

# FIGHTING

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FEBRUARY, 1959

# TALK



## The changing face of Africa



'Theatre' on page 11.

### DIARY OF THE ACCRA CONFERENCE

By E. Mphahlele  
SPECIAL AFRICA REPORT

### Unity Against the Nationalists?

RUTH FOLEY  
of the Black Sash

\* \* \*

SPORT

SCIENCE

WRITING

THEATRE

ARTICLES BY EDWARD ROUX

LIONEL FORMAN

JENNY JOSEPH

# KING KONG KING KONG KING KONG

# FIGHTING TALK

A monthly journal for Democrats

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FEBRUARY, 1959

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### THE COVER:

"King Kong, King Kong, King Kong" — Nathan Mhiedle plays the star role of the boxer acclaimed by the crowds in his triumph, a legend of strength and power, sought after by newspapermen (Joe the reporter played by Victor Ndlazelwane of the Woody Woodpeckers) who tries to capture some of his magic for his public.

## Top of the List

**The New Face of Africa.** AFRICA is changing so rapidly that it has the mapmakers and historians, the politicians and the commentators badly winded and gasping. 1960 is to be the year of Great Decision in Africa. At least three countries are due to achieve independence: Nigeria, the Cameroons and Somaliland. Independence was not on the agenda in the Belgian Congo, the goose that lays the golden eggs for Belgium, until events in this central part of Africa in January rushed Belgium into announcing some steps towards self-government. **The Keys to the Safe.** Page 9.

**That Accra Conference.** Few momentous events on this continent and in the world have been so shabbily treated in South Africa's press which glossed over the facts and ferreted out so-called rivalries between Arab and Black Africa, Cairo and Accra, Cairo and Moscow. Ezekhiel (Zeke) Mphahlele was at the conference leading the five-man delegation of the African National Congress and his day-by-day diary describes the great continent-wide unity cemented at this conference and records with verve and colour the personalities, issues and debates at the conference. **Special Africa Report.** Pages 6-8.

**What Will Minister De Wet Nel do next?** Covered in confusion the Minister of Native Affairs had to back-pedal fast on his proposed ban on mixed gatherings in Johannesburg. He admitted when cornered that his notice went further than the professed aim of the ban. What will his next step be? **De Wet Nel's Ban: The Real Target.** Page 3.

**Anti-Nationalist Unity.** Any chance of unity among the democratic opposition to the Nationalists? Mrs. Ruth Foley of the Black Sash movement writes this month in the series exploring the chances of a closer common front. Earlier contributions were by Peter Rodda, Father Martin Jarrett-Kerr and Ben Turok. Page 5.

**The State Enters the Sports Field.** The newly formed South African Sports Association (SASA) is to work for the end of race discrimination in sport at a time when kites are being flown for direct intervention by the government with the setting up of a Sports Control Board. Page 15.

**Science Marches On.** A new feature by Dr. Edward Roux will summarise in popular language some of the ways in which the advance in scientific knowledge has influenced modern thinking. This month **The Expanding Universe.** Page 14.

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# De Wet Nel's Ban: THE REAL TARGET

Temporarily, but only temporarily, overshadowed by the Nationalist Party's 1959 Parliamentary programme to abolish African representation in Parliament, set up a phoney substitute in the form of Bantu Authorities, and introduce university apartheid is Minister De Wet Nel's plan to ban mixed gatherings in Johannesburg.

No one, probably not even the Minister, yet knows what the next step will be.

Under strong fire, the Minister retracted his original proclamation: its terms exceeded what he really wanted to achieve, he said.

It is debatable whether the Minister has power to impose a blanket ban on gatherings, even if he could slip out from behind the protective verbiage of his department and admit this is really what he wants.

**Next Steps?** Possibly he will try a new proclamation in terms of the Native Laws Amendment Act. He has threatened he will pilot yet another repressive measure through the House which will empower him to act alone and to sweep aside City Council opposition. Or, as the Sunday Nationalist newspaper "Dagbreek" suggested, he may be considering trying to copy the procedure of the Suppression of Communism Act and forbid certain individuals from attending any mixed gatherings.

Whatever he does next, the Minister has exposed himself as bumbling and inept and confused. Handling his first big issue since his succession to Dr. Verwoerd, Mr. De Wet Nel had to retreat in ignominy at the first shout of opposition and critical examination of his plan of attack.

It was a short lived attack by the Minister.

**December 12.** The Minister drops the bombshell to the City Council that he intends to ban all public gatherings in Johannesburg at which one or more Africans might be present. At the same time he supplies in a secret list, since revealed, the names of 13 European citizens who will be barred from attendance at all mixed gatherings . . . and here followed the statement that mixed parties at the homes of the 13 had been characterised by "excesses" . . . 'liquor had flown freely' . . . "and the results can be left to the imagination."

No one had any difficulty interpreting the Minister's proposed proclamation.

It would, in the words of „Die Vader-

land": outlaw "any gathering or meeting, including any social gathering in the urban area of Johannesburg" — except in a proclaimed African township — if it was attended by any African. "Only gatherings organised exclusively for church or other religious purposes, or a school, hospital or similar institution will fall outside the latest ban."

Clear enough. No African anywhere in the "white" areas of Johannesburg was to be seen in or near the presence of a white man, except as labourer and servant. And understandable enough too; for it has been the whole purpose of apartheid and of the Nationalist government to make the master-servant relationship the only relationship between South Africa's blacks and South Africa's whites.

But the Minister had already overreached himself.

The Act called for the consent of the local authority for any such ban and gave the council three weeks to lodge any objection, and for once, the Johannesburg City Council dug its heels in and refused to have De Wet Nel's "new order."

By January 5, cowed by the uproar the ban had caused from the time of its press publication on January 3, the Minister had issued a statement — in blind disregard of his own proclamation — that the ban was aimed exclusively at mixed drinking parties on thirteen specific premises.

January 7, badly cornered, the Minister threatened the Johannesburg Council over its failure to co-operate and said if it did not give its consent to the ban he would ask Parliament "to relieve the Council of its responsibilities" and "entrust the responsibility for action to the State alone."

## THE CASE FOR THE 13

The 13 individuals singled out by the Minister as scapegoats for the ban on mixed gatherings will present their case to the City Council in a memorandum. The Council should not agree to restrictions on the right of any individual to meet, talk to, or entertain the friends of his choice, they will argue. At least in the social field here are some bridges between Black and White that must be left standing.

The Minister was at this stage still insisting that the proposed notice was not all embracing. In it, he said "I gave a list of the stands and even the names of the owners, thus sufficiently indicating what my intention was."

But the Minister also said, "If the Council's law advisers had advised it correctly it would be quite clear that the prohibition of such gatherings on only the premises indicated would be quite ineffective unless the prohibition was applied to the whole city, (our emphasis) because the gatherings could simply be held on premises not mentioned in the proposed notice."

It is useless to try to square this straight admission of the blanket character of the ban with the brazen claim that it was aimed exclusively against thirteen organisers of "mixed drinking parties."

**January 16.** A deputation of Johannesburg Councillors was assured by the Minister he had not intended to prohibit or interfere with freedom of speech. And he made a public admission: "It is clear that the legal effect of the proposed notice was much wider than the limited purpose which I wished to attain."

\* \* \*

**No Slip-up!** What needs to be cleared up is not what the legal effect of the notice would have been, for that is clear; but what was the purpose the Minister wanted to attain?

Is it conceivable that a Ministerial instruction to his officials to stop "mixed drinking parties on thirteen specified premises" could have been understood by the official draftsmen of proclamations to mean a blanket ban on all mixed gatherings whatsoever in Johannesburg? Is it conceivable that even after the press and the City Council had drawn the Minister's attention to the sweeping nature of the ban, he could mistakenly have re-read the notice as banning "mixed drinking parties on thirteen specified premises", and stuck to that mistaken reading for a further two weeks? If this is the truth, then the Minister stands revealed as a dangerous incompetent, whose continuation in office is a menace to the country and its administration.

But there are further facts which point not to incompetency, but to a well-laid plot. The notice was sent to the City Council late in December, at a time when all local authorities are to be expected to be in recess; its reply had,

by law, to be given not later than January 2, although clearly there could be no life-and-death urgency in the matter since the Minister's own statements speak about the 'goings-on' at the thirteen premises being known to the authorities for a considerable time. Was this an attempt to let the Council's veto right go by default? Later there was a denial that the Council's reply had been received in good time, only to be followed — when the Council produced the post office receipt — by a feeble explanation that the reply had been buried 'accidentally' under a pile of correspondence on the Minister's desk.

And above all, there is the fact that never once, during the whole of this controversy, has the Minister met the criticisms of the draft notice with an answer; every criticism has been met with righteous anger and vituperation; the responsibility, we are assured, was that of the malicious "English press" — despite the fact that the true nature of the proclamation was first revealed by "Die Vaderland"; of the Council's incompetent law advisers; of the Council itself for its malicious publicising of a highly "confidential" matter, which was never intended to become public until the public was well and truly trussed, bound and gagged by the proclamation itself.

