

WORLD STAGE by SPECTATOR

Western Correspondents Agree:

WHOLE OF INDO-CHINA TURNS TO HO CHI-MINH

SINCE the Geneva Conference Indo-China has dropped out of the newspaper headlines and been largely forgotten. But events of the greatest importance to Asia and to the maintenance of world peace have been going on there.

Under the Geneva agreement, Indo-China proper was divided along the 17th parallel into North and South, the North, including the capital, Hanoi, and the port Haiphong, to be administered by the Viet-Minh (People's Government), and the South by the puppet Vietnamese. Within two years of the agreement general elections were to be held in both North and South Viet Nam with the object of bringing into being a single government in a united Viet Nam. Laos and Cambodia were to remain independent states for the time being.

The division left about 13 million people in the North, as against about nine million in the South. The delay of two years in holding the general elections was insisted on by the Western powers at the Geneva Conference. They realised that had an election been held immediately Ho Chi-minh would have won a resounding victory throughout the country. They hoped two years would give them time to organise to "save Viet Nam from Communism."

The lapse of time since the Geneva Conference, however, has witnessed only a further strengthening of the appeal of the Ho Chi-minh regime in the North and further demoralisation in the South. Here are the comments of some of the Western newspaper correspondents:

Smell of Death

Robert P. Martin, in U.S. News, said of Saigon, the capital of the South, that it "has the same smell of death that shrouded the port of Shanghai and other great cities of China before they fell to the Communists. . . . Gambling casinos and night clubs . . . do a roaring business. . . . A new 300-girl brothel has opened in a compound patterned after an American motel, run by Binh Xuyen, a gangster organisation that controls all the opium, gambling and prostitution trading in the city. . . . Corruption is on a massive scale. Speculation is rampant and profits are enormous. . . . Powerful cliques and individuals are struggling to get into office—not because they want to fight Communism but because they want power and profits. . . . Very strong criticism is reserved for the United States, whose diplomats still operate on the theory that if enough U.S. dollars are poured into Viet Nam the Communists can be beaten."



"Its chief is also head of South Viet Nam's police. . . . Corruption is on a massive scale. Speculation is rampant and profits are enormous. . . . Powerful cliques and individuals are struggling to get into office—not because they want to fight Communism but because they want power and profits. . . . Very strong criticism is reserved for the United States, whose diplomats still operate on the theory that if enough U.S. dollars are poured into Viet Nam the Communists can be beaten."

The London Tribune reported—"In Saigon, capital of the South, there is complete anarchy. The Prime Minister, Ngo Dinh-diem, spends his time feuding with the army."

"His house is closely guarded with battalions of police. And he is mobilising refugees from the North into armed bands, not to fight the Communists but his own generals!"

"In the interior of the country the situation is even worse. Various independent armies, controlled by religious sects, are fighting a civil war for possession of the territory evacuated by the Communists. . . ."

"Communists Will Win"

"Hence it seems almost certain that the Communists will win the elections and occupy the whole of Viet Nam."

The special correspondent of the London Times quotes a citizen of Saigon as saying—"There is more support for the Vietminh in the South even than in the North. Here people feel it is the only hope." The correspondent adds—"The pro-Vietminh feeling is of all kinds. . . . But it is most commonly the vague idea that at least the Vietminh are efficient and incorrupt. At least they represent hope, and elsewhere there is no hope visible."

Dennis Bloodworth, in an article headed "Eighteen Months for a Miracle" in the London Observer, concludes—"The Vietminh resistance. . . has if anything increased its popularity and influence since the cease-fire. Sick of neglect, corruption, political rivalries, armed clashes and weak government, the population has tended to turn towards Ho Chi-minh for salvation."

Even a United States senator, Mansfield, reported to the Foreign Relations Committee after a tour of Indo-China that "all of Viet Nam is open in one way or another to absorption by the Vietminh. Even now there is little to stand in their way."

Mansfield said the morale of the French forces was shaken after the disaster of Dien Bien Phu, and in any event the French forces might have "outlived their usefulness" in Indo-China. He said internal political quarrels among the Vietnamese factions, and even "blatant chicanery on the part of France," had weakened the Nationalist Government and discouraged popular acceptance of it. The national army of the Southern Government was disorganised after its defeats in the field, and in any case was being converted "into the private army of its commander and his adviser to be used not for the legitimate purposes of the Government but as a tool in the manoeuvring for political power in Saigon."

