area in the original Bill would be made wide enough to allow full use of non-European artisans. This, however, is not the case. Although for instance, Sophiatown and Alexandria have been excluded from the definition on the grounds that they are to be moved in the near future, these areas are still a matter for Ministerial discretion. Furthermore, it is not clear whether Non-European artisans are to be allowed to do the "odd jobs" such as repairing, in these areas, since according to the Bill, no Non-European is allowed to work in any area except a proclaimed Native area.

Ultimately the whole conception of the Bill, is finally reduced to the real

cause of its initiation, viz., Apartheid. Whereas the principle of the Bill is sound, in the hands of this fanatical government, so concerned with protecting White civilisation, the Bill becomes another negative measure. To this must be added the complete lack of understanding on the part of the Government of any knowledge of fundamental economic laws. The prime purpose of this Bill is to stake out a preserve for white workers, in areas where the greatest building operations will take place.

No amount of appeasement of reactionary attitudes towards increased numbers of Non-European skilled workers will succeed in solving the problems of multi-racial societies, let alone solve the Non-European housing problem. It must be conceded that this problem is far too intricate and involved for this government to handle. For the primary issue of building houses for all sections of the population cannot be governed by an attitude as inconsequential and as vague as apartheid. It must be tackled on the basis of creating the greatest number of skilled and unskilled workers (or operators), to make use of all available materials, and the full use of mass production methods. The whole of the planning must come from a special centralised body, with full representation for Non-European and European trade unions.

Unless these methods are adopted, there can be little or no hope of solving this gigantic problem. The N.B.W.B. will however achieve nothing but a frustration of the already skilled Non-European worker, and merely entrench the white worker more securely for boom periods.

Finally we must reiterate our objection to the wide powers the Minister of Labour, like all Nationalist Ministers, have created for himself. It is our belief that this new step in government by proclamation will still further shrink the small essence of democracy present in this country.

Something different!

AT

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WHERE SMART MEN SHOP

Film Review

We Were Strangers

It is possible to divide historical films into two opposite categories: those which interpret political events as the outcome of a popular movement, and those which show history as the instrument of a great hero. Films about groups of ordinary people actively involved in significant events are rare in our cinemas. One has to go back to the war films, like "A Walk in the Sun" to recall a collective study of men in a crisis.

"We Were Strangers," which has excited much comment (and quite a lot of heated argument) in Legion circles, is such a film. The plot concerns the efforts of a group of revolutionaries to overthrow the Fascist Government of Cuba in 1933. The central episodes describe the digging of a tunnel to plant a bomb under the family vault of a leading politician and thus destroy the whole Cabinet.

The resultant tensions amongst the group, which comprises five men and a woman, are skilfully drawn. There is a tremendously effective scene in which the brutal, amorous chief visits the girl and drinks himself into a self-pitying, drunken, stupor. The terrible scenes in which the group dig through the "poor" graves are never allowed to get out of hand. The sequences showing the mental collapse of the intellectual and his attempt to betray the plot are finely done. But best of all is the superb control of the tension, scene after scene building steadily towards a climax, then smoothly transferring to a new mood and a new pattern. Director John Huston is a craftsman with wonderful control of his medium.

Performances are uniformly fine. John Garfield makes the reticent hero completely believable, Jennifer Jones speaks and moves convincingly, and Pedro Armendariz makes a full-blooded job of the police chief. Gilbert Roland as Guillermo, and David Bond as Ramon, the intellectual, play their spectacular roles brilliantly, but Roman Navarro overacts in his mercifully small role of the revolutionary leader.

One intelligent Legionnaire has criticised the plot for failing to resolve what he considers to be the major conflict, that between the group and their project. The reviewer feels that this conflict was resolved by the reaching of the spot beneath the tomb, and found the two

ONS MOET BETAAL VIR HULLE FOUTE

EEN van die uitstaande kenmerke van die Nasionale regering is hulle onvermoë om feite te begryp, of sal ons liever sê hulle onwilligheid om 'n feit te aanvaar wanneer dit nie strook met die beleid van die party nie, en aangesien feite so selde strook met daardie beleid, en indien dit nie sulke ernstige gevolge vir Suid-Afrika inhou nie, sou dit nogal amusant gewees het om die politieke manewales van daardie menere gade te slaan.

Pas 'n jaar of so gelede het mnr. Shoeman, die Nasionale Minister van Arbeid verklaar dat die Verenigde Party se staatsondersteunde immigrasie-beleid die Suid-Afrikaanse jongman die geleentheid ontnem om opgelei te word as vakman, en dit is dan ook as een van die redes genoem waarom die Nasionale party nie kon voortgaan met die V.P. se immigrasieplan nie.

