

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

January

The Congress of the People to draw up a Freedom Charter, a movement born in an African National Congress resolution at the end of last year, is warmly welcomed by progressives throughout South Africa.

Canning workers begin their historic strike in Wolsley, when active trade unionists are not taken on for the new season.

Ray Alexander is nominated for Cape Western.

Parliament opens. South Africa is faced with a new crop of fascist legislation.

February

The French suffer major defeats in Indo-China, where the People's Liberation Army in Vietnam marches to victory.

The year's toll of bannings under the Suppression Act begins with the banning of a number of A.N.C. leaders and officials.

British atrocities in Kenya are officially confirmed in the report of the Military Court of Inquiry.

Minister of Labour, Schoeman, starts the year with his amendment to the Industrial Conciliation Act—a plot to smash trade unions.

Walter Sisulu, A.N.C. secretary-general, is welcomed back from his overseas tour, where he was a guest in China, at a Colonial Youth Day mass rally in Alexandra.

March

While reactionary trade unionists are working for the dissolution of the S.A. Trades and Labour Council and the formation of a racialist federation, Workers' Councils of Action are being set

up throughout the country to fight the Schoeman Bill.

Leaders of A.N.C., S.A. Indian Congress, Congress of Democrats and S.A. Coloured People's Organisation meet in Durban to elect a joint planning committee for the C.O.P. campaign.

With 23 Japanese fishermen dying (they were injured by death ashes when 90 miles away from the U.S. Hydrogen bomb explosion on March 1), leading spokesmen the world over condemn America's hydrogen bomb "tests."

April

Ray Alexander, elected to Parliament by an over-whelming majority of African voters, is refused admission by Swart's henchmen.

A joyous festival for youth of all races is held in Cape Town over the Easter week-end.

Most encouraging world news is the 19-nation conference on the Far East in Geneva, at which Ho Chi-minh, of Vietnam, China's Chou En-lai and Korea's Nam Il are present. Conference is major defeat for U.S. war-mongering policy.

May

Advance comes out in special edition in honour of May Day, carrying messages of greetings from progressive organisations.

The fall of Dien Bien Phu to the victorious end of the seven-year-old war in Vietnam.

Trade union "unity" conference held in Cape Town retreats before Schoeman and adopts "wait-and-see" policy to the proposed amendment to the I.C. Act.

Langa Africans start struggle against the opening of a beer hall

in their township, leading ultimately to the Municipality shelving the plan.

An African village near Klerksdorp is burnt to the ground by force of armed police, no alternative provision being made for the 300 families.

Wits, and Cape Town students protest against the apartheid commission.

In British Guiana people start campaign of defiance against unjust emergency laws, and Dr. Cheddy Jagan, deposed Prime Minister, is sentenced to six months' imprisonment.

June

U.S. invades Guatemala by proxy with her arming of neighbouring States and military demonstrations on the borders.

June 26 is commemorated as Freedom Day throughout South Africa.

Rhodesian trade unionist Bob Taylor is summarily deported from Southern Rhodesia following the railwaymen's strike for higher wages.

The people's struggle against Western Areas removal, the Bantu Education Act and Schoeman's labour laws is taken step further by special Resist Apartheid Conference of ANC, SAIC, COD, SACPO and Council for N.E. Trade Unions, where a call for 50,000 Luthuli volunteers is made. This conference is invaded by 100 armed police.

July

Durban dockers win substantial demands following strike for higher wages and better conditions.

Swart bans A.N.C. President-General, Chief A. J. Luthuli, as he arrives in Johannesburg to attend Western Areas mass meeting.

Many more A.N.C. officials and leaders banned this month, including Walter Sisulu and Duma Nokwe, national secretary of A.N.C. Youth League.

Durban tobacco workers go on strike for higher wages and union recognition.

A ruling by Justice Blackwell throws C.I.D. out of Congress of the People conference in Johannesburg.

Canon J. Collins, the Precentor of St. Paul's Cathedral, visits

South Africa, and mimes no words in condemning racial oppression and discrimination.