Of the Northern capital of Hanoi, French journalist Max Clos reported in Le Monde—"Once more the 'experts' were wrong. Nobody has been imprisoned. Nobody has been openly bullied. Yet in a few days the Vietminh radically transformed Hanoi . . . without violence, by a technique of imposing nothing, forbidding nothing. . . . We have seen the perfect functioning of the system which gave the Vietminh its victory in the North. Its force comes essentially from the fact that it touches a chord . . . in any kind of human being—the desire to lead . . . a more honest life, more useful to his country; the ambition to take part in a great, collective effort."

"Horried, Helpless Admiration"

And perhaps the most remarkable report came from the pen of the American journalist Joseph Alsop, who visited Indo-China last December. Visiting an area from which the Vietminh had been evacuating to the North to comply with the Geneva agreement, he admitted "a sort of horrified, helpless admiration for the Communist achievement—not, of course, for the thing itself but for the courage shown, the incredible difficulties overcome, the sheer brilliance of the political-military feat in a huge region with a population close to three million, with no local resources except its rice production, with no hope of serious outside aid, situated . . . as far as possible from the main Communist base in the North. Here the Vietminh first raised the standard of revolt. . . . nine long years ago. Such arms as they had got from the Japanese and a treasury of 75 piastres (about £2) were their sole assets."

"An army of 30,000 regulars and regional troops was organised, trained and armed with captured French heavy weapons and small arms painfully manufactured in tiny, camouflaged local shops. . . . A permanent government was formed, complete with financial, economic, educational, health, propaganda and police services. Currency was printed, taxes were levied and budgets were annually prepared—in the very teeth of the French military power."

"I wish I could report that the Vietminh organisation . . . was feeble, evanescent and hated by the people. But the record of its achievements in nine years all too clearly confirms my own short observation of its efficiency, power and popular support."

"Earnest Moral Endeavour"

Similarly, Lois Mitchison reports in the Manchester Guardian how Hanoi, formerly "profoundly frivolous . . . a town of pavement cafes and gay shops, and streets with bars, brothels and boasting soldiers cat-calling happily at anybody of any age in any sort of skirt," was now, under Ho Chi-minh, full of an "atmosphere of earnest moral endeavour, of hard work and plain living." She was a bit sarcastic about the puritanism of the new regime, but had to admit—"There are certain obvious gains in the new state. People are encouraged to help each other . . . officials seemed to be both friendly and helpful."

French journalist Robert Guillaun reported from Saigon to Le Monde—"We may perhaps not have to wait until the July, 1956, elections to see the Red Flag floating over Saigon. . . . How could it be otherwise when the striking contrast is clear even to eyes closed for the longest time between the regime at Hanoi and the one that is already completing the process of decay in Saigon?"

It is against this background that the manoeuvrings of the Americans in Indo-China must be seen. The mission of General Lawton Collins in Saigon has been openly proclaimed as one to salvage Vietnam from Communism. How is it to be done? By postponing the elections, if possible. By military force, if necessary.

U.S. News reported in December that "some American officials" felt that only by somehow post-

YOUTH RALLY BROKEN UP DURBAN. A mass Colonial Youth Day rally was broken up by the police on Monday. A second rally, held in Clairwood, continued in spite of police attempts to stop it. The Natal Indian Youth Congress has issued a strong protest.

UNEMPLOYMENT IN AMERICA might reach 4,000,000 in the next two months, compared with the figure of 2,838,000 last December, the American Federation of Labour has reported.

HARVEY MATUSOW, the man who recently confessed he lied to help convict 13 United States Communist Party leaders under the Smith Act, has been summoned to give evidence before the Senate Internal Security Sub-committee.

Govt. Aims To Make Chiefs "Spies, Police, Tax Collectors"

—A.N.C. Comment On New Bill

JOHANNESBURG.—"The Native Administration Amendment Bill, which purports to increase the powers of the African chiefs, is a deliberate fraud on the part of the Nationalist Government, calculated to bribe the chiefs into believing that their status has been raised and to prevent them from joining the people's struggle for freedom," the African National Congress declares in a statement issued here this week.

"ITS aim is to convert the chiefs into spies, policemen and tax collectors."

The A.N.C. statement continues: "Realising the mounting tide of opposition against its reactionary and unpopular policies of racial discrimination, the Government is desperately seeking allies from among the chiefs who will be assigned the dirty task of administering the apartheid measures."

"We warn the chiefs not to fall into this trap, as otherwise there might arise serious conflicts between themselves and the people."

FRAUDULENT

The fraudulent character of the attitude of the Government towards African chiefs, the A.N.C. continues,

has been clearly revealed in the execution of the so-called rehabilitation scheme where chiefs who opposed the culling of stock in the interests of their people, have been deposed or banished.

