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LIBERATION

ONE SHILLING

JUNE

No. 8, 1954

**FAREWELL TO MISSION
SCHOOLS**

**KOTANE
ON
"WESTERN AREAS"**

A JOURNAL OF DEMOCRATIC DISCUSSION

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WAR -- AGAINST WHOM ?

NOT for a moment, since the defeat of the Fascist Axis, has there really been peace in the world. Every day since then, somewhere or other, somebody's village, someone's country has heard the crackling of rifles and the chatter of machine guns, the screech of the dive-bomber, the pitiful cries of the wounded and dying. We remember how thousands marched through the streets of Johannesburg, not ten years ago, behind the banner of the African National Congress and the flags of the United Nations to celebrate VE Day. We remember the joy that was in our hearts and the high hopes that we cherished. Hopes that the noble visions of the Charters and the Freedoms would speedily be realised. That Hitler's friends in South Africa would receive their just deserts. That peace would come at last to a war-weary world.

But there has been no peace.

The ink was hardly dry on Germany's surrender documents when British troops were fighting in the streets of Athens, against the EAM, the heroes of the Greek resistance. The ashes of Hiroshima were still glowing when Chiang Kai-Shek turned his American weapons, scarcely tasted by the Japanese, against his own countrymen, to plunge China into civil war.

And so the sorry tale has gone on: in Java and Malaya, in Vietnam and Korea; nearer home, in Kenya; the other day in little Guatemala. These are not, as the newspapers tell us, all separate "little wars," unconnected with one another. They are all a part of one big war: to the unfortunate people who live in those countries a war no less murderous and destructive than the Second World

War. Examine them again; see how the pattern runs.

Soldiers from Britain, France, Holland, the United States, tanks and planes and guns, sent far from home in battleships to fight in foreign lands. These are the troops of America's "North Atlantic Treaty Organisation," the "European Defence Community." The "North Atlantic Region," as defined by its inventors, is a pretty huge area: it seems to take in Turkey in the Mediterranean - and other corners of the world. But wherever it is, it certainly does not include the territories where its soldiers are fighting. Still less can these troops be said to be "defending Europe against the threat of Soviet aggression" — which is the excuse they give for imposing a crushing burden of armament expenditure on the American and west European taxpayers, an austerity economy, and speeding the revival of Nazi militarism in Germany. No, they are not fighting the Soviet Union—not one Soviet army unit has been in action since the defeat of Japan—and they are not defending "Europe." Are they defending anything? Who are the aggressors?

Who are the Aggressors ?

Did any Koreans invade the United States and drop bombs on New York? Has anyone heard of a Kikuyu army devastating the peaceful English countryside? Have the Vietnamese sent battleships to France?

Everyone knows that none of these things happened. And since they did not happen it is clear that the troops who are found thousands of miles away from home, killing and burning in someone else's country, are committing aggression. Everyone knows that if all the soldiers went home now there would be no more fighting.

Looked at in this light, and stripped of all the newspaper ballyhoo about the "free world" fighting "Soviet aggression" and so on, the broad outline and general character of the present war we are in the middle of is pretty clear. It's not a war against "the Kremlin"—the Soviet Union is too tough a nut for Mr. Dulles and his friends to crack, and they know it. It's not a war against "Communism." Broadly, it's an aggressive war of the imperialists, led and directed from the U.S.A., against the colonial people of Asia, Africa and South America.

Of course, this is not the whole of the picture of the current international political situation — a large and complicated situation, with many cross-currents and conflicting factors. The imperialist camp is not united: its members are torn in conflict and rivalry. Its leaders, too, are not free agents. They have to reckon with their own people, who do not wish to fight the Russians or the Asians or the Africans. Witness the case of Mr. Mendes-France, who has become the most popular Premier of France since the war by ending the fighting in Vietnam and ensuring the collapse of the "E.D.C." Nor must we forget the massive strength of the millions-strong world peace movement, officially supported by the leaders of one-third of the world's population. Or the far-reaching implications of

the historic agreement reached by Nehru and Chou En-Lai at Delhi.

But the aspect we have emphasised, though not the whole picture, is a very important one for us in South Africa. When Mr. Erasmus travels to London for secret talks about "defence" it's not some Russians somewhere in Siberia they are thinking of fighting. It's not even in the Middle East (what's happened, by the way, to that famous Treaty?) Let those Africans who still fail to regard the peace movement in its true importance ponder the lesson. Just as Churchill and Dulles have been "defending" Asia against the Asians, so Malan and Huggins are out to "defend" Africa against the Africans. When Sir Godfrey Huggins starts preparing the ground for the "discovery" of a so-called "Mau-Mau conspiracy," and warning the "so-called African intellectuals" that their aims are "completely beyond the bounds of realisation," he is getting ready for war. When Brigadier Rademeyer, following the lead of the New York Times, starts hinting about sedition and high treason and heaven knows what else, and Minister Swart begins a new round of bannings, raids, threats to suppress "Advance," and deportations—these are preparations for war.