After nearly three months of negotiation, Geneva Conference ends the seven-year-war in Indo-China with a truce declaration. World celebrates a great victory for peace.

August

Dr. Otto John, West German Chief of Security, crosses over to the Democratic Republic of East Germany to join struggle for world peace.

Chief of Staff General Heyman reveals that the British authorities in Kenya are now killing 500 Africans a month.

Cape C.O.P. conference among the many raided by police, but people not intimidated and 300 volunteers sign up.

John Alwyn, Worcester leader, sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment under Suppression of Communism Act.

Brussels Conference spells the death of E.D.C. but new plans afoot to rearm West Germany.

Africans throughout South Africa organise in protest at new "economic rentals," which are subsequently upset in Transvaal by Supreme Court action.

Swart's vendetta against the Food and Canning Workers' Union is renewed with the banning of Frank Marquard, president, and Gus Coe, Port Elizabeth secretary, to be followed later with the banning of Becky Lan, general secretary, and Oscar Mpeha, African secretary.

Advance offices and homes of a number of individuals raided by C.I.D.

Biggest dock strike since 1926 shakes Britain, ends in victory for workers.

Indian Premier Nehru visits China.

Walter Sisulu and Sam Kahn get prison sentences under Suppression of Communism Act following their arrests at private homes. Appeals noted.

Other results of the Bantu Education Act are:

September

Among the many delegations from the West to visit the People's Democracies in the past year was an eight-man British Labour delegation to China, headed by Mr. Clement Attlee.

Three of the cities to suffer most in the last war—Coventry, Stalingrad and Hiroshima—join forces to demand the outlawing of the hydrogen bomb.

World Council of Churches condemns apartheid as "unutterable offence against God."



This group of trade unionists fought vigorously against the dissolution of the Trades and Labour Council at the Durban conference in October.

October

Swart bans Advance. First issue of New Age appears.

At historic Durban conference right-wing unions force the dissolution of the S.A. Trades and Labour Council, but 14 unions follow to form non-racial centre. New Trade Union Council comes into being, with African workers strictly excluded.

The school, which is run by the Anglican church on 400 morgen of their own land at Riversdale, has an enrolment of 500 children.

Neither the school nor the church were informed when the commission was appointed, and actually knew nothing about it until they saw a Press announcement.

A spokesman of the Commission is reported to have said that it could not allow large concentrations of African children in European areas and the school must close.

"That is official policy and applies in all areas in the Union," he said.

Other results of the Bantu Education Act are:

November

Premier Daniel Malan resigns, and after much behind-the-scenes manoeuvring Havenga retires to his farm and Hitler-loving Strijdom becomes new Prime Minister of South Africa.

People in Western Cape rally behind the residents of Kraai-foortuin, whose homes are threatened with demolition for "health reasons," while no alternative accommodation is even being considered by the authorities concerned.

Churchmen overseas—particularly in Britain—forcefully condemn Bantu Education Act.

Children are being asked to put down money for school equipment before being accepted as pupils. The amounts range from 3/- in the sub-standards to as much as 20/- in the higher standards and those unable to bring the money are not being enrolled. For farm labourers who have two or more children at school, this represents a month's wages.

Children and teachers on farm schools can be required to assist the farmer in repairing fences and doing other work, according to an instruction from the Native Affairs Department.

Many of the instructions issued to schools are issued on one circuit only at first. This means that while the instruction becomes known to others, it does not apply to their region. Then, when it eventually reaches them they are already familiar with the ideas conveyed in the instruction, and therefore accept them more readily.

December

In spite of being banned by Swart from attending meetings, Len. Lee-Warden is elected to Parliament with big majority.

Historic A.N.C. national conference in Durban calls upon African parents to withdraw children from primary schools on April 1 next year in protest against Bantu Education Act.

Conference also pledged support to people of Western Areas in their struggle against their removal, pledged to make the Congress of the People "the most representative assembly in the history of our country; pledged also to adhere strictly to the forward-looking democratic dynamic policy of freedom, for which the leadership of the organisation is being persecuted, banned and exiled."