"The interests of the chiefs are inextricably interwoven with those of the wide masses of their people, and hostile to the policies of the Nationalist Government," the A.N.C. maintains.

"The correct course to be followed by our chiefs is to support the African National Congress, which has for years devoted itself to the building of an independent African nation."

The A.N.C. concludes: "The noble works of such celebrated chiefs as Chaka, Moshesh, Sekukuni, Hintsa, Khama and many others must be emulated by all the African chiefs. They stood not for the division, but for the unity of their people. They were opposed to slavery and serfdom and waged determined struggles to assert their right to independence."

Urban Areas Act Used Against Women

Deported After 18 Years Residence

JOHANNESBURG.—The hated section 29 of the Urban Areas Act, under which Africans are deported from the cities, and which has brought tragedy into so many homes and broken up countless African families, is now operating against African women, too.

The most recent amendment of the Act made section 29 applicable to women, and they too can be investigated and deemed "idle and disorderly." A number of municipalities are using this clause in the law to deport women from the towns.

Krugersdorp was one of the first local authorities to start arresting African women in large numbers for pass offences, and also to hold enquiries into women in terms of the act.

Mrs. Rachel Musi, a mother of seven children, was one of those "investigated" declared "disorderly" and deported from Krugersdorp to the Lichtenburg area.

This, although she had lived in Krugersdorp for over 18 years. An enquiry into Mrs. Musi was started last May and on June 15 the Native Commissioner ordered that she be removed under police escort to "her place of domicile," not to return to any Rand urban area, or Pretoria or Vereeniging, for three years.

Three of Mrs. Musi's children were at school in Krugersdorp, one of them doing very well in Form three.

Mrs. Musi applied that her case before the Native Commissioner be re-heard, as she was not legally represented at the enquiry and was ignorant of the proceedings. A Supreme Court decision ordered a re-hearing, but her fate was once again confirmed by the Native Commissioner and the deportation order came into effect.

HUSBAND DEAD

During this investigation into Mrs. Musi, her husband, who had worked for eighteen years for the Krugersdorp municipality, died. No effort was made to find out whether Mrs. Musi would have any means of support in Lichtenburg, where she had last lived before she was married.

Four women from Vereeniging were recently declared "idle and disorderly" and ordered to leave their homes in the location for Evaton, and not to re-enter Vereeniging for two years.

The four are Mrs. Martha Mokhotu, Mrs. Miriam Tlou, Mrs. Anna Letoga and Mrs. Evalina Jantjies.

The enquiries in terms of section 29 started just after the location residents had organised a boycott of a new municipal beer-hall in the location. During picketing, nine residents were arrested. No charges were laid against the nine, among whom were the four women. But shortly afterwards the four women were called before the Native Commissioner and an investigation into them was started.