Land and Labour

"War," that is, in the Kenya manner, the ruthless massacre of thousands of innocent unarmed folk, the deliberate attempt to grind a nation into the dust of trembling fear and servile submission. That is what war means here in Africa. We know these people. We have met them before, and our fathers and our grandfathers have met them. We know their contempt for humanity and their disregard for human life. We know that they will stop at nothing, that they will spill rivers of blood, that they will strip themselves of every vestige of the "civilisation" they pretend to uphold, to retain their grasp on our land and our labour.

Land, natural resources, cheap colonial labour. These tangibles and not any altruistic urge to convert the heathen brought the imperialists to Asia, Africa and the Americas. These, not any fancy conceptions about "defending the free world" and "resisting Communism" have now sent "Western" soldiers to the jungles. It is not "civilisation" they are defending but big profits based on colonial wealth and upon the poverty, suffering and lives of Asia and Africa. Where labour is cheap, life too, is cheap.

But, for the imperialists, the writing is on the wall. The days have gone when a handful of silver could buy a colonial leader, or a party of marines quell a liberation movement. After seven long years of bitter warfare the head of a great imperial power has been forced to sit at the conference table with the representatives of the Vietnam resistance on equal terms and negotiate a treaty. We live in an era when white domination and colonialism are coming to an end.

It is against this background of the world-wide struggle to substitute negotiation for force in the settlement of disputes that we invite

South African patriots and democrats, Congressmen and progressives to consider the urgency of building up a wide and representative peace movement. The democratic leaders of this country have called the people to prepare for the most important gathering ever convened in this country: the Congress of the People to frame the Charter of the people's demands for Freedom. The breadth and vision of this undertaking, its appeal to all sections of our people of all races and colours, the immediate and inspiring response wherever the people have listened to the Call: all these are potent signs that the country is ready to advance to democracy, and that the Congress of the People is indeed, as Moses Kotane has shown, "South Africa's Way Forward."

The Malanites will try to stifle the truth of the Call to the Congress with lies, to strangle the movement of the people with provocations, repressions and violence. They shall not succeed.

They will fail because the movement of the people of South Africa is united, conscious and determined as never before, and because we live in a world where the people are vigilantly on guard for peace. But let us have no illusions. Let us not ask against whom war is being prepared, for whom the bullets are intended. They are meant for us. Only the conscious determined participation of the South African people in defence of peace can avert the massacre that is being plotted. No task before us is more urgent.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

Better Late than Never," they say. Of course it is better not to be late; some of our readers may have begun to fear we were never going to bring out this number.

Well, you've guessed the main reason for the delay, the chronic shortage of funds that has dogged this little magazine since its inception. We are not going to labour this point. We know how many calls there are on all democratic people to give financial support to deserving causes. At the same time we do ask you to consider whether theoretical clarity is not essential for sound construction, and whether a journal of democratic discussion is not indispensable as the freedom movement in this country advances to new, crucial struggles.

We think that "Liberation" has an irreplaceable function to carry out. We plan, in addition to regular publication in future, to add a number of well-known and distinguished writers to our list of contributors. An important article by Mr. Moses Kotane has been prepared for our next issue, in which this brilliant analyst carries forward the theme of economic reforms for the Freedom Charter which he initiated in his widely-discussed pamphlet "South Africa's Way Forward." We plan to print regular features specially written by well-known friends of South Africa abroad.

We ask you to help us realise these plans by donating every month to our printing fund.

FAREWELL TO MISSION SCHOOLS

By TITSHALA

CANON COLLINS' conclusion that he had been visiting a madhouse is one that will be shared by the great majority of inhabitants of this country, though, no doubt, they would not share his view that it was a pleasant one. More pleasant to visit than to live in, we think this honest and forthright Canon would agree.

We think the Canon would agree, too, that the South African Bedlam differs in one most significant particular from any other lunatic asylum that ever existed. The ordinary inmates are sane enough; it is the warders, alas, who are balmy — stricken with that strange malignant pigmentomania which so strongly impressed our kindly, modern Gulliver from St. Paul's Cathedral.

A madhouse where all but the governors and their staff are sane: it's a theme that would have delighted Gulliver's creator. Indeed there's material enough for the brilliant Dean of St. Patrick's to have filled out a whole new volume of Travels, in this strange, topsy-turvy land of ours where everything seems upside down.

All the grand democratic principles common to all the advanced thinkers of our times are stood upon their heads and made a travesty and a mockery to serve the ends of baasskap.

Take the question of female suffrage. All over the world, in the twentieth century, the issue of equal votes for men and women has become a practical touchstone of the genuineness of a democracy; none but the most bigoted reactionaries oppose it. But in South Africa the enfranchisement of (European) women on an equal basis with men meant little more than the doubling of the white electorate, thus halving the effectiveness of the rudimentary Non-European franchise in the Cape. A noble principle turned to the ignoble end of buttressing European minority domination.