Mr. Walter Sisulu, banned secretary-general of the African National Congress, sells the first issue of New Age in the streets of Johannesburg.

THERE ARE MANY LESSONS FOR US IN "THE PETROV SPY CASE"

Do you remember the big Petrov "spy" case? In Australia now Prime Minister Menzies is wishing it could be forgotten.

A couple of weeks before the Australian elections, when everyone was predicting certain defeat for Menzies and the victory of a Labour Government, Menzies made a dramatic announcement—He had received evidence from a Russian called Petrov that Communists and Labour Party members, including some working in the office of Dr. Evatt, the leader of the Labour Party, had been spying on Australia. As a result of the screaming hysteria created by this story, Menzies won a narrow victory, although on a minority of votes.

Since then the information which has come out at the commission which Menzies set up in imitation of the notorious McCarthy "Un-American Activities" Commission, has had the Government fuming and writhing in turns.

Not least of their troubles has been the brave and unflinching behaviour of the progressives and workers hauled before the tribunal.

The most remarkable demonstration flared up when the secretary of the Victoria branch of the Seamen's Union, Bill Bird, was summoned to the commission.

Seamen walked off 18 ships to be present when their popular, fighting leader went into the witness box. They had the time of their lives watching Bill Bird in action.

Bill Bird didn't let the judges do all the cross-examining. He did some himself.

THE WORKER AND THE JUDGE

The judge asked Bill Bird to tell him how the Communist Party organised.

Bird (leaning forward): Do you know anything about the party?

Judge Ligertwood (leaning back): I am afraid I don't.

Bird: Then why don't you read something and find out? I refuse to discuss the internal workings of the trade unions or the Communist Party.

Later the judges wanted to know where Bill Bird was born—hoping, perhaps that he would say Moscow!

Bird: I was born in the Big Smoke.

Judge: Where's Big Smoke?

Bird: Do you mean to tell me you don't know where the Queen lives?

Judge: Edinburgh?

Bird (with a sigh): London.

Judge: Do you know Walter Seddon Clayton?

Bird: I wouldn't know him if I fell over him.

Judge: Would you mind conducting yourself properly.

Bird: That's the ordinary manner of speech. I would not know him if I fell over him, I said. I never heard of him until this outfit started to bandy his name about.

Judge: Are you a Communist?

Bird: I am, and I'm proud of it.

This brought the first round of applause from the crowded galleries of seamen. From then on Bird was constantly interrupted by a young Government lawyer called Pape.

When Bird protested at these interruptions the judge warned Bird to "control himself" and said he hoped the police were taking notes of what he said.

Bird: That doesn't worry me. I am telling you about my life, and I will tell you without you telling me what to do.

Pape then tried to interrupt.

Bird: I won't continue unless that youngster dries up.

At that there was thunderous applause from the galleries and shouts of "Give it to 'em, Bill." For a moment the judges seemed stunned by the demonstration. Then Judge Owen ordered the court to be cleared and led his fellow judges out, followed by loud shouts of derision.

When the judges had left, uniformed police moved towards the seamen, then thought better of it as a rugged, veteran seaman rose to address them. After he had used the courtroom as a platform to attack bitterly the frame-up being conducted by the judges the seamen filed out slowly and in order.

Later the judges released Bird from all further appearances! Bird told his cheering fellow trade unionists—

"If everybody Menzies tried to involve in this Petrov business got the solid backing you fellows gave me, this whole unhappy affair would be dead and buried long ago."

But it is not only the courage of the witnesses that is giving Menzies a headache. Awkward facts are slipping out.

THE FACTS COME OUT

The facts show that the events which came to so convenient a climax on the eve of the elections were organised over a period of years and used by Prime Minister Menzies as a deliberate provocation against the Australian Labour Movement.

They show that no practice was too low, nothing too contemptible for the secret police to use so long as it served the ends of their long term Petrov intrigue.