**Real Target.** Amongst the many things which the Nationalist government abhors about Johannesburg, it is difficult to imagine that "mixed drinking" on thirteen premises takes first place. Far more important — and far more horrific to Nationalist politicians as they have time and again made clear — is Johannesburg's steady development of inter-racial political action, or what the cabinet no doubt calls "mixed politics." There is now in every major city in the Union one or more groups of Europeans who ally themselves with the cause of African emancipation. But Johannesburg has been in this, as in so many other radical respects, the storm centre of the Union. It was in Johannesburg that the Freedom Charter was adopted; here that a vigorous multi-racial committee emerged to fight the Western Areas Removal scheme; here that the White population came forward to aid the Alexandra bus boycott; here that the Mayor over-rode police objections to meet a mass deputation of permit protesters from the Western Areas. It is here too that the White limb of the Congress Alliance, the Congress of Democrats, has its headquarters and its main

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# Crisis in the Universities

Eleven years ago, the then Prime Minister of the Union, Dr. D. F. Malan, described the position at the "open" universities as "intolerable", and said that steps would be taken to alter the status quo. Ever since then, the students at the Universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand have been fighting against the introduction of apartheid at two of the few remaining multi-racial meeting grounds in our country. At the University of the Witwatersrand, the student body, its elected representatives on the Students' Representative Council, as well as the University authorities, have consistently taken a strong stand on the question of Academic Freedom. They hold that the only equitable and just system of university education is one which opens its doors to students on the basis of academic merit alone, irrespective of race, creed or colour.

**New Name.** Dr. Verwoerd has other notions of so-called African development towards self-government and, significantly the University apartheid measure has had its name changed from the "Separate Universities Bill" to the "Extension of University Education Bill."

What educational paradise is there in store for Non-Europeans?

The Inter-Departmental Report on the financial implications of the establishment of separate University Colleges visualised the building of three "Tribal" Colleges for 945 students. That figure, however, includes 499 external students and also 115 medical students. We thus have the Government generously building three Universities for a total of 331 students — a ludicrous figure.

Examine now the courses offered at these State Colleges. The United States Supreme Court ruled against "separate but equal" institutions as implying discrimination. The South African "equal" is less subtle. It discriminates openly, and offers the Non-White an inferior, fettered education. The establishment of faculties of Engineering, Dentistry, Architecture and Law at the "Bantu" institutions is extremely problematical. The choice of even Arts subjects is restricted. Africans may not study Music or Commercial Subjects; Indian and Coloured Students may not take Political Science, Sociology or Ethnology.

The finances of the Tribal Colleges are also totally inadequate. Their running

costs are estimated at £71,186 in the tenth academic year. The figure for the University College of Ghana after the same period was £676,000.

Non-European students will be forced into isolated and narrow centres of indoctrination under the strictest Ministerial control. A lecturer at such a University, to quote the evidence of the Wits S.R.C. to the Commission on the Separate Universities Bill, "must be unmarried, prepared to live in cultural or intellectual isolation, be underpaid, have no time for research, and forego his right to speak the truth as he sees it." The last statement is implied from Chapter II of the Bill which contains 17 categories of "misconduct" leading to dismissal, including the criticism of any Government Department.

**Weight of Evidence Ignored.** All the above objections to the proposed University Colleges were pointed out to the Commission on the Bill. Yet, in its majority report, the Commission not only completely ignored the vast weight of evidence against the establishment of the Colleges, but also made recommendations unprecedented in the history of university education and administration. The "Conscience" clause, guaranteeing religious freedom, was deleted from the "Extension of University Education Bill." The new "universities" must provide a proper religious training, says the Commission, and of course the religious suitability of a lecturer is to be determined by the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development. The Councils and Senates of the Colleges are to be White bodies, as "mixed" bodies would lead to racial friction.

**Stave off the Crisis.** In a few weeks' time, when the Extension of University Education Bill again comes before Parliament, the crisis of the Universities will be at hand. For five years the demonstrations of the students and the support of the public have staved off the introduction of apartheid at U.C.T. and Wits and the taking over of Fort Hare by the Government. During this time about 4,500 students have had a true University education. It is possible that with the concerted opposition of the students federated into the National Union of South African Students, the public of South Africa and international academic and political bodies, the fight may again be successful.

S. J. BASTOMSKY

**BLACK SASH  
VIEW**

**WHAT PRICE UNITY?**

Unification of the various liberally-minded political groups in South Africa is frequently advocated. Notwithstanding the many obvious advantages of solidarity I believe it is extremely doubtful whether the results of such an amalgamation would be a valuable factor in South African politics. I do not think the concerted efforts of one large group would surpass the contributions towards the welfare of South Africa so far made by individual groups.

In a recent article Owen Vine conjures up a depressing picture of the juggernaut of the Nationalist Party rolling relentlessly onward, undeterred and undismayed by sporadic raids made by scattered and puny bands of opposing elements. He deplures the time, energy and money which, in his opinion, is thus wasted.

Mr. Vine's moving plea is that the voice of liberalism should be more plainly heard. This, I feel sure, is the ardent wish of all who cherish the cause of freedom and progress in South Africa.

**Juggernaut Rolls On**

It is, however, not easy to see how solidarity or even weight of numbers would make any great impression upon either the electorate or upon the Government. It is difficult, in fact, to imagine any political alignment which would make a perceptible inroad on the complacency of the present government. A party which is completely indifferent to the fact that it is opposed by more than half the electorate and which blandly ignores the political existence of millions of Non-Whites is not likely to be perturbed by a coalition of liberal elements. The juggernaut does not roll on because opposition is ineffectual; it rolls on because the South African system of delimitation has made its present power virtually impregnable.

**Small Groups, Rather Than Large**

Because the South African electorate is by nature conservative

and because both major political parties foster conservatism the voice of liberalism has never been welcomed in South African politics. The climate of opinion indeed, is such that in fifty years of Union there has been a very marked decline rather than an advance in governmental policies. I believe that small groups inspired by deep convictions are far more likely to affect a "change of heart" in our voters than any large organisation could do.

Deep conviction is the keynote of qualification for membership of nearly every one of the groups mentioned by Mr. Vine. It does require extraordinary devotion for members of a movement to continue undaunted in the face of insuperable difficulties. It also requires faith, supported by determination and dynamic energy.

These qualities would be missing, I feel sure, from the "make-up" of an organisation composed of such widely differing organisations as the Liberal Party, the Congress of Democrats, The Progressive Association, U.N.E.S.S.A., the Institute of Race Relations and the Black Sash.

It is an almost impossible task to unify movements whose "end" objects are not the same, because without unity of purpose complications arise at every step. The Black Sash, for instance, could never concur in any step based on

the theory that the end justifies the means; some, at least, of the other groups, we believe, accept that expediency is inevitable in politics.

**Impossible to Unite**

The Black Sash would in fact find it impossible to unite with any of these groups. The wide affiliations of the Institute of Race Relations would preclude both that organisation and ours from taking such a step; the Liberal Party and the Progressive Association are ruled out because the Black Sash is a non-party movement. The very name of U.N.E.S.S.A. would prevent its union with bodies whose aim it is to promote unity between Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking South Africans; the Congress of Democrats has views and undertakes activities which do not conform with the constitution of the Black Sash.

In the past the Black Sash has happily and successfully co-operated with other groups on specific issues. In opposition to unjust and immoral legislation we welcome united endeavours, we believe there is much to be gained by frequent and free exchanges of views and ideas and we look forward with confidence to the growing strength of what we believe to be not so much the liberal view in South Africa, but of sane and enlightened policies.

RUTH FOLEY.

**The Liberal Dilemma**

**THE PATON WAY**

Mr. Paton, National President of the Liberal Party, has done his party a great service with this first really comprehensive statement on what is meant by 'liberalism' and on Liberal Party policy. **Hope for South Africa.** Alan Paton.

Although written primarily for overseas readers, the book will bring greater clarity to the Liberal Party itself (for inconsistency among the membership remains a weakness of the Party) and will also bring about greater confidence in the Party in Congress circles. Mr. Pat-

on himself emerges as a figure of some stature and one who will surely play an important part in bringing about the "common front" that he so earnestly advocates.

The book opens with a short history of South Africa as background for the overseas reader. Of interest here is the way Mr. Paton traces current white prejudices to their historical roots. He shows that Dr. Verwoerd's policies spring from events deep in the history

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# ACCRA CONFERENCE DIARY

By EZEKIEL MPHAHLELE

**Monday 8.** Most delegates arrived during the week-end. Several notable people. Friday 5 I met my old friend, Ntsu Mokhehle, president of Basutoland National Congress, Mrs. Mary Louise Hooper, old "patron" of Dönges's. Also Roy Mdudu, teaching in Accra who had consented to help us. Three Basuto also teaching in Accra agreed to serve on Mokhehle's delegation after the president had decided that as we were hoping to bring the ANC delegation up to four, he might as well use the available manpower to form a self-contained Basutoland delegation. Mohan Govan, lecturer in Nigeria, arrived and said that he had been asked by the Indian Congress to represent them. I was asked by the ANC and the Basutoland members to head the ANC delegation. The Tanganyika delegates had told us Alfred Hutchinson had been released and was waiting to be picked up by plane: we should thus be a complete delegation of 5.

