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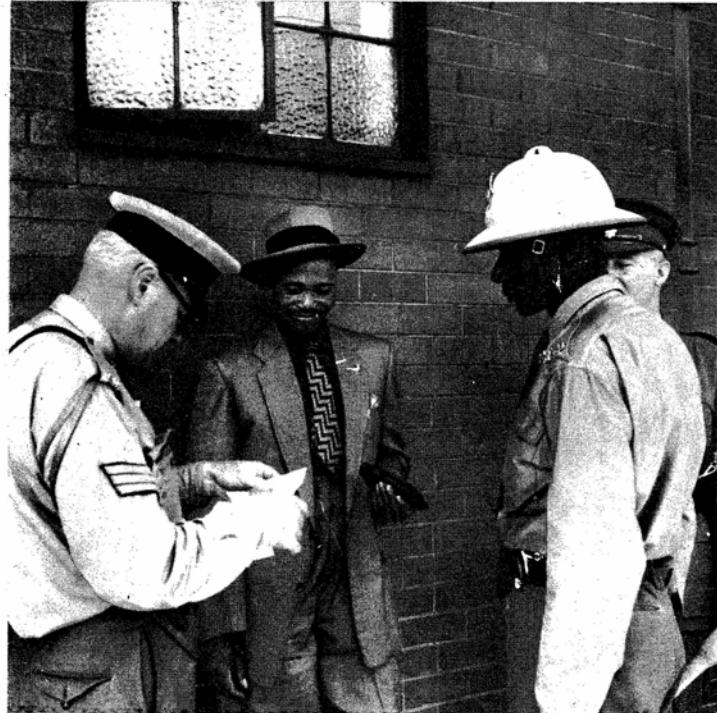
SEPTEMBER 26, 1958

SOUTH AFRICA ATTACKS THE UNITED NATIONS

Having returned to the United Nations after boycotting the last two sessions of the U.N. General Assembly, one of the first actions taken by the Government of the Union of South Africa was to launch an attack upon the 'defects' of the U.N., the shortcomings of the U.N. Charter, and in particular a "tendency to amend the Charter by a process of interpretation."

Mr. E.H. Louw, the Minister of External Affairs of the Union of South Africa, said that South Africa could never agree to the conception of the U.N. as a world Parliament. The U.N., he said, was "at the mercy of a chance majority." The Charter, he said, should be revised, and - he hinted - small powers should be deprived of the vote.

Mr. Louw did not, however, make it clear whether he considered South Africa a small power or a great one. At one stage he appeared to feel that South Africa was a small power, for - referring to the protection provided by Article 2 paragraph 7 of the Charter, which is concerned with 'domestic jurisdiction' - he said that "national honor is not the prerogative of the great and powerful." Later, however, he complained of the U.N. voting system, saying that a group of smaller states, acting in concert, is able "to thwart or impose its will on certain great powers." He added that unless remedial action was taken there was a real danger that the U.N. would resolve itself into a condition of "organized chaos" - or, alternatively, that it would degenerate into a sort of international debating society - "albeit a very dangerous one."



POLICE STATE: South Africa today is a police state - as this picture plainly shows. Africans are obliged to carry passes under a system which adds a new dimension of such complexity to everyday life that it appears well nigh unthinkable to citizens of free countries. This system makes the normal conduct of life so difficult without infringing the law that arrests are virtually as common in a city like Johannesburg as are parking tickets in New York City. The Government of the Union of South Africa - which is run by a secret society known as the "Broederbond" who have tricked and schemed their way into control of a nation - has made a specialty of shaping the laws to suit their purposes. When the South African Parliament could not give them the majority they required, they 'packed' the Senate to get the necessary extra votes by appointing another 50 members. Now that the Broederbond have established their complete supremacy in South Africa, they are attempting to apply the same tactics at the United Nations. In the U.N. Fourth Committee this week South Africa attempted to have procedure adopted to suit her ends. In the General Assembly, as reported on this page, South Africa went even further, and raised the question of revising the U.N. Charter. This would not be disturbing were it not that South Africa obtained some degree of support from within the U.N. organization itself.

The Future of South West Africa

Every Fall the U.N. General Assembly convenes in New York. Every General Assembly, too, creates its own atmosphere - an atmosphere that is, in a sense, an indication of that prevailing in the world at large. Last year the Assembly was characterised by one observer as the 'Do-Nothing' Assembly. This year the Assembly might indeed be characterised as the "Do Something!" Assembly. For even if nothing is in fact done, there is a growing feeling that it is time that definite action began to be taken on some of the world's problems.

One of the factors contributing to this change in the psychological atmosphere has been the return of the Union of South Africa to the U.N. after a two-year absence. This development has had three principal results :

- (1) To heighten tension on African questions.
- (2) To introduce a greater degree of reality by having both sides fully represented.
- (3) To bring about the formation of a school of thought (a more subtle instrument than a lobby or a bloc) which takes the view: 'Don't let us say anything that would offend South Africa, or she might withdraw again. Let us instead show ourselves ready to co-operate (i.e. to make concessions) to her.'

Tension, an atmosphere of reality, and a spirit of concession ("appeasement", is, after all, a much abused word) were all in evidence in the proceedings of the Fourth (Trusteeship) Committee when it took up the question of South West Africa this week.