Or, again, take the matter of Republicanism. The world over an enlightened and rational human being is, practically by definition, a republican. Monarchists are, almost everywhere, identified with

those who seek to preserve or to return to a rotten and decayed form of society. Kings and Queens and Courts belong to the childhood of the human race. Alone among the major nations of the modern world, the irrational British cling to these extravagantly expensive symbols of the past. But in South Africa the very word "republic" has been twisted to imply a sinister Broederbond dictatorship based upon principles the very reverse of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.

Finally — though our theme is far from exhausted — let us examine that contemporary issue: the separation of the Church from secular education. Throughout Europe the debate has raged and still goes on. For the most part those who want to maintain Church schools belong with the monarchists and the anti-feminists: it is the democratic Left, and frankly we agree with it here, which declares that the schooling of the children is the business of society, not of the clergy. Piety and religious zeal are not qualifications for instructing the young in letters and numbers, in the sciences and the arts. Indeed they may be, and often are, positive handicaps. The priest-pedagogue is always in a dilemma: the devout evangelist and the conscientious schoolmaster always at war within him over timetables and curricula. Too often his zeal for saving souls overcomes his appreciation of the need for producing cultured and accomplished citizens; better, he reasons, a semi-literate conformist than an educated heathen. But here is at odds with the parents. We send our children to school to become useful and fully-equipped members of society and the modern world community. For religious instruction we may, if we choose send them to Sunday-school, to the mosque or the "cheider."

South Africa's long experience of missionary education for Africans only strengthens us in these convictions. True, mission education is better than no education, and we should be grossly unjust to deny tribute to those noble souls who laboured down the centuries in appalling conditions to teach young Africa its ABC. But the schooling thus imparted was always inadequate and seldom truly disinterested. As Mr. Duma Nokwe pointed out in a brilliant contribution to an earlier issue of "Liberation," many earlier missionaries and Governments regarded the mission schools as an ideal means of converting proud and independent tribesmen into submissive and obedient labourers. Whatever the achievements and motives of the past, the modern State of South Africa, made wealthy by the labour of its toiling millions, owes to its children of all races a full and many-sided education. Education, that is, as a right to be fulfilled by the State; not as a charity, in which the education itself is merely a by-product in the manufacture of so many pious Anglicans, Wesleyans, Calvinists or Catholics.

Yet we may confidently assert that not a single South African who is genuinely concerned with the education of Africans, how-

ever anti-clerical he may be in educational matters, will regard the impending transfer of African schools from the missionaries to the State with anything but the profoundest anxiety and misgiving. For the schools are to be transferred not to the Department of Education, but to the Department of Native Affairs.

With all their weaknesses and inadequacies, the mission schools; on the whole, believed in education for Africans; though they had no doubt a clerical bias, they understood "education" in its universally accepted meaning — the sum total of human knowledge, art and science gathered and sifted and passed on through a thousand cultures and civilisations, from Africa, Asia and Europe over centuries of time.

The doctors Verwoerd and Eiselen, on the other hand, do not believe at all in education for Africans; they believe in something quite different, which they call "Bantu Education," whose nature emerges tortuously but, in the end, clearly enough, from the Eiselen Report and the Bantu Education Act. They do not think that the function of education is to help the individual to self-fulfilment and give him the key to the cultural treasure-house of mankind. They do not recognise the human cultural heritage; they can see culture only as a separate tribal, racial or local phenomenon. In this, of course, they are grossly mistaken. To this day a large part of the education in European schools consists, essentially, of what the illiterate and savage British, German, French and Dutch tribes were taught by the Romans — and what the Romans had to a large degree learnt from the Egyptians.

The missions believed in education, and were continually crying out for more funds and more resources to be devoted to education for Africans. It was not missionary shortcomings but Government stinginess that crippled African education all down the years. No funds for school buildings, for equipment, for teachers' salaries, for the training of teachers: that has been the terrible curse under which the African people have suffered in their thirst for knowledge for their children. The education of European children in South Africa compares very badly with that prevalent in advanced countries overseas. Yet approximately thirty times as much money per head is apportioned to European education as to African education. Until the advent of the Nationalist Government no-one in authority seriously contested that the first essential to improve education was to spend more money on it.

No so, however, doctors Eiselen and Verwoerd. In paragraph 812 of the Report of the Eiselen Commission, anyone may read this astounding passage:

"Experience in other parts of Africa has shown that the tendency is for an undue percentage of the budget to be allocated to education."

Unduly high, that is — as the context makes clear. And it is to the tender mercies of men who think like this that African education is now being entrusted.