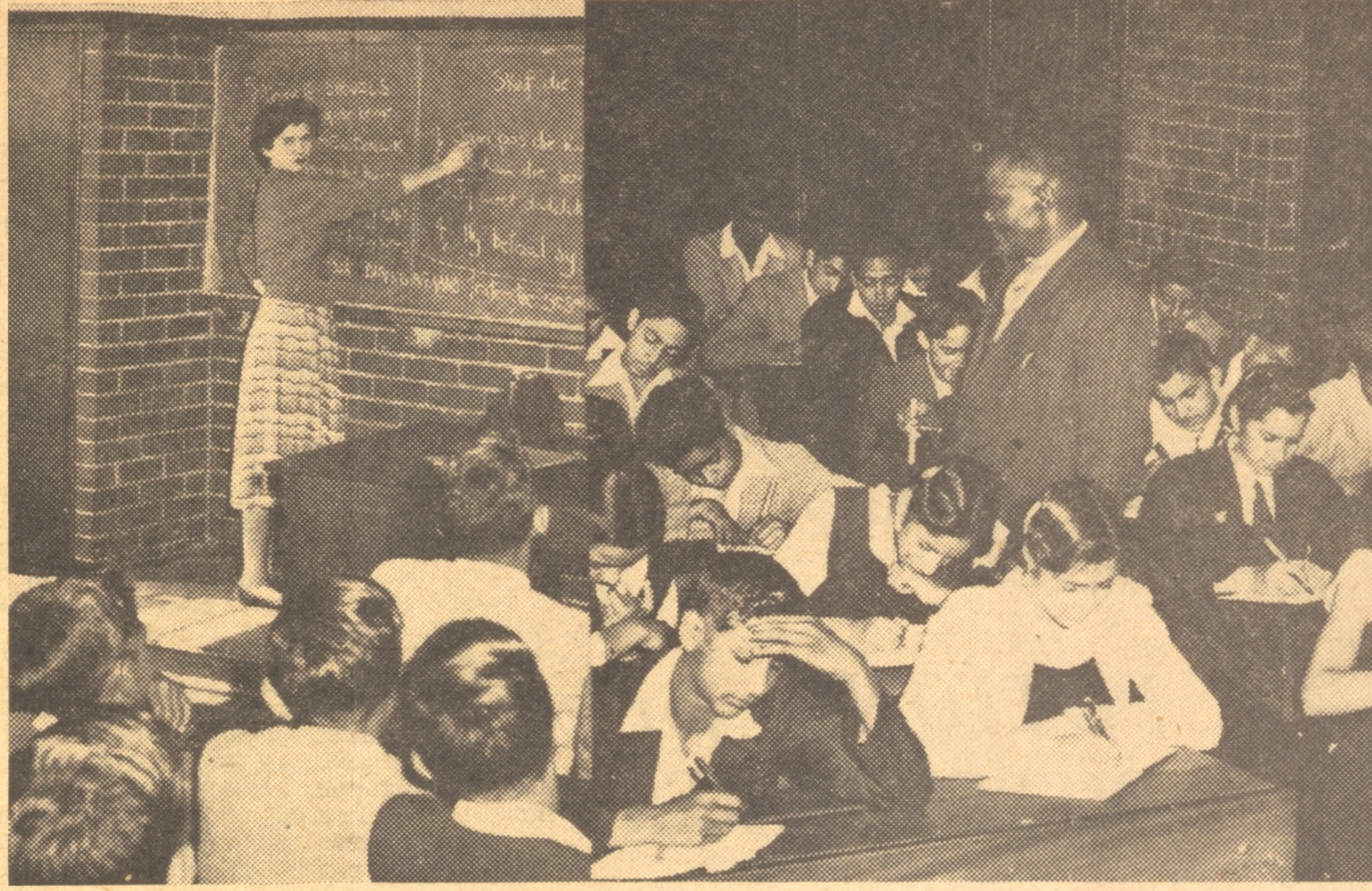
The women are attempting to appeal against the deportation order. The Native Commissioner has ruled that there is no appeal from his administrative decision, so an application to the Supreme Court is being considered.

war. They have heard the chief of the U.S. Military Advisory Group in Saigon, Lt.-Gen. John W. (Iron Mike) O'Daniel, call for a display of "guts and resiliency" to make South Viet Nam "a proving ground for American determination to whip Communist infiltration of South-East Asia." They have noted the visit of China-hating Admiral Radford, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, to Saigon to check up on measures to maintain the "status quo" in South-East Asia. They have read the accounts of the NATO meeting in Paris in December, where it was decided that, if necessary, atomic weapons would be used to maintain the Western front in Asia.

Thus neutralism and a desire for peace and unity with the North is growing in South Viet Nam, even among circles normally hostile to Communism. So strong, in fact, had the peace movement grown that the Diem Government clamped down on it and arrested the 22 leading members (including Catholics, Buddhists and Cao Dai and Binh Xuyen sects) of the Vietnamese Movement for the Defence of Peace merely on the ground that peace was subversive.

Yet the desire for peace persists. Alsop reported "a good deal of eyebrow-raising" at three banquets given by French officials when the cook served cold fish, cold chicken and a rich cake with "Peace" spelt out in mayonnaise, truffles and the icing of the cake.

The aim of the peace movement, which is not linked with the World Peace Council, is merely to ensure the carrying out of the Geneva agreement and the holding of the general elections in July, 1956. The more the Americans try to prevent the achievement of these aims, the more the Vietnamese people, of all shades of opinion, will unite to support them.



The Central Indian High School is the name given by the Parents' Association to the new private school they have opened to accommodate the children who are boycotting the unwanted "ghetto school" at Lenasia. Teachers of all races work at the school in Fordburg. Johannesburg School Board has decided to send a deputation to the Administrator to point out that the Lenasia school is unacceptable to the Indian community.

WELCOME TO THE NEW TRADES AND LABOUR COUNCIL

By RAY ALEXANDER

THE formation of a new trade union centre, maintaining the tradition of the old South African Trades and Labour Council in its most militant and progressive period, was made inevitable by the colour bar clause of the S.A. Trade Union Council which excluded African trade unions from its membership.