## All Africa In A Room

**Saturday morning** heads of delegations met in the Prime Minister's office at Ministry of External Affairs, under chairmanship of Hon. Kojo Botsiu, Ghana's Minister of External Affairs and leader of Convention People's Party delegation. How awe-inspiring to see the whole of Africa contained in that room — from Algeria, Tunisia, United Arab Republic in the north to the South African sub-continent, from Somaliland and Kenya to the Congo. Sudan and Libya were the only countries not represented. I was put on the Steering Committee, among men from Kenya, U.A.R., Algeria, Tunisia, Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroons and other French territories. Here I struck up friendship with Dr. Fuad Galal, U.A.R. delegate and Dr. Fanoh Omar, Algerian delegate stationed in Tunisia.

Let me bring you back to the conference this morning. The Community Centre and the terraces flanking it are choc-a-bloc. It is a hot morning. There is an army of local and overseas newspapermen and photographers. Heads of delegations are on the platform facing the large audience. While we are waiting for the Ghana Premier's arrival I have time to look at the slogans on the walls: like Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's "We prefer independence

with danger to servitude in tranquility" and President Sekou Toure's "We prefer independence in poverty to servitude with plenty." Says a Cabinet Minister of Nigeria's Western Region government which has been highly critical of Ghana lately: "These are the sort of words that breed so much trouble — independence with danger! "Depends on the meaning one reads into the slogan, doesn't it?" I say.

## The Face of Ghana

**Ten-thirty.** Prime Minister arrives, accompanied by his Finance Minister, the Hon. K. Gbedema; his skittish-looking Minister of Communications, the Hon. Krobo Edusei; his External Affairs Minister, the Hon. Kojo Botsiu, and others. Youthful Mr. Tom Mboya, Kenya's strong man and chairman of the conference introduces Premier and gives his remarks on the significance of the conference. Dr. Nkrumah spots the Tunisian ambassador in London next to me. What an electric smile of recognition as the Premier waves his hand. So spontaneous. As Tom Mboya later ushers him on to the rostrum, with his arm round the Premier while they whisper to each other, I realise all the more that this is Africa; an Africa with a totally different sense of convention from that of the West. All during the speech the feeling of self-confidence that Dr. Nkrumah inspires does not escape one. No doubt, this man has an iron grip on Ghana, but not in the way some of the overseas press would like the world to understand. I look at Gbedema, Botsiu, Ghana's Special Envoy to Guinea and am struck by the same self-confident and bold, dignified facial features that characterise the Ghanaian of today. At close quarters you find it isn't conceit: it's something beautiful against the background of colonialism and all the servility it demands. This whole imposing front rank is offset by the picture of some college boy-looking, fidgety, skittish and stubby person opposite me: the figure of Mr. Krobo Edusei. He looks the very personification of a huge, tragic joke.

The Prime Minister says we should take courage from the achievements of Ghana in the fight for freedom. He hopes that colonialism will yet be overcome by non-violent means. His is a

metallic voice moving on with restrained impetuosity as he warns the imperial powers to pack up voluntarily rather than be forced out.

## Will Hutchinson Come?

**AFTERNOON:** Committees mobilise themselves to prepare for the following afternoon's work. There are 5 committees: 1. Colonialism and Imperialism in Africa; 2. Racism and Discriminatory laws and practices: land, franchise, Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations in relation to this; 3. Tribalism and religious separatism, traditional institutions under colonial rule and a free democratic society; 4. Adjustment of existing boundaries, amalgamation or federation or confederation of state groupings into an ultimate Pan-African Commonwealth of free independent states of Africa; and 5. Setting up of Permanent Organisation to pursue resolutions of conference etc. The Steering Committee has made me convenor of Committee 2. It is envisaged an organisation with the full delegation of 5 will be represented on each of the committees. We put Mohan Govan on Committee 6; Mrs. Hooper and I go on No. 2; Roy Mdudu goes on No. 1. We decide committees 3 and 4 do not affect us much, and Ntsu Mokhehle, himself on No. 5, promises that his team will keep us informed about these two committees. We're wondering if Hutchinson will make it.

## 'Scram Out of Africa'

**Tuesday 9.** Plenary session in morning. Tom Mboya gives his address. "We are determined to free Africa, whether the colonial powers like it or not. What we are fighting for is nothing revolutionary: it was endorsed by the colonial powers as part of the United Nations Charter of Human Rights. Although we believe in non-violence, we should not be provoked too far." He says time has come when colonial powers must scram out of Africa, 72 years after they sat in Berlin to plan their scramble for Africa. Mboya heads the Kenya Federation of Labour and is also in the Legislature. I'm told he's fond of good clothes, looks it too. Has ascetic habits. A veritable product of colonialism, where trade unionism and politics are inseparable.

When peace comes to Kenya, I wonder whether this 29-year-old Oxford-trained protege of Nkrumah will emerge as a politician or labour organiser.

**Words A Luxury**

Heads of delegations begin their addresses. There are about 50 delegations, and it is hoped that in three days at least two-thirds will be able to speak, for 10 minutes each. Dr. Fouad Galal (U.A.R.) comes forward. We have become friends since the first meeting of heads of delegations, when he successfully urged the deletion from the provisional agenda of the item binding the conference to formulate strategy on the basis of Gandhian passive resistance for the overthrow of colonialism. It was agreed that it was not the responsibility of the conference to impose any method of struggle on any liberatory organisation. Dr. Galal is a stocky Egyptian with a slow but vigorous manner about him. He has a study group type of analytical mind. Already there is gossip outside conference that Cairo and Moscow want to take over the conference. I can't see it that way and I can't detect the cause for this alarm beyond a neurotic "bloc attitude" that always vitiates certain people's dealings with others.

Dr. Fanoh Omar of Algeria is certainly the highlight of the session. He does not mince words—what FLN man can afford the luxury anyway? Algerians have no other recourse but fight back, he says. And the FLN means to go through with it. In staccato French he carries his audience to the horrible scene of French atrocities on Algerians. The results of the French referendum, he says, were faked in part, and at best did not reflect the true majority opinion of Algeria. Outside the conference walls Dr. Omar is very tense and grave. He gets the loudest and longest ovation of all the speakers.

I make my speech for the ANC. As I tell the story of the women's travails and struggles several people wipe tears from their eyes and many more are visibly outraged. Guinea and Algeria present a clear and definite case. Of course, the Trusteeship territories of the Cameroons and Togoland too. It soon becomes evident that the delegations from the French colonies are represented by "minority" parties who lost the referendum to the yes-men. They are thoroughly bitter, but they disappoint me as political debaters. They beat the air about them, telling the audience that France should be "asked" to do this and

that. In all this anti-colonialism talk I find it difficult to see what they suggest a Pan-African movement should do for their countries now committed to the French Community.

The Liberian delegation drags the tone down when its leader says it is evident that the conference wants to pull independent states like his into violence and thus interfere with the sovereignty of such states. The delegation of the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons — Dr. Azikiwe's party — walks out in disgust and protest.

Alfred Hutchinson stalks up the aisle, six feet of him, just like one of those outlaws on the screen who come to tame and civilise a noisy, lawless town of the Wild West. I rush from the platform to embrace him, beside myself with excitement. Mboya introduces him to the conference amidst loud applause. I miss the rest of the speeches because I'm absorbed in Hutch's tale of escape.

**Aliens, Exiles and Leaders**

Afternoon. Committees get down to serious work. I'm elected chairman of Committee 2. Dr. Fanoh Omar is among us. So are Dr. Koinange of Kenya; Dr. Aklilu Habte of Ethiopia university college; Dr. B. N. Kununka of Uganda; K. Kaunda, who has broken away from Harry Nkumbula's Northern Rhodesia ANC. What has happened to Nkumbula? I keep asking myself. Ever since I met him over the week-end, he has been looking dazed most of the time. What's happened since the great days when his Congress led the harassing boycott of European shops in Northern Rhodesia and gave the Copperbelt bosses something to think about? And now at this conference he looks a complete outsider, disgruntled too. Just like Dr. Banda of Nyasaland. Ironically, Dr. Banda looks to me like a fellow who has come out of exile in his country and has come back home in an alien country. Against these two enigmas, the man Kaunda strikes me as a clear-headed and persistent person in search of a more popular cause to present him to a wider audience. It will yet come, I'm sure, if Nkumbula is as burnt up as I think he is. Dr. Habte of Ethiopia tells me that Vusumzi Make is happily settled in Adids Abeba (he tells me it's wrongly spelt by geographers) and they are doing everything to place him in a suitable job. I'm elated at the news and a Sunday comes back vividly to my mind when Vusi and Joe Molefi saved me from the clutches of late Bishop Sims who was about to bash my head with an iron bar, during the

Evaton riots. I was doing a story for Drum on the riots. We listen to reports about race discrimination from Kenya, Central African Federation, Belgian Congo, Algeria and South Africa. What can a Pan-African movement do in this situation? I present a working paper on South Africa.