Already, before the transfer, the N.A.D. is giving us a taste of the new regime by issuing high-handed mechanical directives to the schools. Not enough schools? Nonsense! says the N.A.D. By a stroke of the pen, it proceeds to double the number of "school-going children" by the simple process of halving the hours of instruction. That is the intention and purpose of the already notorious order to mission schools to run "double-decker" primary schools; two sessions must be held, the first from 8 to 11 a.m., after which the first batch of African children, having received their due measure of learning for the day, are free to roam the streets; the second from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Poor children, expected to absorb a lesson in a fifteen-minute period! Poor teacher, expected to teach duplicate lessons to two grossly overcrowded classes daily! Poor Africa!

But perhaps we may agree that the three-hour school is not inadequate to convey the sort of instruction which "Bantu Education" envisages.

Let us take one last example of the manner in which topsy-turvey "White South Africa" takes a sound and admirable principle, and turns it into a thing to be hated and feared. We refer, here, to the principle that a child should be educated in its own mother language. Of course, this is a right and proper conception. No child should have to struggle with arithmetic and history and geography and science in a language other than his own. And no African patriot will rest until we have enough good text-books and trained educationists and language academies and institutes to ensure that our children are not saddled with the handicap of having to learn through a foreign medium.

But when Dr. Eiselen's Commission reports in favour of "mother-tongue education in the vernacular," does it have in mind the rapid creation of conditions to give us good textbooks and teachers in the arts and sciences, in Zulu, Sesotho, Xhosa and Sechuana? Not a bit of it. "Bantu Education" is meant to produce not scholars but labourers; manual work, agricultural training, needlework: these are the backbone of the "vernacular" lessons to be given. And to facilitate separate language schools to teach such lessons, vast urban African populations are to be resettled in separate tribal zones; a suggestion as fantastic as would be one that proposed dividing the whites of Johannesburg or Cape Town into separate living areas for the sake of having separate Afrikaans- and English-medium schools.

No wonder then, that instead of welcoming the Verwoerd "mother-tongue" schools, Africans hate the very idea. It is hard to

learn history in English. But it is better to learn history in English than to learn handwork in Sesotho.

The Eiselen Report does not exclude the teaching of English and Afrikaans to African boys and girls. It says, in paragraph 924, that these official languages should be taught, but however:

“in such a way that the Bantu child will be able to find his way in the European communities; to follow oral or written instructions; and to carry on a simple conversation with European about his work

There you have it. “Bring daardie sak mielies! “Ja, baas.” “Jim, sweep the floor!” “Yes, Missis.” Teacher, you thought you belonged to the noble company of Socrates in the high profession of drawing forth and leading out the tender souls of the young. You were wrong. You are not there to teach the languages of Shakespeare and Langenhoven, but to teach your pupil how to follow instructions and listen to the baas.

We little thought the day would come when we should mourn the passing of the mission schools. The day is here.

WESTERN AREAS

By MOSES KOTANE

THE Townships of Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare were established as Non-European free townships way back in 1905 and 1912. They were set up as places where Africans too could acquire, buy and hold landed property in their own names in the same way as other, non-African, citizens of the Union of South Africa do.

The three of them together have a total of 2,605 stands on which there are dwelling houses, schools, shops, churches, halls, tea rooms and cinemas. These townships have electric lights, water and tarred roads. They house a Non-European population of some 60,000 souls or 19,130 families. They are within five miles of the centre of the city of Johannesburg, and they are served by what according to all South African Non-European standards is regarded as a tolerably good and efficient bus service.

Now the Nationalist Government and its conscienceless sadist Dr. Verwoerd ruthlessly plan to uproot this large and old established Non-European population of Johannesburg. To enable them

to carry out their oppressive and humiliating policy of Apartheid, the Nationalists have passed the "Natives Resettlement Act" which provides for "the removal of Natives from any area in the magisterial district of Johannesburg or any adjoining magisterial district and their settlement elsewhere, . . ."

This Act legalises plunder and downright swindling. It empowers the Government to acquire land "by purchase, exchange, expropriation or otherwise." The Government's brutal Western Areas Removal Scheme envisages the forcible removal of all the inhabitants of the affected areas without regard to the loss suffered by those who have invested their whole life savings in there, and without offering equal ~~homes~~ at places to which they are to be removed. In addition to and apart from being cheated and chased out of their property and homes, therefore, these Africans will be deprived of the right to buy and own land in freehold.

The working people of Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare, the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants in these areas, are to be removed to Meadowlands, some six or seven miles further from their places of work; fares will be higher than they are and transport services will be of the scantiest kind; they will have to get up at three and four o'clock in the mornings, and come back late at night. At Meadowlands they will be ~~subjected~~ to oppressive and degrading regulations; there will be no electric lights; no tarred roads; water will be scarce, and it is doubtful whether school accommodation and recreational facilities as well as places of worship will be sufficient for the needs and requirements of the people.