Deliberately put-up raids were made on offices and newspapers.

There was illegal invasion of private homes, bribe offers to people to spy on the Communist Party, their neighbours and workmates, wiring of meeting rooms, planting of tape recorders, approaches to doctors to spy on patients, phone tapping, opening of private mail, recruitment of ex-Nazi army men as Australian "security" agents, organising of deliberate provocateur missions by "security" agents against Soviet diplomats, deliberate efforts to frame people.

Three years before the climax came, on July 27, 1951, one Dr. Bialoguski, who admitted to the commission that he was a secret police agent, was officially given the "Petrov Assignment." From this date, said Bialoguski, he was convinced Petrov was a potential deserter.

At the same time Bialoguski wormed himself into the Peace Movement, was elected in September, 1952, by the Australian Peace Council as a delegate to the Peking Peace Conference. But the Government could not afford to have Bialoguski's work with Petrov interrupted. So they killed two birds with one stone. They withdrew the passports of Bialoguski and his fellow delegates.

Money-loving Bialoguski found in Petrov a brother. Petrov didn't "choose freedom." He chose cash. A year before the climax Bialoguski, on behalf of the Government, secretly made Petrov a partner in a big restaurant.

Now there is no turning back. He agrees to remain in Australia, and the tempo of his betrayal increases.

APPROACHES PROGRESSIVES

Petrov now approaches a large number of progressives, saying he is from the Soviet Government and asking them to give him information. He is deliberately trying to frame-up innocent men — to create evidence of a "spy ring," for he must have something to sell to the Australian police. He has no success. But tape recorders note every rash word. In due course sentences will be taken out of context and presented to the commission.

Bialoguski's car is used for long, friendly trips with progressives, and they are pumped for information. The car is fitted with a secret tape recorder.

To create "background," there is a sensational raid on the Communist newspaper, Tribune, and it is charged with "sedition." The charge is thrown out by the court—but the proper atmosphere has been created.

U.S. ADVICE

As the plot reaches its height, Vice-president of the United States Richard Nixon, who is an expert on the frame-up (he was largely responsible for the shocking conviction of Alger Hiss on a framed charge), arrives for consultations with Menzies.

The price goes up. Bialoguski shows Petrov over a £3,000 farm!

TRIES TO SELL OUT

Then everything nearly blows up. Three months before the election, when there would still be time for Labour to show what a damp squib Menzies' "bomb" is, greedy Bialoguski tries to sell his story to the Sydney Morning Herald! Just in time the Government heads the story off.

On April 3 Petrov deserts. He can't wait any longer. He is suspected of embezzling money from the Embassy.

Ten days later Menzies melodramatically makes the "surprise" announcement of Petrov's desertion.

When Dr. Evatt, Labour Party leader, accuses Menzies of using the affair as an election stunt, Menzies says he "first heard of Petrov" on April 10 or 11. Menzies is the Minister in charge of the department which began the Petrov Assignment three years before!

Then Dr. Evatt sets out to expose Menzies before his own commission. So successful is he that the judges find it necessary to bar him from attending the commission—just on the day he is to cross-examine the police agents responsible. Dr. Evatt raises the matter in Parliament and Menzies uses his majority to apply the guillotine.

That is the stage the Petrov affair has reached in Australia to-day—but the Australian people are not likely to permit Menzies to stifle discussion for long. This sort of sinister stunt is not confined to Australia only. The "Western" world is pooling its experience of how to frame progressives.

They may well try it in South Africa. There are lessons we can learn from the Petrov case. And with the news that Swart is taking with him the head of the Special Branch (the Suppression Branch) of the police to the London Conference of Prime Ministers, it is as well that we keep very alert. Colonel Prieslow may also try to learn something from the Petrov case.