Wednesday 10. The morning has a haze reminiscent of late autumn in South Africa. Plenary session. Speakers this morning include those from Zanzibar, French Cameroons, Tunisia, United Party Opposition in Ghana, and the Rev. Michael Scott (51) looks positively older than I last saw him during the "Tobruk" days at Orlando. But I think also he looks much steadier and more sure of himself, much less lonely. He is greatly honoured with a loud applause: yes, who doesn't know this man Scott? Dr. G. Kiano of Kenya comes up. He is uncompromising and says concepts of multi-racial society, apartheid, Bantustan are traps laid by the White man. Makes me realise all the more how difficult it is to tell the colonial African, who thinks of his problem in the simplest terms of Black versus White, about our fight in South Africa to set up a multi-racial community where all people shall govern on a basis of equality and where all people shall share the land. He cannot but think of South African Whites as aliens who must quit. And then we have to listen to the vapourings and whinings of men like Mr. Eric Louw who tell everybody that we are inspired by Russia and the independent African states, states the mere existence of which, as nationalist countries, is an expression of the "quit Africa" slogan. During Dr. Kiano's speech Kenyans rise and display banners which scream out, **Free Jomo Kenyatta now!**

**Mouthpiece of Africa**

Afternoon. Committee work. We hear that argument is raging in Committee 1 on whether violence or passive resistance should be resorted to in the fight against colonialism. Committee 5 is being chaired by a strong and level-headed man, Chief F. R. A. Williams, Minister of Justice and Attorney-General in the Western Region, Nigeria, who is to present a draft of a constitution for a Permanent Secretariat to pursue the resolutions of the conference. This is to be the mouthpiece of African states to the outside world and is to finance and coordinate liberatory projects. Incidentally, I have also in my committee Mr. Alfred Rewane, political secretary to Obafemi Awolowo, Premier of the West-

## SPECIAL AFRICA REPORT

ern Region, Nigeria. He is a lawyer and has special knowledge about the United Nations Charter. Later in the afternoon I meet Mrs. Paul Robeson — a most charming woman with a brilliant intellect. Her smile and conversational manner fill you with a warmth you can't forget. We go to a children's books exhibition together organised by a Ghanaian poetess, Efua Morgue. I tell Mrs. Robeson how we still remember her husband's support during the hectic days of the Defiance Campaign.

**Thursday 11.** A bright morning. I have been invited to a Press conference by Aliou Diop, African editor of *Présence Africaine*, a literary and cultural review in Paris. His Society of African Culture is very much interested in the conference. He has asked me to give a talk before the Press on the significance of a conference like this in relation to Negro writers in Africa. He announces the congress of Negro writers to be held next April in Rome. Back to the conference hall. Mrs. Du Bois, wife of the famous ninety-year-old Negro historian, reads her husband's message. He says in his typical forthright manner that Africa must seek an alignment with the East rather than with the corrupt West.

### On The Use of Violence

**Afternoon.** Committees work on resolutions. We have got through ours on economic sanctions and boycott of South African goods by independent states; the formation of a bureau of information by the Permanent Secretariat to be formed, such bureau to seek to strengthen and promote the interests of the existing African Bureau in London; the withholding of mine labour by Nyasaland and the Rhodesias for South Africa, and economic aid sought by these countries for projects that will divert the labour force. A preamble has now been adopted by all committees which states inter alia that the conference supports organisations or peoples who have recourse to non-violent and constitutional means of attaining freedom, but supports no less those who, because constitutional channels are closed to them, feel compelled to retaliate against those who use violence on them. A resolution to dissolve the Central African Federation has also gone through.

### We Talk to Nkrumah

**Friday 12.** The Prime Minister has been inviting various delegations for a chat in his office. This morning his adviser on African affairs, Mr. George Padmore,

springs a surprise on the South African delegation. Just when Hutchinson, Mokhehle and Mrs. Hooper are not about, because starting time has been shifted on to 11 a.m. Mr. Padmore rounds up Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Duncan and Mr. Jordan Ngubane of the Liberal Party who are on the spot as well as Michael Scott (representing South West Africa) and me. A most interesting and fruitful interview.

In committee as in plenary sessions I have seen something of the meaning of French assimilation politics. French West and Equatorial Africa do not seem to have produced many politicians of the stamp of Dr. Felix Moumie, Cameroonian now in exile in Cairo. Those in France's parliament are assimilated gentlemen who couldn't resist the lure of Paris lights. Those who revolt against the French community are but new in the game, untrained, noisy, prone to cavil about procedure, with something of the stiffnecked and severe attitude of a fellow who has just discovered a cause to fight for. Condemnation of South Africa's racial policy has come from Ghana, Nigeria, Ethiopia, East and Central Africa. A pamphlet has been passed round giving an account of the ghastly conditions in which Africans live in Angola, and a message has sneaked out of the country to the conference. Even Belgian Congo has made herself heard.

### Winding Up

**Afternoon.** Heads of delegations meet to consider resolutions from all committees. All the above resolutions from our committee are passed. From other committees come the following: independent states to form a freedom army; a human rights committee of the conference to be formed to examine complaints of abuse of human rights in every part of Africa and take appropriate steps; rejection of plan to partition South West Africa or to incorporate into South Africa's apartheid system any African land or people on its borders; refusal to recognise Portugal's claim that its colonies are part of Metropolitan Portugal; condemnation of proposed nuclear tests in the Sahara and determination to resist the plan; to work towards a commonwealth of African states; setting up of a Permanent Secretariat to operate from Accra. There shall be a permanent organisation called the All-African People's Conference, delegation to which will be fixed later, each delegation or member organisation to pay £10 a year. The Conference to have a Permanent Secretariat and to establish and maintain sub-sec-

retariats and agencies in various parts of Africa. There will be a Secretary-General, to hold office for 3 years subject to efficiency and chance of re-appointment. Conference to meet once ever year. Every year a Steering Committee to be elected by conference, which committee shall appoint a Working Committee to work with Secretariat. Steering Committee formed at last conference to meet in June 1959 at Cairo, and the committee elected each year will meet in June the next year and so on. Work continues until 3 a.m. Saturday.

**Saturday 13.** Full delegations confirm resolutions as above. Tom Mboya gives closing remarks. Dr. Nkrumah is on the platform. The entertainment chief asks us to sing *Nkosi Sikelel'i Afrika* and *Morena Boloka Sechaba*. Hutchinson, Mrs. Hooper, Mdudu and another South African teaching in Accra, Mr. Michael Scott and I get on to the stage. I explain the reason for our thumb raising, pointing to the large map of Africa drawn on the wall, and ask the audience to respond "Mayibuye!" to "Afrika!" After the anthems, which obviously inspired the big crowd, Dr. Nkrumah gave us his warmest acknowledgement, shaking my hand vigorously. He gives his closing speech.

### Setting the World Rocking

Already this conference has set the outside world rocking. When frightened politicians and an uneasy Press that is the tool of big money in Africa say derogatory and even hostile things about us simply because we want to determine our own destiny, it only serves to drive us into a shell of exclusiveness, even where, as in the case of a South African, we had begun to identify our future with that of the White man. The angry mood of the conference and the tongue-in-the-cheek talk of passive resistance or non-violence gave me this one grave thought: if the White ruling class in South Africa and their voting cattle continue, in the face of such conferences, to reinforce their defense-mechanism instead of overhauling their sense of values completely, they are going to have to face a fire that will be continually fanned by continent-wide anti-white hostility. It will be a source of inspiration they will not be able to control. This has been said several times before, but the context has realities for us it did not have before — and ugly realities at that.



# THE KEYS TO THE SAFE

In a previous imperial age revolts were allowed to come to a head and then crushed mercilessly. Nowadays the metropolitan countries have learnt that with old age setting in they are not as strong as they used to be and that it is wiser to try to keep control of the keys to the safe by promising to give the colonial leaders duplicate keys to the outhouses.

Nigeria, preparing for her first free national election, and Basutoland, celebrating the winning of a key to the front gate, were minor manifestations of this. Congo events were more dramatic.

## ● Belgian Congo

### Too Little, Too Late

Mayor Diomi of the Ngiri-Ngiri suburb of Leopoldville in the Belgian Congo has the distinction of being the first delegate to the Pan-Africa Conference in Ghana to land in jail for attempting to put into operation the resolutions adopted there. No doubt he will not be the last.