Government propaganda has it that the scheme has been prompted by the desire on the part of the Government to abolish slums. This is not true. The truth is that this is the implementation of the apartheid policy. If it were true that the Government really wanted to do away with slums it would have started with the shanties and pondokkies at Moroka and Orlando, and with the squalors of Vrededorp, and not with people who are relatively well housed. Let no one be misled by this false propaganda.

No, the scheme must be read together with other sinister acts of the Nationalist Party. It must be seen as a part of a huge conspiracy against the people of South Africa, in particular against the Non-Europeans and the working class. It is a part of a scheme to render the people hopelessly impotent organisationally and helpless politically and industrially by dividing them and impoverishing them, and by keeping them ignorant and making them suspicious of one another. It is a part of the Group Areas Act, the Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act, the Industrial Conciliation Act Amendment Bill, the Bantu Education Act, the Bantu Authorities Act and the Suppression of Communism Act. The Western Areas Removal Scheme is such a scheme

This predatory scheme has aroused the indignation of the residents in the affected areas and alarmed the African people and lovers of justice and fairplay throughout the country. It is the utter injustice of it all that has aroused the anger and opposition of the Liberals, Labourites, Christians and even of the majority of the members of the United Party. These people together with the residents of the Western Areas and the African National Congress, the S.A. Indian Congress and the South African Congress of Democrats are to be highly congratulated for the splendid and admirable work they have done so far in drawing the attention of the country and the world to the gross injustice that is being done to the people of Sophiatown, Martindale and Newclare.

However, much more still remains to be done. The people in the affected areas and throughout the country must be made aware of the issues at stake in the Western Areas Removal Scheme. Let there be no mistake about it is not only the Western Areas that are affected by the scheme and the Act. Alexandra Township, Lady Selborne and similar areas throughout the Union will be dealt with in the same way sooner or later.

All the South Africans must be made to realise that the Western Areas Removal Scheme is a matter of grave national importance. They must be made to understand that they are on trial; that they cannot with impunity allow the Government get away with its criminal plan which the Western Areas Removal Scheme is but a part, and that it is their political responsibility and national duty to respond to the clarion call to halt the Government in its intentions.

WRITE FOR LIBERATION

The Editor of "Liberation" cordially invites contributions in the form of articles on political, scientific, literary and other matters of general interest, short stories, poems, or factual material upon which articles can be based.

If stamped addressed envelopes are enclosed with the articles, the Editor undertakes to return them with critical comments in the event of their not being considered suitable.

Address all communications to the Editor, "Liberation," P.O. Box 10120, Johannesburg.

BUILDING, BUILDING, BUILDING

By RUTH FIRST

THE day I left Moscow all newspapers carried reports of the first atomic-energy power plant opened in the Soviet Union and this was the main topic of conversation everywhere: in the metro, in the buses, in hotel lifts and dining rooms, in the plane in which I flew to China, and here, too, in Peking. Everyone was elated. For while in the Soviet Union all are appalled at the thought of using atomic science for devastating atom and hydrogen bombs ("It is equivalent to thinking of the power of electricity in terms of the electric chair," was the way one Soviet scientist put it) all understand the tremendous benefits the Soviet citizen will reap in his everyday life if atomic power is harnessed by man to production and for creative purposes.

This atomic energy plant just opened is a small experimental one with an output of only 5,000 kilowatts, but already work has started on a second plant that will have an output of 100,000 kilowatts.

So life strides on in the Soviet Union, as though by Seven-League Boots.

Graphs of industrial production soar as do the temperature of patients in high fever, but ever higher, with no crises of overproduction and unemployment to bring them hurtling down again. In this country there is no limit to man's endeavour.

First illiteracy is wiped out, then seven years' education is made compulsory for all, now 10 years' schooling for every single soul in town and country, far east and far north. In a Republic like Armenia which 34 years ago had not a single secondary school, one in every four persons is now enrolled either at a school, university or technical institute.

Statistics again? Yes, in the Soviet Union one must learn them everywhere.

Seven sharp falls in the cost of living since the end of the war. Wages in 1953 219 per cent higher than in 1940. In the formerly backward Armenia, whose capital, Erevan, had three small factories in 1913, the per capita output of electro-energy is higher today than in France or Italy.

More statistics: 47 theatres and opera houses in Moscow, but still not enough. Queues for the ballet where less than half a century ago there were queues for bread. A new canal-dredging machine used on the Volga-Don Canal does the work of 35,000 men armed with shovels and spades. Everyone offers you statistics: so many acres of tree plantations to beautify the new Moscow and the countryside; so many square metres of housing in new 5- and 7-storey apartment buildings; so much manpower saved by the introduction of new techniques and the invention of new machines.

For the Soviet people, fired with the joy of their own creation and experiencing in their daily lives the benefits of their skill and effort, progress is rapid, but never fast enough. So progress must be measured and statistics learnt and each year, each quarter, they become outworn as the country gallops forward.

For this is a country in which change is visible to the naked eye.