Enkele dae gelede het dieselfde Minister beken dat Suid-Afrika gebreke gaan aan 'n ernstige tekort aan geskoolde vakmense. Hy het egter in gebreke gebly om by te voeg hoe hy die tekort gaan aanvul sonder om terug te val op die V.P. immigrasie-beleid of altans deel daarvan.

Weliswaar kan aangeneem word dat die Minister geen plan het nie, en die beleid van sy party verhoed hom om die voor die hand liggende oplossing te soek.

Die oplossing is tweeledig: Eerstens, 'n goed beplande staatsondersteunde immigrasiebeleid wat moet help om die tekort in alle vertakkinge van die nywerheid aan te vul. So 'n beleid sal ook help om die vrees kompleks wat daar by die blankes bestaan as 'n gevolg van die getalsverhouding tussen blank en nie-blank te kalmeer. Tweedens, gebruikmaking van die nie-blanke miljoene as

potensiële werk en koopkrag. So lank Suid-Afrika weier om hierdie bate te ontgin, so lank sal ons 'n agterlike en arm land bly. Dat 'n land se rykdom in sy werkkrag en koopkrag lê is tog immers 'n ekonomiese feit wat deur niemand weggeredeneer kan word nie, nie eers deur Minister Schoeman en sy regering nie.

Dit is essensieel vir ons toekomstige welvaart dat die nie-blanke opgelei moet word om sy deel by te dra in die Nywerheidsontwikkeling van Suid-Afrika, en dat hy besoldiging moet ontvang wat hom instaat sal stel om te koop wat hy produseer.

Ons herhaal wat ons by vorige geleenthede gesê het, nl. dat daar nie so iets as 'n natuurlike probleem bestaan nie, en dat die sogenaamde probleem geskep word deur blote vooroordeel.

Sodra die blanke ontslae raak van hierdie vooroordeel, en begin om die Natuur aan te neem vir wat hy werklik is, nl. die grootste bate wat enige land kan besit, sal ons begin om 'n welvarende land op te bou.

As ons egter weier om hierdie feit te aanvaar en die Nasionale party toelaat om ons te lei op hulle pad van reaksie, kan ons verwag dat ons sal betaal vir hulle, en ons eie, foute.

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ROUND-UP

by

VIC EDDY



A POPULAR FRONT?

AS the campaign against the Representation of Non-Europeans Bill gains momentum, it is becoming more and more obvious that Dr. Donges has bitten off more than even he can chew. What he and his colleagues have dreaded most seems to be happening. The non-Europeans, Indians, Coloureds and Natives, are achieving a measure of unity never before witnessed in this country. The demonstration on the Cape Town Parade on the 8th of this month showed the truth of this more clearly than any slogan or propaganda could indicate. According to the local press, eight thousand people took part, but all the eyewitnesses I have spoken to are confident that at least 20,000 people of all races turned out in a solid, defiant mass. One wonders what purpose the English press hoped to serve by minimising this mass meeting. Could it be that even the United Party is becoming embarrassed by the hornets' nest so effectively stirred up by the Nats? I earnestly hope that the U.P. will acknowledge the right of people to struggle against vicious legislation outside Parliament, as well as in.



DON'T LET'S BE BEASTLY

IT MUST BE horribly frustrating for a man like Dr. Malan, who, having pledged himself again and again on the side of Western civilisation, now finds himself being sharply criticised and even attacked on his colour policy (if one could call it that) by his best friends. One can understand his chagrin at the Gold Coast experiment in self-government, but one is completely at a loss to understand on what grounds the good doctor expects other countries to share his paranoid fear of any suggestion of independence for Africans. Even Mr. Patrick Gordon Walker, the ungrateful so-and-so, comes here, drinks our wine, eats our food, even listens to our Cabinet Ministers and then goes home to

England and criticises. I am afraid that Nationalism of the Malan-Havenga-Donges school is an ever-decreasing force. The more it shoots its mouth off, the more isolated it becomes.



A POINTER FOR Mr. SWART

IN the unlikely event of Mr. C. R. Swart having a heart, he might well take the Australian lesson to it. The Supreme Court in Australia, by a five-to-one majority, recently declared invalid an Act that sought to outlaw the Communist Party in that country. The Australian Act was not nearly as crude and as contemptuous of democratic rights as its South African counterpart, and yet an honoured panel of learned judges found it to be unconstitutional and unjust. As a legal man, Mr. Swart should take a pointer from other legal men, more learned and more qualified to speak than he.



O, COLUMBUS!

IF anything was needed to finalise my opinion as to the state of mind of the American Way of Life, if I may use a mixed metaphor, a recent news item in the *Star* certainly makes a brave attempt. The Italian film *Bicycle Thieves*, universally acclaimed as a masterpiece and to my mind one of the most magnificent films ever made, was banned in New York on the grounds that "it glorifies a thief". Give me an honest-to-goodness thief every time!

"WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR SISTER . . . ?"

ALL the arguments and excuses in favour of Apartheid and race discrimination generally were neatly summed up by a Negro delegate at a recent race relations conference, in the United States. He said: "I don't want to be your brother-in-law — I want to be your brother."

Attention All Ex-Service House Hunters

THE scheme whereby 90 per cent. Building Loans are made available in terms of the Housing (Emergency Powers) Act has been revised and such loans will be available to the public forthwith.

The scheme will be operated by approved Building Societies in conjunction with the National Housing and Planning Commission and is effective in all Provinces in South Africa with the exception of Natal, where a special scheme is operated by the Natal Housing Board. Prospective borrowers are advised to obtain full details from the Building Societies.

This type of loan is available to a person only for the erection of a new dwelling for his own occupation. Loans are confined to those persons whose income does not exceed £1,200 per annum and, in addition, who are not in possession of assets exceeding 40 per cent. of the total value of the land (together with any existing improvements) and the cost of the buildings to be erected.

The maximum loan available is £2,800 in the main centres and £2,400 in other centres, and the loan must not exceed 90 per cent. nor be less than 60 per cent. of the cost of the land and the dwelling to be erected thereon.

The loan is repayable over a maximum period of 30 years. The minimum monthly repayment will be at the rate of 10/2 per £100 borrowed, and includes interest at the rate of 4½ per cent. per annum. The monthly repayment however, must not exceed 25 per cent. of the monthly income of the borrower.

The applicant will be required to deposit with the Society the difference between the amount of the loan granted and the total estimated cost of the project, plus costs of transfer, costs of registration of the bond and an inspection fee of £10. If, however, any amount has already been paid by the borrower in respect of the purchase price of the land, this amount will be deducted from the deposit required.

This scheme has been initiated with

(Continued on next page)

BRANCH**ITEMS**

MEMBERS outside Johannesburg are always envious of the strength of its branch, but the necessary ingredients to a successful branch or group is essentially the same everywhere. It is not so much a large number of Legionnaires which matters, but the presence of just a few really keen pivotal figures.

Look at the Central Group. There have been times when circumstances have made it extremely difficult to keep the Group functioning, but Mackie and Henry Pereira have battled on manfully and triumphed over all their difficulties; at their last meeting they had a packed house to hear Dr. P. Tobias on racism and genetics. There is little doubt that had Mr. and Mrs. Pereira been living in Cape Town or East London their group would be just as long-lived.

Of course it is no easy matter to keep a Legion group together in many of the smaller towns. As a matter of fact Brakpan Branch have sent in a resolution for Conference urging greater organisational attention being paid to these towns. There is little doubt that this resolution will receive a lot of support from the other branches.

There is a lot of discussion in Johannesburg Branch circles on the advisability of devoting very much more energy to social and economic welfare. The number of ex-Servicemen seeking assistance in their matters is increasing, and most of us know only too well how completely out of hand the cost of living has become.

The Legion was recently responsible for the reinstatement in their homes of several ejected coloured ex-servicemen and their families. It was surprising to read in one of the local papers that the Mayor of Johannesburg was responsible. When Roy Cousins, travelling on a slow tram and by foot, arrived to tell the ex-servicemen of the results of his representations, he found the Mayor on the spot getting his photograph taken! The Town Clerk's Department had been extremely co-operative and the Mayor is a good

chap and was genuinely concerned, so we did not correct the report.

Roy Cousins, who is spending a lot of time on the Reef, reports that Legionnaires are doing wonderful work in the political parties. Rodney Hojem, who is leaving Vereeniging shortly, is the U.P. Secretary there, Mrs. Powers and all our other Brakpan members are very active indeed in the U.P., Mannie Baker, the Labour Councillor, is the present Mayor of Germiston.

This page could be filled with examples like this.

All of these people should be congratulated on their practical contributions to the Democratic cause. If there are any sluggards in our membership who have ignored our appeals to get into the parties and work, it's never too late to mend. *Do it now.*

EX-SOLDIERS HOUSING SCHEME

(Continued from previous page)

a view to assisting those persons to obtain homes who have been unable to arrange finance through the normal Building Society loans, which, in terms of the Building Societies' Act, cannot exceed 75 per cent. of the valuation of the property and in respect of which the repayments cannot extend beyond 30 years. It is anticipated that many people will take advantage of the scheme.

This Government Assisted Loan Scheme is obviously more advantageous than the Governor-General Fund's collateral security scheme and any ex-volunteer wishing to build a house should be referred to it.

No aid from the G.-G. Fund will in future be necessary (and, for that reason, will not be given) to the class of person covered by the Government Assisted Loan Scheme.

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