Very soon after the cell door clanged shut on him, it became clear that Diomi would not be locked up for long, and that very soon anxious Belgians would be negotiating with Congo leaders in an attempt to put into effect the new constitution which the Belgians had been preparing for just such a situation. The Congo had taken a step nearer to freedom.

Caught unawares were the Belgians.

The January upheavals in the Congo were totally unexpected by the colonial power which has smugly congratulated itself on an administration that, after the Portuguese territories, has ruled over the "most dormant part of Africa." Belgians were confident this set-up was safe for several decades more and had confidently started building a new palace for the Governor-General.

If the Belgians were oblivious to the simmerings in the Congo others were not nearly so. A small New York newsletter edited by Keith Irvine wrote fully a month before the trouble: "The Cry of Independence is raised in the Congo" and reported the opening of a new chapter symbolised by the petition presented to the Minister of the Congo by African leaders who later formed the first African political party in the Congo. Called the Congo National Movement its aims

are to "carry out the political education of the Congolese, to train leaders, to obtain the fundamental freedoms guaranteed by the U.N. Charter, and to free the Congo from imperialist colonialism with a view to obtaining through negotiation, and after a reasonable time, the independence of the Congo."

The Congo National Movement was formed just in time to send a delegate to Accra and was about to make its bow on the political scene against the background of absolute rule from Brussels relieved only last year by provision for very limited consultation with Africans in the three main cities; Leopoldville, Elizabethville and Jadotville.

Important as a background factor to the disturbances was the economic depression felt by the Congo in recent months. Copper prices have dropped and the Congo, the world's largest exporter of industrial diamonds, is worried about reports of strong competition from American synthetic industrial diamonds and new Soviet discoveries. There are reported to be 45,000 Africans unemployed in Leopoldville alone. (Pop.: 400,000).

What is known of the story of the outbreak of the January troubles strikes a sharp parallel with the sparking off of such disturbances in other parts of the continent. A police detachment interfered with a meeting in a YMCA hall of the Abako association (an organisation of the important Bakongo tribespeople). Despite appeals from the African mayor Pinzi (now behind bars) the crowd turned on police cars, police firing opened up and in little time the trouble was on. Wild rumours raced through the city that all 11 White men were in danger and armed White Vigilante bands and police and army sent punitive patrols into the African areas, even when they were quiet. Figures of dead and injured are still in dispute.

The disturbances prompted the Belgians to hurry forward with plans for a "skeleton" chamber of representatives in

The Secretariat of the African People's Accra Conference is sending a representative to the Congo to investigate events there — the first solidarity action to be carried out in fulfilment of the resolutions passed at the Accra conference.

local elections and indirect representation to a "skeleton Senate" in 1960. How long the bag of bones will take to grow flesh and fat will depend, no doubt on the new Congolese movement. But even King Baudouin in a radio broadcast has already been forced to promise the Congo "eventual independence"—though he takes refuge behind the comforting formulation "without damaging delays but also without undue haste." The Belgians should have known better, but the Congo is one more place in Africa where reforms trotted out are too little and too late.

## ● Algeria and France 'They Are Mad'

Announcing an unconditional amnesty for 7,000 Algerian prisoners of war, many of whom have been interned for over two years, De Gaulle showed his understanding that continued violence was going to end in total defeat for France. The reaction of the Algerian Provisional government was reserved; their terms for a cease-fire are negotiations on the basis of the recognition of African independence.

Internal developments were also of importance. In France "Every day since the new budget was announced the price of some essential commodity has shot up," the News Chronicle (Jan. 14) noted. "This was not what the people of France bargained for when they so wholeheartedly voted for a new regime. Once again they are turning against the men who run the government. 'Ils sont fous' (they're mad), exclaim the more restrained of the French."

De Gaulle was becoming aware of the swing from parliamentary to industrial struggle in France. Having been robbed of their voice in Parliament, the workers were preparing to make themselves heard in other ways. French capitalism is soon likely to be weighing up whether it made a good bargain by swopping 180 Communist parliamentary deputies for ten million workers out on strike.

## ● Britain, Cyprus and the General Election The Tory Bus

Prompted, possibly, as much by the havoc being caused in the Nato camp through her crazy war against Cyprus,

as by the toll being exacted by the Cypriot freedom fighters Britain too was making peace gestures. There was talk of truce and the free return to his home of Archbishop Makarios.

Peace in Cyprus would also help the Tories in another way. They are thinking about holding a general election early this year.

The possibility exists though, that they have missed the bus. Until last month the Gallup polls were showing that a nicely timed election might return the Conservatives for five more years.

But now things are changing.

For the first time since last August the Tories are not clearly ahead in the Gallup poll. In December the figures were Tories: 40%; Labour: 36%; Liberals 8% and Don't Knows 15%. But last month 3½% of the voters moved from the Tory camp into the Don't Knows, leaving the parties neck and neck.

Political commentators are agreed that the downward swing in Tory popularity is due to the upward swing in unemployment, which is today the British man-in-the-street's biggest nightmare. 25% of those polled last month considered unemployment to be the government's biggest problem (against 17% in December), while only 16% listed the danger of war, 14% the H-bomb.

Incapable of doing anything about unemployment, bound to America on questions of war and the H-bomb, Mac-Millan has an eye on the fact that 13% of voters consider the Cyprus war to be Britain's greatest problem.

Peace in Cyprus is also important in Britain's desperate effort to salvage something from the debacle she suffered at Suez. Her humiliating trade pact with Egypt — when in effect, she paid for the war damage she had caused by her invasion of Egypt — was a step in this direction. Now that the independence of the United Arab Republic is assured, the internal class conflicts in Syria and Egypt are making themselves manifest and Nasser is meeting heightened working class resistance with heightened political oppression. This creates possibilities for Britain as it does for others . . .

### ● USA and Latin America **A Bash at a Dictator**

Across the Pacific we move up on the United States from far to the South. The politics of the continent of South America are as hazy to most of us as

## GHANA — CAMEROONS — GUINEA

**GHANA ANTI-STRIKE MEASURES.** Ghana's Government is preparing to pass a law forbidding strikes by civil servants and making other government workers give four weeks' notice of a strike.

**SPECIAL UNO SESSION ON THE CAMEROONS.** A special session of the United Nations General Assembly will meet on February 20 to discuss the future status of the Cameroons under British and French administration. The French Cameroons is expected to become independent in 1960. Elections in the British Cameroons are due and the British Cameroons must decide whether they want to join the French or go in with an independent Nigeria. A U.N. mission to the Cameroons is due to report to the Trusteeship Council before the Assembly meets.

**GUINEA,** first independent French territory in Africa which announced a merger with Ghana last year has appointed three Ambassadors abroad: one to Paris, one to Ghana and the third to the United Nations in New York.

the politics of Africa are to most South Americans.

But democrats in Africa can recognise a good bash at a dictator as well as those in America can recognise a good bash at imperialism and people in Rio de Janeiro were no doubt as pleased about new advances in the Congo as people in Randfontein Location were about the flight of Batista.

The period of U.S. rule in South America through subservient fascist dictators is drawing to a close, and only the tiny dictatorships of the Dominican Republic and Paraguay, financed and run from New York, remain.

The barometer country in South America today is Argentina. The Frondiz government which enjoyed the support of the people has decided to seek the capital it needs in the United States on U.S. terms, and this has led to the usual results — inflation, rocketing cost-of-living, suppression of strikes, political tyranny. The conditions appear to exist for interesting developments.

### ● The USSR and China **Leaking Through**

In America itself the focus of comment last month was Anastas Mikoyan and the evidence his visit brought that the people of the U.S. have changed in their attitude to the Soviet Union — while Dulles's apparatus has not.

The average American image of the Soviet Union used to be that the place was roughly like a Bethel farm jail, only bigger. Now the Americans who have been going in a steady stream to see for themselves are coming back and reporting that the place is really pretty wonderful. The scientists are better, the culture is better, the schools are better, even the children are fatter and better behaved than the Americans.

China's impact has not yet been felt with equal force. Dulles' iron curtain of "non-recognition" has prevented U.S. visitors from travelling there as they have done in the USSR.

But the fantastic achievements of the communes are leaking through — and when the China story does finally break in isolated America, it is likely to have an effect even more dramatic than the reports from the Soviet Union.

America is now ready for the event which will dominate next month's world panorama — the meeting of the 21st Congress of the Communist party, now completing its 7 year plan in Moscow. It is a safe prediction that a month from now more people than ever before in history are going to be thinking — socialism seems to work.

L. FORMAN

# KING KONG CROSSES

## THE BAR

"King Kong" is going to be a success as a show. It would probably go down enormously well in London and, like the Australian play "Summer of the 17th Doll", be a piece of really first class export goods and far better propaganda for the Union than the posters of sunny beaches with beefy boys playing ball, and Mr. Steward's official protestations. We are all getting so sick of words that have no meaning that we feel a bit like Eliza in "My Fair Lady" — "Don't talk at all. Show me."