The former S.A.T.L.C. by a majority vote accepted apartheid in its ranks and dissolved itself so that affiliated unions could join the colour-bar body. The dissolution took place in October—five months ago—but the S.A.T.L.C. has actually ceased to exist as a fighting body for a very long time.

The responsibility for its suicide lies at the door of those trade union leaders who put the approval of the Nationalists above the interests of their class, and preferred security in their jobs to solidarity with their fellow trade unionists who were battling for trade union rights against the Fascist clique.

They would have welcomed it. The founders of South African trade unionism—men like Bill Andrews, Charlie Tyler and "Taffy" Long—would have repudiated the actions of those who occupied the positions in the trade union movement which had been created by hard work and sacrifice of previous generations. By their standards, Bill Andrews and his comrades would, on the other hand, have given their blessing to the proposed S.A. Trades and Labour Council (1955). It is this body that maintains the tradition of working class solidarity and internationalism. Its draft constitution, which is to be discussed at the inaugural conference on the 5th and 6th March, does not define membership in terms of the bosses' language, i.e. by "registered" trade unions like the S.A.T.U.C. constitution does, but opens its doors to all bona fide trade unions.

Although it is to bear the historical name of the body which for 24 years dominated the trade union movement, the new organisation

representatives drawn from all individual centres in South Africa. Secondly, more responsibility should be carried by local committees and they won't get this from the constitution in its present draft.

Conference should delete clause 14(h) which reads that "local committees shall not have the power to decide matters of national importance." This wording is taken from the constitution of the dissolved S.A.T.L.C. which used it in order to suppress any attempt by the progressive section of the movement to put up a fight against governments and bosses.

At this stage in the career of the new organisation, simplicity and flexibility are desirable. Elaborate constitutional formalities are a hindrance; it is activity and militance that the South African workers need most.

PEOPLE'S CHINA is giving economic help to the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam under an agreement signed between the two countries earlier this year. The principal feature is the dispatch of 1,000 trained Chinese railway workers and technicians to assist in building a railway from Hanoi to the pass into China a few miles north of Langson, where it links with the Chinese railway to Nanking. The railway, about 90 miles long, is being built from both ends simultaneously, and trains are already running on the first section from Hanoi.

THE INDIA-SOVIET AGREEMENT, under which the Soviet Union will install a steel mill with a capacity of one million tons a year in Central India, was signed recently by the Soviet Union and India. India will repay in 12 instalments in Indian currency, and the Soviet Union will use most of the currency to buy goods in India. India will pay interest at 2½ per cent.—1 per cent. less than the Germans are charging for another steel plant they are building, and 2 per cent. less than the World Bank rate. In 200 years of rule in India Britain never built a steel mill.

talked about but never carried out. Its future depends upon the energy, efficiency and determination with which it undertakes this task.

This should be made its central aim and not, as the draft constitution now reads, a subsidiary one.

LOCAL INITIATIVE

Since the National Executive of the new body can only stimulate and co-ordinate activities, and since the bulk of the organising work must be carried out by trade unions in local areas, it is highly desirable to encourage local initiative and responsibility. The old T.L.C. undoubtedly suffered from being too top-heavy, centralised and bureaucratic. The bad experience of the past should be a lesson for our future guidance.

The draft constitution ought to provide for a national committee meeting perhaps three times or only twice a year, including repre-

CHIEF LUTHULI

Chief Luthuli is dangerously ill.

For the past four weeks the A.N.C. President-General has been in the McCord Hospital, Durban.

His doctors say his condition has become worse. He is on the danger list.

The bulletin is signed by Dr. W. Z. Conco, a member of the A.N.C. National Executive and Dr. G. M. Naicker, president of the Natal Indian Congress.

The bulletin calls on the nation to pray for the chief.

Delegate to China Returns

CAPE TOWN.

"For the first time in my life I found myself in a country where the question of race meant absolutely nothing at all," Mr. Albie Sachs, recently returned from a visit to China, told a very well-attended meeting organised by the Modern Youth Society in the Mitra Hall here last Friday.

Mr. Sachs was one of the South African delegates to the Council meeting of the World Federation of Democratic Youth in Peking.

"We'll never forget the warmth and sincerity of our welcome," said Mr. Sachs. "At every station in China we were welcomed by crowds of Chinese youth, always carrying gifts."

Peking was particularly impressive as a city in which the great historical monuments were being preserved, and in which the great traditions of the Chinese people in the fields of art, architecture and music were being infused with a new spirit and used as a basis for the new China.

"The cleanliness of the city is but one example of the co-operation of all Chinese in building their new world," said Mr. Sachs. "I found Peking a much cleaner city than London."