IN CHINA THE PEOPLE GOVERN

By RUTH FIRST, who has returned from a visit to China

CAN a people largely illiterate take part in self-government? An Egyptian visitor to Peking at the same time I was there, a member of the Moslem Brotherhood, was highly sceptical. He voiced his strong doubts to his young student interpreter as they were walking in the streets of the capital one day. His interpreter's eyes gleamed. He offered to stop the first person the Egyptian chose to ask him questions on any of the country's laws, or, for that matter, China's new constitution. The Egyptian wavered for a moment in the direction of an old woman standing nearby on the pavement . . . but then changed his mind, and let the student's challenge drop.

During July and August when I was in China, the whole country was in the throes of discussing her Draft Constitution and in every one of the eight cities I visited as well as in the villages there was overwhelming proof that the people had taken the reins of government into their own hands.

The Draft Constitution was finally adopted by China's first Parliament on September 15, but that after two full months of discussion by the people in all walks of life. The Constitution was not a document artfully quibbled over by professional politicians, bargained over by the whips of the political parties, debated by constitutional lawyers or in closed caucus. I saw it being studied in every corner of the country, every word weighed, every phrase scrutinised, each clause put to a thousand tests, by working people and peasants, students, government officials, writers, miners, fishermen, drivers and firemen on the trains . . . as many of China's 601 million as are old enough to talk about their country's affairs.

In a visit to Shanghai and Hanchow I went to a jute mill, a machine-tool factory, a paper-pulp factory and a textile factory. In each workshop of these plants, all employing over a thousand workers, the Draft Constitution—and the news of the peace agreement in Indo-China—occupied pride of place on the blackboard news-

papers. In the train between Nanking and Shanghai extracts from the constitution were quoted over the train loudspeaker system between records of Chinese opera and popular folk tunes. I went north of Peking to see the Kuantien Reservoir that has tamed the mighty Yungting River and there, sitting beneath the shade of the trees and the new bridge, were groups of building labourers discussing the Draft Constitution.

EVEN IN PRISON

I was shown round the Peking prison and in one of the court-yards a small meeting was in progress. The paper in the hand of the speaker was a copy of the Draft Constitution.

One Thursday afternoon in Peking I was invited to take part in a residents' meeting on the constitution.

It was a small gathering of women in what had formally been one of the poorest districts of the city. By three o'clock 17 women and I were sitting round a ping-pong table in the residents' health office (borrowed for the occasion). The only man present must have been about 20 years old and he was the vice-president of the local committee for the study of the constitution, for such committees had been set up in every district, village and alleyway to explain the constitution to the people and get them to study it. In Peking the Constitution Committee had the slogan: "every family must discuss the constitution" and this was done!

Among the women present that Thursday afternoon were housewives, a street pedlar, a Moslem woman, two Manchurians (one in 14 in China belongs to a national minority), a landlady, and a representative of the Women's Federation.

A woman with a child on her lap started:

"Even the men in the old society did not know what was in the constitution. As for the women, we were told: 'Don't meddle in what does not concern you.' Now we are being asked

to discuss the constitution and to give our opinions. So we gladly leave our housework. . . ."

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The next woman who spoke related how as a child of eleven she had worked in a cotton mill. Her family had lived in a cattle shed and when she was 14 her father had become paralysed and could no longer work. A marriage was arranged for her. But when her husband beat her she ran away from him. Later he sold her to another man for 1,000 Chinese dollars. She went to the police station and threatened to commit suicide. 'It is too late,' she was told. 'You have already been sold and as you can not repay the 1,000 dooyars, there is nothing you can do.' Only after 1949 in the New China did this woman get a divorce and find personal happiness. She graphically described her life in the old China to indicate her support for article 96 of the constitution: "Women enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of political, economic, cultural, social and domestic life."

A very old woman spoke next, hesitantly, in a low voice. "I cannot yet read the entire text," she said, "I have only just started literacy classes. But I know this is a great day for our people. For the constitution is like the great root of a tree. The other laws are the branches that grow from it. This root is strong and good, and so the other laws of our country will be too."