But the importance of this musical goes beyond the show itself in two ways. The most immediate one is in the effect it is having on the many people involved. The slower, but more far reaching, belongs right outside show business.

**Stirring the Dough.** "King Kong" has been like stirring a great lump of dough. I don't for one instant want to suggest that Nathan Mhledle, Dan Poho, Miriam Makeba, the Woody Woodpeckers, and the many willing amateurs, are lethargic artists, but until now they have been continuing, very expertly, to present themselves in a limited field — largely that of the concert party type of show.

"Township Talent" — selection competition shows whose growth was intimately connected with the formation and growth of the Union of Southern African Artists — provided enjoyment and did a great deal to bring musicians together. "King Kong", which probably could not have been staged had not the Union reached the point where its organisation was ready for it, is in one sense the outcome of these shows. And, like so many offspring, it must kick away the ladder it climbed by. We see now that the whole point of the Township Talent shows was to act as a preliminary to something better, more creative, more exciting — real art, in fact.

Most people connected with "King Kong" have been woken up into a wider space than they knew of before, and even if they are not sure what comes next, there are all sorts of ideas and a heap of energy released by working at this unique experiment.

**No Going Back.** The Union's aim at the moment is to get on to a sound enough footing financially to stage such shows without using the fantastic amount of time and effort needed to collect money from charitable well-wishers — to make the administration side more

professional and less dependent on the vagaries of voluntary work.

I don't think this will be the last time that the producer, Leon Gluckman, and the Musical Director, Spike Glasser, work together with this sort of material, but we must not do more than guess at what may be forming in those tireless minds.

Todd Matshikiza has far too many ideas in his head to stop at "King Kong" and even if he does not work with the same combination again, he is beginning to find out what he wants to do and how to do it. His fingers are itching far more than ever, these days, and his family is likely to be regaled with midnight practising all over again soon. There is no lack of African script-writing talent nearby, if only it can be disciplined into producing something stageworthy. The writers as well as the singers and actors of this country (Non-European, that is) are aching for chances. Sophiatown still harbours writers who talk away their visions rather than write them.

Members of the different groups that have come together on the stage have taken up the challenge of being one of fifty instead of a quarter of the show, and no doubt learnt things that will be useful to their own groups when they return to them. But from most people one gets the impression that they don't want just to go back. They want to go on.

Nathan Mhledle, on the stage in straight plays and music, for 25 years, says he "will be very happy" if only there were another show like this to work in.

Dan Poho, whose real place is in a straight play, however well he fits into a musical, is longing for more stage work. The periods when he has to act office messenger are very long, since straight plays for African casts are practically non-existent.

Miriam Makeba, happy singing in anything, would rather not go back to those exhausting and repetitive tours singing mediocre songs to uncritical audiences. She's had ten years of the concert party

type of entertainment, starting her singing career when a group of three at school in Kilnerton provided the music for friends' parties at home. Her eyes lit up at the thought of "something after 'King Kong'."

And working together has given members of the band new ideas. Even if all these people don't work together again, even if they don't do the same sort of thing, it has opened on to the minds of nearly all of them, from producer to stage carpenter, some window through which fresh air is pouring. The electric current that good art contains has run through "King Kong" into many minds.

**No Play Without People.** Outside show business "King Kong" will have repercussions. Art is not isolated in its own glass case. It has been said that all good art is propaganda. It is strongly to be hoped that "King Kong" will not be used too crudely as propaganda, as it is known here. However, it is well to remember in which fields Black people were first accorded honour in America: the arts and sport. If you've got no tie and your shoes show they leak, but you're a writer, there's justification for you. If you can sing gloriously, are someone in the Entertainment World, your black skin may even be a help. There is quite a lot in this attitude that one detests, and it often brings out the worst side of the artists concerned, but it's still exploitable.

People feel safer joining forces in a song than on a political platform, and "King Kong" has been an example of a co-operative effort between colours.

Ultimately you cannot treat as dirt someone whose voice you love, or someone who reveals for you the theme and matter of your own feelings. An interpretive artist — an actor, dancer, pianist — basically says "behold the man" in all his or her work, to the audience. It is this that is so necessary in this country, to see men and women, and this is what good drama aims at essentially. You can have a book with no people in it, a novel or a poem — although if it has no human reference it will have little appeal. A play without people is unthinkable.

Some of the colour feeling here is snobbery, and people always like to know about those in the world's eye. There is nearly always reflected glory

in knowing someone others have heard of.

The truth can be denied by wrapping it up in officialese, but the "sweet insidiousness" of art is not so easy to escape. Plato was one of the few people wise enough to fear poets. If there are some more real shows like "King Kong" some truth may thereby be "carried alive into the hearts of men" watching them.

For all the law-makers in this country, it may be proved again here that "poets (and other artists) are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."

JENNY JOSEPH.

## De Wet Nel

(Continued from page 4)

strength; and it is here that there exists the real strength of that Liberal Party wing which reaches out for alliance with the Congress, wherever the majority of the Party might be found. And, above all, it is here in Johannesburg that the real co-ordinating heart-and-soul of the multi-racial Congress movement, the National Consultative Committee, meets and functions.

There can be little doubt that it was this political opposition to the whole concept of apartheid at which Mr. De Wet Nel aimed. In customary clumsy fashion he almost admitted as much, when he said that the sinister mixed drinking parties were, in fact, a camouflage for "subversive and un-South African" activities. There is, in Nationalist eyes, nothing more subversive and un-South African than inter-racial alliance for the creation of a new multi-racial democracy. This was the Minister's real target. That he chose to shield it under a smokescreen of an offensive against "mixed drinking" almost enabled him to get away with it.

L. BERNSTEIN

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# WRITERS MEET IN

About three hours after taking off from Moscow's Vnukovo airport our TU-104 crossed the Great Silk Road, the road along which for centuries the material and spiritual values of the cultures of the peoples of Asia and Africa were exchanged, the road which still remains as an idea in the minds of the people of Central Asia.

Many speakers at the Afro-Asian Writers' Conference in Tashkent referred to the Great Silk Road. The image is a vivid one and it suited the work of the conference aptly; for the aim of that gathering of some 150 writers representing lands as far apart as Ghana and the Phillipines was to re-establish the flow of ideas and cultural values between lands that had been isolated for centuries, and not only between themselves but between the continents of Asia and Africa and the West — a West which one must remember, includes European Russia.

## Delhi Origins

The idea of holding this conference in the capital of Soviet Uzbekistan arose in Delhi two years ago. It was there that the Uzbek poetess Zalfia speaking in the name of the Soviet Asian writers who attended the Asian Writers' Conference extended an invitation that included African writers too. The Delhi conference, the first of its kind, proved to be a useful stimulus for a rapprochement between writers and literary organisations in the spirit of the principles of peaceful co-existence asserted at Bandung.

To define the idea that lay behind the Tashkent conference would require an analysis of the ideological principles that move China's Big Leap Forward, India's gradual advance towards a "socialistic pattern", Arab nationalism, the national aspirations of the peoples of Ghana, the Cameroons, Indonesia, the Phillipines and of many others. Could the organisers of the conference hope to find a common platform on which the delegates could work together?

That was the question that some of us "Western" observers had in our minds as we entered the magnificent Navoi theatre for the opening of the five-day conference. It was a question that some delegations had asked themselves on their way to Tashkent. Both the Indian (the largest) and the Japanese delegations were composed of men

and women of widely differing political affiliations, and of some who had no affiliations at all.

The Indian delegation was selected on the principle of representation of each of the fifteen main languages of the sub-continent. The representatives of Ghana included men and women who stand close to Nkrumah. Many of the writers from colonial Africa were political militants who believe that it is the duty of the writer to enlist in the armed struggle for independence. Could one hope for that minimum of tolerance without which the conference could turn out to be nothing but a demonstration of disunity?

And at the back of the minds of some of us lay another question? Would the writers attending the conference be called on to sink their differences in the adoption of an anti-Western attitude, by turning the tables on a West which had so often adopted a superior and exclusive attitude towards the cultures of the brown, the yellow and the black-skinned?

## No Chauvinism

Let me say right away that the conference avoided any kind of Asian or African chauvinism. Indeed, it showed a maturity in this respect which left this observer feeling humble and chastened. One was continually being impressed by the dignity of the speakers.

Once it was Chou Yang, the Chinese critic, telling us that the Chinese people had always respected the cultural achievements of other nations and had absorbed much of the best of other cultures — including those of the West — and going on to declare that the new situation in China made it possible and necessary for the Chinese people to establish normal cultural relations with Western peoples and have a genuine cultural exchange with them. Or was it an Indian writer saying: "We, authors of Asia and Africa, do not consider that Western culture has nothing to offer us except war and exploitation." Or was it the poet of the mountainous Soviet republic of Daghestan who said: "We must not confuse colonialism with culture and Dreiser with Dulles . . . A beautiful carpet must not be burned because of dirty marks on it."