Leave Moscow in May and when you return in November you may find yourself in a street completely unrecognisable, so many new buildings have gone up. In June in Moscow work was proceeding simultaneously on 200 buildings. Six-storey buildings take seven months from start to finish. How is this possible? Building techniques have been utterly transformed. On no building site in the Soviet Union have I seen lines of men endlessly trundling wheelbarrows up narrow plank gangways, tipping the loads and returning once again for a dozen spadefuls. More of the construction is done in the vast mechanised factory plant than on the building site. Roofs are laid in sections; painstaking plastering of public buildings has been eliminated and new ceramic materials in large layers are used instead. Paint spraying machines do the work of dozens of men in half the time.

At an exhibition of new construction methods I saw how great blocks of the concrete foundation, slabs the equivalent of a half-day's bricklaying by one worker, whole staircases are lowered into position by giant cranes.

So it was possible to rebuild Stalingrad, almost completely destroyed in 1942-3 in the fiercest battle of the war, in one-fifth of the time estimated by a visiting American engineer. So Leningrad has been rebuilt and Sebastopol, and new suburbs of new cities are shooting up faster than the first grass-shoots on the new lawns before the apartment buildings.

Whatever housing problems remain in Soviet towns and villages, largely a legacy of the war, will be solved thus in the next few years.

One has to get accustomed in the Soviet Union not only to the value of statistics to measure the constantly changing life of the

people, but also to the scale on which things are done in this country.

The Volga-Don Canal in the Stalingrad-Rostov area, for which 22 successive plans were submitted to the Tsars of Russia, was completed in less than four years, one ahead of schedule. (The Panama Canal took 35 years, and the Suez eleven.) Using the first walking excavators in the world, each manned by a team of 17 engineers and highly trained operators; giant bulldozers, special concrete-making plants that rushed liquid concrete to the site, there to be poured and pressed in record time, work on the canal proceeded at an unprecedented rate. The Don River had to be raised to meet the River Volga by a system of pumping stations, reservoirs and nine sluices in a river staircase. Whole villages of altogether 9000 families had to be moved from one region to give way to a reservoir. Cossack families watched their homes transplanted to new sites, and in a street named "Sea Street" before there was any water in sight, they stood by as with the opening of a great reservoir, the man-made sea was brought to their door-steps. A row of hills was in the way of the Canal, so some of the engineers of the Moscow metro were called in to construct underground tunnels.

So nature was re-made. Today cotton, rice and grapes are grown on formerly dry and barren steppes. A system of subsidiary canals will feed water to the arid lands of this vast area; giant hydro-power stations along the canal will electrify agriculture. Besides the irrigation systems, shelter belts of trees are being planted to protect the land from the hot air which parches them in the summer areas. The soil will be made fertile, and the climate will be changed as well.

And by this canal, and the other two, the one from Archangel in the north to Leningrad and the second the Moscow-Volga Canal, Moscow in the interior has now become the Port of Five Seas.

The Volga-Don Canal is not only an engineering feat. It is a work of art and a splendour to look upon. Triumphal arches are the gateways to the locks; festooned lamps light the way at night along the canal banks; the neat slopes of these banks that turn them into boulevards and the sculptures and motifs celebrate the triumph of man over nature and the advent of the era in which science, engineering and art are raising human civilisation to unprecedented heights.

Stalingrad is the most beautiful city I saw in the Soviet Union. The embankment of the riverside, not yet completed, stretches for miles along the city front and with its columned theatres and public buildings, structured arches and wide steps here is a new Athens. But here the marble halls, the statues in the parks, the drama and the dancing is not for a privileged aristocracy. Manual labour in the Soviet Union is being replaced by the machine; agriculture in some regions will shortly be totally mechanised. So already this year the Soviet Government is discussing the shortening of the working day. And in his leisure time the citizen of Stalingrad, as everywhere else in this vast country, is building a new culture in which all share equally.

NUSAS AND STUDENT UNITY

By LIONEL FORMAN

WITHIN the next few months a student meeting is to take place in Johannesburg which may have important consequences for the whole South African democratic youth movement.

At the recent Assembly of the National Union of South African Students the offer was made by the delegates of the University of Natal (Non-European) and the Bantu Normal College to sponsor a "Unity Meeting" between representatives of the Non-European centres which have disaffiliated from NUSAS — Fort Hare, U.N. (N.E.) and Hewat Training College — and the NUSAS Executive to discuss, in the words of the Bantu Normal College delegate "the changes NUSAS will have to make if it is to be true national union, representative of Non-European as well as European students."

Over the past year there has been confusion and a certain amount of disagreement in the democratic camp on the correct attitude to NUSAS. Some have continued to take a leading part in NUSAS activities; some have rejected the organisation as a waste of time; and some, even, have declared it a harmful organisation which should be opposed.

The forthcoming meeting makes it more essential than ever for democrats to enter into a full discussion of the issues involved, so that a clear and united stand can be made.