At the School of National Minorities, which is an important part of the new Peking University, students from all minority groups in China came together to build up, through cultural contributions, friendship and understanding between all China's peoples.

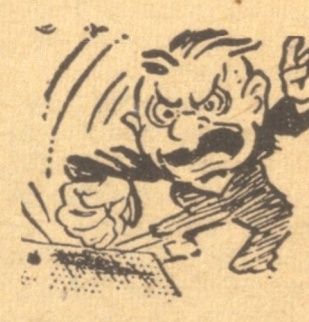
"To Block Elections"

Guillaun confirmed—"The pattern everywhere, never officially admitted, because it is absolutely contrary to the Geneva armistice terms, is to block the July, 1956, elections, to prevent the reuniting of Viet Nam's two halves and, as in Rhee's Korea, to make the Southern half an anti-Communist bastion."

Collins has tried to whip the various factions in South Viet Nam into line behind the Premier Diem, and Washington plans to pour 500 million dollars into the country in 1955 to train and re-equip the Vietnamese forces. The American aid is not going through the French, but directly to the Vietnamese, with the result that ill-feeling between the Americans and French in Indo-China is intense. The French have the definite feeling they are being squeezed out of their own colony by the Americans.

The French residents in South Viet Nam, reported the London Observer, deplore "the victory of American policy gained through the stranglehold of indispensable dollar aid," and encourage the attempts of the French delegate to North Viet Nam, Jean Sainthey, to establish "co-existence" with Ho Chi-minh. Sainthey has already signed a trade and cultural exchange agreement with the Ho Chi-minh Government.

Above all, both French and Vietnamese fear the Americans will still plunge Indo-China into atomic





POTION for POTENTATES

by
REGINALD REYNOLDS

HAD they been any ordinary customers the management would probably have reminded them of the time. They were the last in the restaurant. Well schooled, the wine waiter stood at a discreet distance from the alcove where they sat in semi-privacy. He must be beyond suspicion of eavesdropping.

The Prime Minister half-turned to signal for another decanter but he changed his mind. He had often praised the local wines, so unjustly disparaged by comparison with those of Europe. To-night he was disturbed by their unusual potency. He had never known them to affect him in this way before. It was not merely the tingling in his skin and at the roots of his hair; it was a singularly unpleasant optical illusion which bothered him most.

For years Dr. Umphumphump had piloted his country through successive stages of apartheid. Thanks to his tireless efforts, the dark-skinned people had been firmly reduced to their proper station. This little dinner with Professor Yawp, Minister of Native Affairs, and Jan Swartarsch, the most brilliant journalist in The Party, had been arranged in order to discuss a further dramatic assertion of civilised supremacy. Jan, who was better informed than anyone with regard to foreign opinion, believed the time had come for the open reintroduction of chattel slavery.

It was while the Premier was listening to Jan's contemptuous observations about the British Press that the optical illusion began. He was watching Jan's face as he spoke. In that soft light, of course, one could be mistaken. The Premier turned to Professor Yawp and saw the same thing. It was very disconcerting and disagreeable. He decided against another decanter.

Jan Swartarsch finished and looked straight at the Prime Minister, as though for answer. His glance turned into a fixed stare. Out of the corner of his eye Dr. Umphumphump noticed that Yawp was looking at Jan and himself alternately—like a spectator watching a tennis match. The optical illusion was becoming more vivid and unmistakable. Fate or the wine could hardly have jested in worse taste, he thought.

To cover his confusion he brought out a favourite tag. One of his secretaries hunted up suitable quotations, and he tried to memorise a fresh one each day while shaving. This practice went back to the days when there had been a few Native Representatives in Parliament—White representatives, of course—and cruel critics had remarked that they were the only literate members of the Legislature. One had done one's best to compete.

"O fortunata, nata me consule Roma," said the Premier senten-

tiously, but not without a hiccup. "The idea is excellent, but the execution needs further thought. Gentlemen, I think it is time we went home. In any case, I must consult the Church Leaders before we proceed any further."

He signed the bill and threw some silver on to the plate. The wine waiter bowed to them as they passed and then started visibly. The Premier was conscious of his staring eyes and turned to quell the man with a sharp word. As he turned, the proprietor entered. He had not been seen that evening in the restaurant.

What happened next was so swift and unexpected that Dr. Umphumphump never began to sort it out until he found himself, with his two companions, sprawling in an untidy heap on the pavement. His backside was sore in several places from well-aimed kicks. He had been half-stunned, too, by something that had struck his head—perhaps another boot. Jan Swartarsch was lying on top of him, apparently unconscious. At the bottom of the human heap the Minister of Native Affairs was moaning feebly.