## Unity Factors

How then did this conference manage to get that measure of agreement which

# TASHKENT

enabled it to vote into existence a permanent organisation, located in Ceylon, to assist Asia and African writers to make their works better known to each other in translation, and, through various publications to bring them to the knowledge of the West? And to agree to a further conference in Cairo, in two years time?

I venture to suggest that there were two main factors contributing to this unity. The first is the conviction, common to most Asian and African lands, that the peoples who, in one way or another, have achieved or are achieving their independence are being swept forward together on a wave of social and economic revolution that is enveloping all Asia and Africa. Despite all their mental reservations and their different experience of life, the intellectuals of the two continents are being drawn together by a process of cultural integration.

Only thus, it seemed to me at Tashkent, was it possible for men as different as the Indian philologist Suniti Kumar Chatterji, the exiled Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet, the Chinese novelist Mao Tun and the Sinhalese Buddhist philosopher D. K. P. Beneragama, to work together loyally at this conference.

Not all these men and their fellow-delegates could be called "progressive" in the narrow "Western" sense of the word. But that over-worked adjective is in fact equally applicable to the young Ghanaese novelist Cecile McHardy, secretary of the Writers' Union of Ghana, as it is to Shri Lakmi Prasard Devketa of Nepal or to Pam Huy Theng of Vietnam, for to all of them the cause of the advancement of letters in their lands is a progressive one.

Here at Tashkent the vexed problem of equating the cause of peace with that of the struggle for national independence, which in the past has disturbed the harmony of many a "Peace Congress", never arose at all. For Asians and Africans are convinced, rightly or wrongly, that the establishment of sovereign national States in the place of colonies is an essential stage in the establishment of a lasting peace. That the new independent nations should engender conflicts between themselves is simply not accepted as a possibility.

The other factor that contributed to the unity of the Tashkent conference was something that derived from the en-

vironment. I do not wish to suggest that the delegates accepted Soviet ways as ideal or that during their week in Tashkent they were converted to the doctrine of socialist realism or of the total commitment of the writer to a positive cause. But in the capital of Soviet Uzbekistan and later in the neighbouring republic of Soviet Central Asia and Transcaucasia they were provided with an example of what they as writers can expect to find in their own lands when the scourge of illiteracy has been removed.

In order to reach the theatre where the conference was held most delegates had to cross Tashkent's main square, a rather beautiful public garden dominated by a fountain in the form of a cotton boll. All around this square book-stalls were erected, at which a brisk trade went on from dawn till dusk.

One saw long queues of Tatars waiting to subscribe to new editions of their classics, students of German from the Tashkent Institute of Foreign Languages carrying away bundles of collected Heine and Goethe imported from Leipzig, purchasers of a new anthology of Indian poetry translated into Uzbek crowding around the authors and demanding autographs . . . In short, Tashkent provided a spectacle of a people that has become literate in the span of one or two generations eagerly and earnestly extending their cultural horizons.

What effect this had on writers from lands that are wrestling with the problem of mass education and the status of the author in society can easily be imagined.

"My father was a nomad of the steppe," the Kazakh writer Mukhtar Auezov told me one morning as we crossed this book mart.

"It was in his tent that at the age of six I discovered that the poems our people sang or declaimed could lie silent on paper. In those days the verse of our great poet Abai were written down for the first time. Today the whole of the Soviet Union knows his works through books in translation. I wonder how much fine poetry and prose still exists only in oral form among the peoples of Asia and Africa represented at this conference."

To sum up, perhaps the greatest value of the Tashkent conference was the step it took towards what Ghana's poetess Efuia Theodora Sutherland called the "unification of the disrupted soul of mankind."

RALPH PARKER.

## HOW MUCH TIME?

A brave defence of the Liberal Party's challenge to South African race prejudices deserves better treatment than it gets from the Party's own publication, "How much time have we left?" This is, in many technical respects, a production of high standard. The paper is glossy; it is packed with first-class photographs which tell a story; the typography is well laid out; the text is commendably short and pithy. And yet the content fails to measure up to the standard of the production. It is designed to stir uneasy consciences amongst white South Africans, and awaken feelings of guilt for white South Africa's responsibility for the blacks. Perhaps this is the way to the purse-strings of the socially conscious, but it contributes little to his understanding of the urgent necessity for the Liberal Party, and nothing to the need to shake loose his prejudices from their dogmatic foundations and restart his thinking processes. Perhaps this is because the pamphlet was conceived, in the first place, as a means of raising financial support for the Party, and was thus no doubt conscious of "preaching to the already partially or fully converted." In this limited field it merits success.

## THE ROAD TO AFRICAN UNITY

Today when people speak of Pan-African unity, they tend to think of the December conference which was held in Accra, at which the liberation movements of the continent came to gather for the first time. History was made at this assembly, whose effects will be felt through the continent for a long time to come. But the beginnings of this new and significant stirring are further back in history, in the emergence of first the Afro-Asian bloc in world politics, and later the consolidation of the independent African states as a new force for world progress. Colin Legum traces the process of that development through the Bandung, Cairo and Accra Conferences. In a potted history of those events, he manages to cram excerpts from the keynote speeches, highlights of the decisions and resolutions adopted, and to fill in a journalistic account of the significance of each of these events on a world and an African scale. As an appendix to this valuable and well-written account, there is reproduced the entire declaration of the first Accra Conference, the Conference of Independent African States. This pamphlet whets ones appetite for a really thorough journalistic

(Continued on page 16)

# The Expanding Universe

This year will see the centenary of the publication of Darwin's "Origin of Species." All over the world biologists will be taking stock of the results which that outstanding stimulus has given to the progress of their science. It is probable also that many who are not professional scientists will during this year direct their thoughts to some of the implications which evolutionary theory has for the modern world. All the other branches of science have likewise shown an amazing advance during the last hundred years.

This article is the first of a series in which the author proposes to summarise in popular language some of the ways in which the advance in scientific knowledge has influenced modern thinking.

Science is essentially a technique for gaining knowledge. It comprises also an outlook on the world (a philosophy) which is an essential part of that technique. It is amazing how long it took man to discover that if you want to find out the truth about something, you should go and see. For some reason it had previously been believed that truth could be discovered by talking alone or by an appeal to authority.

It was during the seventeenth century that certain men in Western Europe began to question Authority and to appeal to Fact, for the settlement of arguments.

"When men of first-rate ability turned from a consideration of the good, the true and the beautiful and of the precise relation of the three members of the Trinity to one another, and began to wonder what makes milk sour quicker in hot weather than in cold and why an object seen through a glass bottle is magnified, they had already made the transition from the old to the new attitude of mind.\*

\* I do not know the source of this quotation. It possibly comes from one of J. W. Draper's numerous works, perhaps *The Intellectual Development of Europe* or *The History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*.

The earliest and most spectacular achievements of the new method came in what is still perhaps the simplest of all the sciences, that of astronomy. Copernicus (1473-1543), by observation of the movements of the sun, stars, and planets, rejected the complicated explanations of the ancients, who assumed that all these bodies moved round the earth. He propounded his heliocentric theory, which made the earth move round the sun. Galileo (1564-1642) with his one-inch telescope saw various things which confirmed this theory. Significantly, his persecutors refused to look through his telescope when he invited them to do so.

The Copernican discovery was the first blow to man's conceit that he was the be all and end all of creation. The earth was merely one of a number of planets revolving round the sun. These other planets were other worlds and they might be inhabited. This conceit received further shocks from subsequent developments in astronomy. It is now known that our own sun is a rather ordinary star among 40 billion others that form our own star cloud or Galaxy. Up to 1917 it was thought that, at least, we were more or less central in our galaxy. Actually we are quite peripheral, being situated in one of the galaxy's outer spiral arms.

Our galaxy in turn is one of billions of more or less similar galaxies scattered throughout space. The whole system of galaxies, known as the Metagalaxy, extends as far as modern telescopes can reach. Further improvements in telescope construction, particularly the radio-telescope, may show that the Metagalaxy is finite in size. This is pure speculation. Up to the present, new galaxies have always appeared with each increase in telescopic power. The most distant of these objects at present located are some billions of light years away.

Spectroscopic study of the light received from distant galaxies shows that they are nearly all receding from us at incredible speeds. This has led to the theory of the expanding universe. If this expansion has been continuous, there must have been a time, it is argued, when all the matter in the metagalactic universe was crowded together in a single mass. It has been calculated that this must have been about 5 or 6 billion years ago. This points to a tremendous explosion having occurred at that time which caused the expansion to begin.