This article aims at assisting such discussion by outlining the main facts and arguments at issue.

NUSAS was formed in the 1920's led by Leo Marquard, today a leading liberal. Like almost every other European organisation it seemed only vaguely aware of the existence of Non-Europeans and no attempt was made to affiliate Non-European students. At first NUSAS was representative of all students but the Nats. were soon at work and the Afrikaans-speaking centres broke away to form the fiercely racialistic Afrikaanse Studentebond.

The war brought a seven-year break in NUSAS activities, and when it was re-born in 1945 it took the step which transformed its character and turned it into one of the pet hates of the Nationalists. It invited the Non-European Fort Hare University to affiliate.

This led, from 1945 to 1952, to a sharp running battle inside NUSAS, as democrats forced the always hesitant leadership stage by stage into a more uncompromising stand against apartheid. Until 1952 the democrats won every major battle.

The First Big Battle

The first big battle was over social segregation. In 1946 the Mayor of Cape Town invited NUSAS delegates to a colour-bar reception. Democrats boycotted the reception, organised their own rival non colour-bar party. As a result of the determined campaign NUSAS resolved that in future no NUSAS function could have a colour-bar—that in its own affairs NUSAS would tolerate neither academic nor social colour-bar. Cape Town promptly disaffiliated in protest. But to the amazement of the Cape Town leaders the students of their university voted overwhelmingly for the NUSAS decision and reaffiliation.

Then NUSAS, at the insistence of the democrats went on record as supporting the principle of the extension of academic non-segregation at all universities. This caused a major furore for some time. This time it was the turn of Durban, Pietermaritzburg and Rhodes to disaffiliate. But once more NUSAS survived the shock and rather than be isolated the disaffiliates returned.

Next victory came shortly after the passing of the Suppression of Communism Act, when in the teeth of bitter executive opposition a named student was elected to the Executive of eight members. A year later, the first Non-European, N. G. Moodley of Natal University (Non-European) was elected to the Executive.

In 1951 one of the bitterest conflicts began when there was a strong move for disaffiliation from the International Union of Students which has the backing of democratic students all over the world. By a narrow margin the progressives won the day.

Further, in the teeth of bitter executive opposition a resolution in support of peace was carried — a bold step indeed in the heat of the cold war of 1951.

Then came the Defiance Campaign and the face of South Africa changed.

Until the Defiance Campaign Fort Hare and the other Non-European centres in NUSAS had been content with what NUSAS offered. But with the great upsurge of the liberatory movement NUSAS was seen to be blissfully unaware of the struggle for freedom, and all absorbed in the affairs of students "as such."

The last straw came when NUSAS finally succumbed to world hysteria and disaffiliated from what it described as the "communist-dominated" International Union of Students.

In quick succession Fort Hare, UN(NE) and Hewat left NUSAS.

There was an enthusiastic, but shortlived effort to set up a new union — the South African Union of Democratic Students — but the difficulties were too great and SAUDS did not flourish.

This then was the background to the NUSAS Assembly which took place in Grahamstown this July.

The Main Decisions

These were the main decisions:

The acceptance of a compromise form of associate membership with the I.U.S. involving participation in its practical activities but dissociation from "political" decisions — with co-operation with the rival U.S. financed splitters international on the same basis.

Unanimous decisions to ask the A.N.C. among other organisations for assistance in the struggle against government interference and the imposition of apartheid at the universities, and to participate in the opposition to the Western Areas Removal Scheme.

The acceptance of the offer by Bulgaria of scholarships for African students. (It is to be hoped that suitable candidates will apply for these as soon as possible).

The election of a progressive executive including an African for the first time in NUSAS history.

The unanimous acceptance of the proposal for the Executive to meet with the disaffiliated centres to discuss with them the inadequacies of NUSAS.

A glance at these decisions reveals the importance of democratic student unity to ensure that something worth-while comes of them.

In the international sphere, experience has shown that no matter how strong may be the Assembly decisions for co-operation, the implementation of the decision depends entirely on the inclinations of the Executive. And strong student pressure on the present executive is the only means of ensuring that the maximum benefit is derived from our relations with the International Union of Students — to receive the widest distribution of the excellent IUS publications, to participate in its efforts for world peace and its work for an end to colonialism and oppression.

Nationally, the decision to work together with the liberatory organisations in defence of university freedom can be made to lead to a deeper understanding among students of the nature of the struggle for democracy.

Clearly also, the question of higher education will figure in the Freedom Charter and there is absolutely no reason therefore why NUSAS should not participate in the Congress of the People and its preparation.

Democratic Student Unity

Student unity is required, but the most glaring fact that the NUSAS Assembly revealed is that this democratic student unity is lacking. There exists a sharp difference of opinion on whether or not democratic students should work in NUSAS at all. And more startling than the existence of differences of opinion is the fact that democratic students have never yet taken the trouble to get together in an organised way and argue them out. If there is one lesson to be learned from experience it is the urgent need for all progressives to be united on the stand they take, whatever the stand may be.