The Premier tried to remember. He recalled the startled and then furious face of the proprietor. He recalled the roar with which the proprietor had summoned help as he seized a chair and brought it down on Jan's head. Then as they were kicked and bundled towards the entrance someone had shouted—"No, no—the back way—can't have them seen coming out that way."

The Premier put his hand to his aching head. What he felt made him look more closely in the dim lamplight at his companions. He ran his hand over Dr. Yawp's hair and peered at his face again. "Optical illusions," he said to himself again, shrinking from the evidence of touch. But in his heart he knew the truth, though he no more understood it than I do. Whether it was that wine or whatever it was that caused it, the Premier knew they were all three the victims of a terrible metamorphosis.

★
The next morning the Minister of the Interior sat, pale and irritable, facing the Chief of Police.

"But they have got to be found," he said.

"I know that," said the Chief, equally irritable but restrained by enforced politeness. "I know that, but you tie my hands. If nobody is to know they are missing I can't even send out word to all stations and patrols."

"For God's sake, man," the Minister barked, "try to be reasonable. Nobody knows where they went except that they seem to have used a taxi. We've checked on cars. Swartarsch never tells his wife anything—he's out all hours

every day and night. He doesn't greatly matter, since he leaves no clue. The other two matter so much that we may be heading for a first-class scandal. Even the Church would hardly stand for—well, never mind. The Professor is unmarried, as you know, and has left no evidence at all. The Premier's wife is away from home. His Confidential Secretary only knows that he was to have met Yawp and Swartarsch last night, but that they changed the place of meeting at the last moment."

The Chief of Police shook his head. "They could have been kidnapped," he suggested.

"Nonsense. We'd have heard from whoever did it—demands for ransom and so on."

"Or killed," added the Chief. The Minister of the Interior had a momentary vision of himself as Premier. "God forbid," he said, "I'd rather—the other . . . if you understand me. Get a search on" (he whispered something to the Chief), "but conduct it with the utmost discretion. Not a single hint, you understand."

The telephone bell rang, and the Minister picked up the receiver. "I've no time for such nonsense," he said over the telephone. The Chief of Police could hear a voice speaking with urgency at the other end. He caught the words—". . . in his own handwriting." The Minister's expression changed. "You'd better bring it in at once," he said sharply. "If it were not for the coincidence," he began half to himself and half to enlighten the Chief. Then the door opened and a young man entered.

"There it is, sir," he said. He handed a crumpled piece of paper to the Minister, who stared at it with incredulity. Then, without a word, he handed it to the Chief of Police.

"It's a perfect—reproduction—of his handwriting."

The Chief frowned as he read. "In the Native cells," he read aloud and looked at the other man with wild incredulity. "It's not possible. But whoever played this practical joke knew something. He gives the names of Yawp and Swartarsch as his companions. Who brought this in?"

"A reporter, sir," replied the young secretary.

"Is he still here?" "Yes, sir. He was round at the station when three natives were brought in. The police had found them out after curfew, also without passes and reeking of liquor. They had been in a fight, the police said. These were the names they gave, and the cops didn't think it funny, so they beat them up a bit on the way to the station."

"And this?" The Chief of Police indicated the crumpled note.

"The reporter thought it a good story and persuaded the police to let him talk to them. One of them begged to write a note, so the reporter let him have his pencil and pad. It was addressed to this Department. The reporter didn't get curious until he showed it to somebody this morning who recognised the—the forgery—as a brilliant imitation of the Prime Minister's hand."

The Minister had been brooding silently. Suddenly he said:

"There's something I don't like about this. It had better be kept quiet."

"I'm afraid that's too late, sir," replied the secretary. "It's in the midday edition of the Blatherblast."

The Minister looked startled. "Anything about the Prime Minister himself?" he asked, "or about—about any other member of the Cabinet . . . or anything unusual?"

"Nothing, sir." The secretary controlled his look of surprise hurriedly. "Only the Premier's speech at the Church Assembly and some routine stuff."

"I think," said the Chief of Police grimly, "that we'd better see that reporter."

★
In the absence of the Premier it was the Foreign Minister who presided at the emergency meeting of

the Cabinet, as Deputy Prime Minister.

The story which the Minister of the Interior had to tell was so incredible that he had taken the Deputy Prime Minister and one other colleague with him to confirm its truth. In spite of this there had been angry denials of its possibility. Rumblegut, the Minister of Propaganda, had even walked out on his colleagues. He had told them plainly that he could not sit and listen to such nonsense, such highly indecent and offensive nonsense at that. It was their job, he had said, to find the Premier and his two companions. He proposed to think out a plan.