There are two variants of this expanding universe theory. One holds that the metagalaxy will continue to expand indefinitely, so that, if there are still astronomers in our galaxy a million years hence, they will be able to observe far fewer galaxies than we can observe today. The second variant of the theory suggests the possibility that the speed at which the galaxies are moving away from each other will slow down as the force of the original explosion expends itself. The forces of gravity will then cause the galaxies to move together again and we shall have a contracting Metagalaxy. Once more matter will become concentrated in a single mass and there will be an opportunity for another explosion. And so on. This is the theory of the pulsating universe.

Both these theories assume that the amount of matter-energy in the universe is constant. In contrast there is Fred Hoyle's theory of the steady-state universe. He agrees that the galaxies are moving apart but he suggests that new galaxies are being formed in between them, so that the general properties of the cosmos are not changing. According to Hoyle quantities of hydrogen are continually being formed (apparently from nothing!) and this leads to the formation of new stars.

The majority of astronomers do not support Hoyle's theory, but neither he nor they are yet able to produce definite evidence to settle the existing controversy. However a very elaborate statistical study of the galaxies now being made may either confirm or refute this very exciting theory. If Hoyle is correct, the universe may be considered infinite in time and space.

E. WARD ROUX

Next Month:

"LIFE ON OTHER WORLDS"

TWO ATOMIC REACTORS in Windscale, England, which were closed last year after an accident, won't be safe to re-enter for at least 200 years. Scientists on the project are preserving a record of what happened so that future-generation scientists will be forewarned.

# The State Pokes Its Nose In

Unnoticed by most, the sporting situation in South Africa has been undergoing an important transformation which is likely to develop further in the near future.

The colour-bar in sport has always been a basic element in South African sport, with Non-Whites, whatever their merits, rigidly excluded from teams representing South Africa — except for the occasional instance where one has slipped through by "passing" as White.

This system has been carefully preserved by colour-conscious sports administrators, who could be relied on "to keep the Black in his place."

Under pressure of international scrutiny and repeated complaints from the Non-Whites this system has begun to prove inadequate, and it is being increasingly felt that something stronger is required.

## Dr. Donges Steps In

The first hints came when the Minister of the Interior, Dr. Donges, declared after the non-racial Table Tennis body was granted recognition to the exclusion of the White one, that "no Non-White teams would leave the country without the permission of the White body." A little later, when there was talk of the cricketers appealing to the Imperial Cricket Conference, Dr. Donges spoke darkly of "sporting traitors" — which was enough to make the cricketers retreat into their segregated shells.

When the Soccer body was challenged at the World Soccer Federation it blamed the laws of the country. But the Commission appointed by the International body found that there was nothing in the laws to justify the exclusion of Non-Whites. The White soccer body then appealed to Dr. Donges, who obligingly informed them that the South African Government would "disapprove" of Non-Whites playing together with Whites.

But the most significant developments have come within the past few weeks.

Writing in "World Sports", an internationally known sports journal, Mr. W. Steward, Director of Information at South Africa House, London stated, in reply to an article attacking the colour-bar in sport, that "apartheid was the only solution." Non-Whites would be allowed to play on their own, against

Non-White teams, and thus have parallel development. Otherwise, as someone darkly hinted, there might be a blood-bath (!).

## Athletes Kow-Tow

Soon thereafter the South African press, English and Afrikaans, were vociferous in applauding the decision of the "Bantu" athletic association to accept affiliation to the White body "under conditions of trusteeship." This included being controlled by White officials — the Secretary of the Bantu Association is a Mr. Botha, an employee of a large mining group — competing only against Non-Whites, being represented by Whites and probably wearing a different emblem if they ever travel overseas. This step was hailed as being a contribution towards solving a vexed problem, and columnists in the "Star" and "Die Burger" were agreed that it would strengthen South Africa's position.

Even more significant was a statement by a Government spokesman in the "Sunday Times" that the Government welcomed the forthcoming tour of South Africa by a West Indies Cricket team. The team is composed entirely of Non-Whites, will play only against Non-Whites, and the leader of the team, Frank Worrell has announced that he will accept the apartheid conditions of South Africa. Obviously, if Non-White sportsmen will voluntarily accept apartheid, the case in support of it will be a good deal stronger.

## State Board Proposed

The most important pointer is a full-length article by Gerhard Roos, one of the most influential sports commentators in Nationalist papers. He has called for the establishment of a Board, not necessarily under direct state-control, which can work towards easing South Africa's problems in international sport by devising a general policy along these lines for all codes of sport. He suggests consultation and co-ordination between various sports and between them and the Government with the setting up of a National Sports Control Board. He bases this on the argument that there will be "considerable difficulties in the future with regard to our colour bar and that

the matter is far too important to leave in the hands of individual sports bodies." He continues: "Would not such a board be of great value to the Government when decisions need to be taken about passports and other difficult matters? The establishment of a Union Board becomes urgent."

It is fortunate that at a time when the problem of apartheid in sport is assuming such new and complex features, an organisation has been created which will be equipped to deal with precisely such broad issues.

## S.A. Sports Association

The South African Sports Association (SASA) formed last year and which held its first Conference in Durban on January 10 and 11 has set as its main objectives the nurturing of all sport and all sportsmen in South Africa — White or Black — and the achievement of full international recognition for all. Among the first things it did was to deplore the decision by the Bantu Athletic body to accept "subservient affiliation" and to condemn the West Indies tour because it is being conducted on discriminatory lines.

Because it must protect the rights of all sportsmen, and especially those of the Non-Whites at present excluded from international sport, SASA felt it was its duty to warn that subservient affiliation and apartheid tours would be to the detriment of South African sport.

SASA has had a hostile reception from most of the press and it has a difficult job ahead, but it is the one organisation which can handle the complex problems which are likely to arise as the colour bar in sport is increasingly challenged.

It will need a great deal of support if it is to weather the coming storm, but its resolve to work for "the elimination of racial discrimination in sport" entitles it to expect a fair measure of support from those who believe in the ideals of sportsmanship and fair play.

JOHN PLAYER.

## The Paton Way

(Continued from page 5)

of the Afrikaner people and that he is merely the latest (let's hope the last) bearer of the torch that has been passed on from Kruger to Herzog, Malan to Strijdom.

A weakness in this section is the poor coverage given to Congress activities like the Congress of the People; compared to what Mr. Paton considers "the great event of the year (1955) the passing of the Senate Act."

It seems that the problem of the franchise continues to haunt the Liberal Party. On the one hand Mr. Paton says that "a White liberal should feel it repugnant to put forward a qualified franchise" and then informs us that the Party's official policy is "universal franchise — perhaps by stages." It is puzzling to find that although Mr. Paton recognises that the qualified franchise has failed in South Africa (he states that over the years fewer, and fewer people have been able to vote) he should nevertheless put forward as a policy universal franchise by stages. What guarantee is there that such a policy will be carried out? And will the Non-Whites find this any more acceptable than the qualified franchise?

Part of the reason for Liberal Party persistence with this policy is to be found on page 67. "The other course is to leave White South Africa to its own devices and to identify oneself solely with Non-White aspirations. This does not appeal to Liberals. We assume that there is a valuable group in the White population that must not be jettisoned." The Party fears that a policy of immediate universal suffrage would frighten off the section of the Whites they wish to influence. On the other hand as long as they do not adopt this policy they will not gain the support of the Non-Whites. This is the Liberal Party dilemma.

In dealing with how change is to be brought about, Mr. Paton makes a most important and far reaching statement. He says, "I do not know one Liberal who believes that change will come about as a result of steady and quiet evolution. It may be reached by either violent revolution or by an evolutionary process of a massive kind — revolutionary evolution or massive evolution." He believes in the latter as being a realistic possibility and considers that it will be achieved by extra-Parliamentary action for, "How under these circumstances will the Nationalists ever be ejected by Parliamentary means? The fact is, they have deliberately set out to make it virtually impossible." (p. 61).

The book is strangely silent on Liberal Party foreign policy. The "Whites" in Kenya, Algeria and Mississippi are indirectly condemned, but world affairs are treated vaguely and given little space. We are told that "South Africa will become a democracy if democracy does not retreat throughout the world." With millions of people the world over throwing off their local and foreign despotic rulers, there can surely be no doubt on this score.

The book ends with a chapter dealing with the need to develop a "common front" against Nationalist rule. Although one could quarrel with much that is said of the character of the Congress of Democrats, Mr. Paton is nevertheless realistic enough to say "The co-operation between these two bodies (Liberal Party and C.O.D.) is an important factor in the fight against apartheid." In taking this stand, and in urging greater unity with the Congress movement as a whole Mr. Paton shows himself to be an enlightened realist. If his party follows him along the path of the "common front" that he lays down, the cause of freedom in South Africa will be greatly advanced.

BEN TUROK.

## Reviews

(Continued from page 13)

report of the second Accra Conference, which thus far has received very shabby treatment from the press and observers. Legum, to judge by this pamphlet, is the man to bring the story of Pan-African unity up to date.

Bandung, Cairo & Accra. A report on the First Conference of Independent States. Published by the African Bureau. London. Price 2/6d.

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