Before the meeting between the disaffiliated centres and the NUSAS Executive takes place it is essential that progressives should have completed the fullest discussion of the problems involved so that there shall be no division and confusion, but a clear and united stand-point.

What should that stand-point be?

The essential point has already been made by the delegate of UN. (N.E.) at the Assembly. He stressed that while NUSAS may be serving the needs of European students in dealing with university matters only, it is completely failing in its duty to Non-European students. For the latter the essence of their needs as students is not confined to the university but is part of the whole struggle for human rights. The absence of these rights cuts off any possibility of university education for the majority of Non-Europeans, and makes the whole period of studentship of those who do reach the universities one of harassment and uncertainty.

The delegate of the Bantu Normal College put it quite simply. "If the Bantu Education Act succeeds there will no longer be any problem — no African will be able to qualify for the university."

The essential, then, before democrats can offer wholehearted support for NUSAS activities is that it should adjust its sights so that it no longer sees things with a purely "European" approach, but takes proper cognisance of the needs of its Non-European members. NUSAS has already — albeit hesitantly — shown its willingness to recognise this necessity.

Congress of the People

The real test — and the testing-time will coincide roughly with the meeting at Wits — will be NUSAS willingness to participate in

the Congress of the People. THIS SHOULD BE THE CENTRAL DEMAND OF THE DISAFFILIATED CENTRES AND OF ALL DEMOCRATS.

If this proposition is agreed to, then a new urgent need arises. And that is to ensure, firstly, the widest student support for the Congress, and secondly, the full participation of the disaffiliated centres in the meeting with NUSAS.

The latter point is stressed because the above-mentioned circumstances under which NUSAS would become an organisation which democrats can wholeheartedly support will not arise by a miracle. They will only come about if every democrat pulls his full weight to ensure their fruition. Certainly NUSAS will not follow such a policy if the militant students are not there to demand it.

It is difficult to see what arguments can be brought forward to justify a refusal to participate in the meeting. Certainly there is nothing to be lost.

The chief arguments which have been brought forward to support a refusal to have any dealings with NUSAS have been its European orientation, its break with the IUS, its refusal to take a general political stand outside the university sphere.

As long as NUSAS does not identify itself with the liberatory movement, any work in it is a waste of time, the argument has run.

It is, however, not a fact that every student who supports the policy of the Congresses is so taken up with direct work for them that he has absolutely no time for any other activity. It is essential for democrats to work on many fronts at once, and it is very doubtful if it is true that those students who are finding time to work in NUSAS as well are any less active in the work of the Congresses than those who have no time to waste on NUSAS.

And apart from this individual saving of energy there is nothing whatever to be gained by refusing to work in NUSAS.

The Value of NUSAS

Once it is understood clearly that by its very nature and composition it is not realistic to hope for NUSAS to become part of the liberatory movement, the more limited but nevertheless useful things which can be gained from membership, fall into perspective.

* Just as it is necessary for every worker to belong to and take an active part in his trade union, so it is useful for every student to take an active part in NUSAS. Student Unity in defence of their interests is, in itself, something desirable.

* Even if NUSAS is most hesitant to take any progressive step,

the influence of democrats in it has at least prevented it from allying itself with the reactionary forces. The one real barrier to the swamping of NUSAS by the fascist Afrikaner Studentebond is the absence of a colour-bar in NUSAS. If the Non-European students walk out — or even allow themselves to be forced out without a struggle — the way is open for the entire European student movement to be captured by the A.S.B. and converted into a powerful and active anti-democratic force.

- * NUSAS has proved to be an excellent platform for the putting of democratic ideas to students who would never otherwise have the opportunity of hearing them. And substantial numbers of students have been won over to active participation in the liberatory struggle.
- * While experience has shown the organisational and financial difficulties of organising a more militant national student federation, NUSAS serves a most valuable meeting place for democrats from all the universities, where they can exchange their views and co-ordinate activities at their own centres.
- * But most important, there is no doubt at all that NUSAS can be convinced of the need for participation — even though participation is limited — in the struggle for democracy. And who will argue that we should spurn allies in that struggle?

For all these reasons there seems little doubt that the correct policy to pursue is for the disaffiliated centres to attend the meeting and put forward a minimum essential policy for NUSAS — greater identification with the needs of Non-European students, manifested immediately by participation in the most urgent immediate activity of students — preparations for the Congress of the People. NUSAS could not justifiably refuse such a proposal.

Nor could democrats, once the proposal is accepted, refuse to work within NUSAS.

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THE WHEELBARROW

By RUTH MILLER

THE black man was bent almost double as he staggered down the street with the wheelbarrow. It was loaded with all his belongings, and the bed and mattress bulged, and the cane table on top slipped with every jerk of his feet. Pots and pans, blankets,

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