They all knew what that meant. Rumblegut thought with the help of a bottle.

"He can say what he likes," said the Foreign Minister wearily, "but it won't alter the evidence we have before us. Three of us have seen these men. In voice, in handwriting, in height and build, in every detail that they can remember and discuss they have proved their identity. We have even identified the clothes they are wearing and the contents of their pockets. And we've checked up about the restaurant story. The Chief of Police says those three undoubtedly went there in a taxi and that three Natives were thrown out by the proprietor when he returned late after a party."

"Also there is the wine waiter," added the Minister of the Interior. "Yes, his evidence is final and conclusive."

There was silence. Then somebody said—"We'll have to change the laws—or make certain modifications and exceptions."

The Foreign Minister shook his head. "Impossible," said the Minister of the Interior.

Everyone looked at the Foreign Minister, who sat in the seat of Dr. Umphumphump pressing the tips of his fingers together. At last he spoke, slowly and deliberately. "There's only one way," he said. They all nodded. "The thing has not gone too far to be hushed up."

General Law Amendment Bill

—More Fascist Legislation

CAPE TOWN.

CIVIL liberties and the rights of the individual are further curtailed in the new General Law Amendment Bill now being piloted through the House of Assembly by the Minister of Justice. Over twenty existing Acts are amended by this Bill.

The most far-reaching clause is the one which lays down that no court can issue a temporary interdict against the Government unless three days notice has been given.

This restriction on the courts, which is unprecedented in our legal system, could inflict irreparable hardship on individuals while allowing the State to play havoc with their rights.

As it is, the Government is at present well protected. The Courts are very cautious and are reluctant to grant interim interdicts against the Government, specially where no notice has been given.

The applicant has to show very good cause before the interdict is granted. But it can and has been done, as in Johannesburg last July when an urgent application was granted by Mr. Justice Blackwell on a Sunday to prevent the police from being present at a meeting.

If the amending clause becomes law, the police could illegally invade one's home, and the people affected would not be able to attain any redress for at least 3 days, by which time it may be too late to undo the damage.

DEPORTATIONS

Another quite foreseeable instance in which the Government could use this new law to its own advantage, is in the matter of deportations. Thus if the Govern-

The story in the Blatherblast will soon be forgotten. Even when the—permanent disappearance of the Premier and the other two has to be made known and explained away nobody will connect it with a silly story about three Natives. But we must face realities. Those three have to be liquidated. They can't be left at large—or anywhere else." There was a deep silence of assent.

"And how—" A voice was interrupted by the opening of a door. All frowned heavily as a young man approached the Minister of the Interior, murmuring an apology to the Deputy Prime Minister.

There was a whispered conversation. The young man was heard to say—"He says it is very urgent and the Cabinet must know immediately."

"It's Rumblegut," explained the Minister of the Interior, "on the phone. Perhaps I'd better go and see what it's all about."

"Tell him to come back," the Foreign Minister called after him. "At least he will agree to getting rid of these men, whoever they are, and we shall need his help in explaining to the public about the disappearance of the Premier and the others."

The Foreign Minister began to outline his plans. He was interrupted by the return of the Minister of the Interior, his face pale and tense. "It's happened," he said, "again . . ."

They all stared. "Rumblegut. On the phone. Can't come now. Turned black. Hair has changed, too. It's . . . I . . ."

"Better have a drink," said the Foreign Minister, ringing a bell.

"Better all have a drink," he added.

Outside the drink was already being prepared.

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ment proposes to deport somebody and is about to put him on a boat to send him away, by the time the court would be able to take any action in the matter, the affected person might already be on the high seas, and out of the jurisdiction of the court.

Let those who think this a far-fetched notion, bear in mind the very wide powers of deportation the Government has under the Suppression of Communism Act, and the fact that all over the Union the Special Branch of the C.I.D. are making investigations into people's place of birth, etc.

Minister Swart is also proposing an amendment to the Public Safety Act, which has not yet been used. In terms of this amendment, if a state of emergency has been declared in the Northern Transvaal, say, persons arrested in connection therewith could be sent to Robben Island or the Kalahari and detained there, without trial, for the period of the emergency.

THE ALL-INDIA PEACE COUNCIL

is planning to celebrate the 1,500th anniversary of the unique frescoes of the Ajanta Caves, which not only epitomise the long-standing greatness of Indian culture but also enshrine a message of peace. Cultural groups throughout the world are being invited to participate in the celebration.

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