Mrs. Chao, 62 years old, spoke next. In the old days she too had never known what a constitution was, she said. Perhaps her husband had known, though working men were not encouraged to take an interest in politics in those days, but even if he had understood, he would never have told her, for since when were women privileged to discuss matters of state? Now she was past sixty, going to literacy classes for the first time in her life. She was ignorant and humble. "This constitution," she said, holding up the copy on the table, "has been written by Mao Tse-tung, our beloved leader and all China's other leaders, from their wisdom and experience. Mao Tse-tung has written it," she exclaimed, "and he comes to me, 62-year-old Mrs. Chao, and asks me for my opinion! Can there be any greater proof that we have a people's government?"

The Constitution was drafted by a special national committee. Before being made public it was placed before conferences of 8,000 leading citizens for study and review. Then it was placed before the entire country. In two months 5,900 suggested amendments came forward.

WORLD'S LARGEST PARLIAMENT

Finally, on September 15, after the nation had been consulted, the first session of the All-China People's Congress, the largest parliament in the world composed of 1,226 representatives, adopted it.

China's government, in the present stage of people's democracy, is representative of all the classes in her society, working people and peasants, intellectuals and the middle class, and patriotic capitalists, who are united to eliminate exploitation and poverty, and, in this transition age, are preparing to build a socialist economy.

Nine political parties share power. Apart from the largest, the Communist Party, these include the Revolutionary Kuomintang, the China Democratic League, the Peasants' and Workers' Party and others. In the Government are found

Ministers of all these parties and also non-party personalities. Kuo Mo-jo, vice-president, belongs to no party at all. Fu Tso-yi, the Minister of Water Conservation, was formerly one of Chiang Kai-shek's generals entrusted in 1948 with the defence of Peking. He and other former Kuomintang officials like Shao Li-tse, now a governor of one of the provinces, and Cheng Chien, now vice-president of the Military Council, left the corrupt and ruinous policy of the Kuomintang and joined the People's Government when it became clear to them that it alone could govern China in the interests of her people.

UNITED FRONT

China's united front was created in the Chinese People's Consultative Conference which held its first session in September 1949, then to proclaim the Republic on October 1 of that year. This conference adopted the Common Programme, the provisional constitutional pact, under which China functioned for the first five years of the republic. The programme was truly 'common,' observed by all parties as their own and joint programme, and supported by all sectors of society.

This year the Common Programme has given way to the constitution. The former functioned during the period of economic rehabilitation. In these five years together with industrial reconstruction, the repair of the ravages of war, and the beginnings of co-operation in the countryside where land reform has transformed the life of the peasants, the machinery for truly democratic government and universal franchise was established.

Now a network of peoples' representative conferences—elective and governing bodies—have been set up at all levels. In villages, suburbs, cities, provinces and national minority regions. In all, 210,000 units of peoples' government exist in China and to these organs of self-government 1,500,000 representatives have been elected for the first time in China's history by universal suffrage.

In the Parliament 11.98 per cent (not 12 per cent, the Chinese are very accurate!) of the representatives are women. The oldest member is 95 years old, the youngest 17. Ordinary people sit alongside Chou En-lai, Chu Teh, Madame Soong Ching Ling, widow of Dr. Sun Yat Sen, the founder of the 1911 Republic. They are army-men, teachers, peasants, model workers like Wang Chun Lung, known as the man who outdistanced time by completing four years' work in one at his lathe, with the invention of a new machine part.

China's new constitution is written in the simple language of the people. Some of the articles are no longer than 25 words: straightforward, direct, explicit.

Voters have the right to recall their representatives if they are

not satisfied with them. All nationalities in China are equal and all are free to preserve or reform their own languages, customs, habits and religious beliefs. The people, through their representatives, control the courts, decide on the national economic plan, may remove the republic's chairman, vice-chairman, prime minister and other leaders. They must pay taxes, defend their country and work for its prosperity. On the other hand, to every one is guaranteed the right to work, to skills, education and training, to rest and leisure and to full democracy. The Constitution is not a dry document, but a living reality now being cherished by all.

Kraaifontein Residents Defended

CAPE TOWN.

A letter appealing to the Administrator of the Cape Province, Mr. P. J. Olivier, to intervene on behalf of the residents of Kraaifontein who have been ordered by the Paarl Divisional Council to demolish their houses has been sent by a number of prominent Cape Town citizens.

The letter points out that the residents are the owners of the land they live on, and feel that they should be given an extension of time so that they can improve their houses to conform with the health regulations.

However, all their requests to the Village Management Board and the Divisional Council have been rejected.

The signatories, who include Senator L. Rubin, Mr. C. Barnett, M.P.C., Mr. B. Levitas, M.P.C., Mr. W. Stanford, M.P., Mr. P. Charles, Mr. B. Turok and Mr. L. B. Lee-Warden, M.P., ask the Administrator to receive a deputation on the matter.

AN OLD STORY

Delegates to the recent African National Congress conference at Durban were met on their return to Johannesburg by a welcoming committee of plain-clothes European detectives, who detained them for half an hour and asked for documents.

The detectives pretended to be friendly, and one of them said: "Our new Prime Minister is really your friend. He is only opposed to Jews and Indians," one of the delegates told New Age. The delegate commented, "If Strijdom thinks he can spread his racialism among the Africans he will be very disappointed!"

OPTICIANS

Wolfson and De Wet, F.N.A.O. (Eng.), Qualified Sight-testing and Dispensing Opticians, 4 King George Street (between Bree and Plein Streets), Johannesburg. Please note change of Address.

Phone 22-3834
20% Reduction to Africans

EXPERT WATCHMAKERS

Reasonable prices and guaranteed workmanship. For Cycles, Watches and Jewellery come to Klaff's Cycle Works, 82 Harrison Street, Johannesburg. New Age readers will receive a special discount on all new watches bought. Managed by Issy Heyman.

Authorities Act To Muzzle Wits Students

IN their drive to stifle the voice of the student body of the Witwatersrand University, which has always raised itself against segregated higher education, the University Council, which is not noted for its progressive attitudes, has ignored strong representations from the student body and the Student's Representative Council, and has approved a new draft S.R.C. Constitution which it is now submitting to the Minister of Education, Mr. Viljoen.

This new status strips the student body of all rights which the students at Wits have enjoyed for nearly 50 years and which a mass meeting of students recently re-affirmed.

The statute gives the principal and Council the power to veto any action or decision of the S.R.C. or any student committee; the right to "restrict or direct" the funds and other assets of the S.R.C.; gives the Council the power to dissolve the S.R.C. at any time and not to call elections for a period of up to one year. The S.R.C. is also directed to act "in conformity with the policy and decisions of the University Council."

STUDENTS SHOCKED

Students at Wits have been shocked by the terms of the Statute which has now been adopted by the Council, and also by the amazing speed with which the Council has agreed to the provisions of the Statute which transforms the S.R.C. into a puppet of the Council. The authori-

ties have carried out the drafting and ratification of the Statute entirely during the period when students were writing exams or had begun their vacation.

The S.R.C. was given the opportunity of having negotiations with Councils Constitution Sub-Committee and appearing before Council itself, but no respect whatever has been paid to the wishes of students. No attention was paid to the clearly expressed dissatisfaction of the students as shown by the petition of over 850 signatures collected within two days during the exams, and the protests from the S.R.C. and faculty Councils.

A letter has been written to the Minister of Education asking him not to allow the statute to go forward for promulgation "as it does not reflect the wishes of students."

N.U.S.A.S. has also been requested to ask all S.R.C.'s in the country to express support for the students at Wits.

PEACE HANDKERCHIEFS

The Natal Peace Council has produced an artistic peace handkerchief, carrying the message of peace in many languages.

They are priced at 2s. 6d. each and can be obtained from the Peace Council, 6 Pembroke Chambers, Durban, or from New Age.

Collection Number: AG2887

Collection Name: Publications, New Age, 1954-1962

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand

Location: Johannesburg

©2016

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document is held at the Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.