The proceedings began with a discussion on a procedural matter - whether Item 1 (a) should be considered separately from Items 1 (b) and 1(c) or not. The best part of two days was spent in reaching a compromise on this point. An outsider might well be pardoned for wondering why the time and energies of so many presumably important people were wasted on this technicality. There was, however, a reason - and an important one. If Item 1(a) had been separated - as South Africa and her supporters wished - then the U.N. would have witnessed the spectacle of South Africa rising to a 'Point of Order', in true McCarthylike manner, whenever any of the other 80 member states felt like discussing any aspect of South West African affairs except the one aspect that South Africa wanted discussed - the Good Offices Committee. The move had been carefully prepared in advance, and there was some evidence that the South Africans were a little dismayed to find the Committee reacting as strongly as it did - an indication, perhaps, that they had not been accurately advised. The situation, from the South African point of view, was not improved by the fact that the personality of Erich Louw did not make the most favorable impression upon members of the Committee who might, potentially, have been supporters of the South

African position. In this sense, the best advocate of the anti-apartheid cause was the South African representative himself, who often seemed to forget he was not in Pretoria but in an international forum.

By the time the week ended, the shape of South African policy had become clear: it was to undermine the South West Africa Committee - which, more than ever before, is being looked to by the people of South West Africa - by perpetuating the by now infamous "Good" Offices Committee. Immediately the South African tactic is to get the U.N. to invite her to make a study of the possibility of partitioning the territory - an invitation that is being supported with the argument: "after all, that would not commit anyone to anything." This argument overlooks the fact that with such a mandate from the U.N., South Africa would use it to spread a climate of disillusion among the South West African people by convincing them that the U.N. had already abandoned them in principle. Furthermore, the U.N. itself would be drawn into long discussions of detailed matters, only to find that it finally was committed to something, and - like a factory worker who catches a finger in a cog - would find itself pulled in and its present position of moral strength destroyed.

Ghana, at least, showed no sign that it intended to abandon the defense of the peoples of South West Africa. In a press conference the chairman of the Ghana delegation - Mr. Ako Adjei, the Minister of Labour and Co-operatives - attacked the "Good Offices" Committee report as "a vicious proposal". After reminding his listeners of the difficulties caused by partitioning Togo and the Cameroons, he said that the Good Offices proposal to partition South West Africa with the Southern half being incorporated into South Africa, "would mean the blatant approval of apartheid and the racial policies of South Africa." "I do not see," he said, "how the United Nations can be manoeuvred into giving approval of these policies." He said that the only solution to the problem was to place the territory under international trusteeship.

This Assembly, consequently, offers some prospect for decisions being taken, at all events on the South West Africa question. After 12 years of slow uphill struggle, the powers of the world have become sufficiently disturbed by the question to wish for decisions to be taken. South Africa has much to gain from getting the U.N. to abandon its responsibilities. First it would add about 200 miles to its coastline. Secondly it would remove the embarrassment of international criticism for its failure to discharge its international responsibilities. Thirdly it would allow the continued exploitation - on an uninhibited

(Continued in following column)

THE MAN WITH SOMETHING TO SAY



Michael
Scott

scale - of the populations concerned. Fourthly it would pave the way for Britain to hand over the High Commission Territories, thereby opening prospects of expanding South African frontiers right up to the Caprivi Strip and North Rhodesia. With such a world to win South Africa will be prepared to fight hard at the United Nations. Nor is South Africa likely to stage another "walk out" - having learnt her lesson last time that the world could get on better without her than she without the world.

In conclusion it might be said that the question of South West Africa is, with the possible exception of Algeria, the most important of the African questions arising at the U.N. this Fall. It is important because this year decisions are likely to be taken which will affect the future not only of South Africa itself, but also of the relationship between the U.N. and Africa. The South West Africa question poses a clear-cut moral issue to the United Nations. How the U.N. responds will be of the utmost importance. Let there be no mistake about it. The issue is far greater, even, than the future of South West Africa itself.

A furious battle is expected to break out at the United Nations in the next few days when the U.N. Fourth Committee considers applications from petitioners for hearings. The battle will be between South Africa and her allies on the one hand, and the African countries and their friends on the other. The main purpose of the battle will be to decide whether or not South Africa will succeed in preventing Michael Scott from speaking to the Committee. The reason that South Africa does not want him heard is because he represents, and speaks for, a large number of the people of South West Africa. And, at this "delicate" juncture (i.e. when South Africa is attempting to push through a very dubious deal concerning their future) South Africa is prepared to go to almost any length to prevent the views of these people from being heard.

In the past 12 years, Scott has been an indefatigable advocate for justice for the people of South West Africa. Justice is, of course, a two-sided coin: it implies not only the recognition of rights, but also the bringing to book of those who break the law. Justice for the people of South West Africa means not only the granting of what is due to them, but also that the South African Government, which is denying them that to which international law entitles them, shall be brought to justice if it continues in its law-breaking course. With the energy of a bad conscience, the South African Government is beginning to try to struggle out of the net which is slowly closing in upon it. Part of this struggle is to prevent the voice of Michael Scott, who speaks of South Africa's obligations towards South West Africa, from being heard.

For many years Scott has been almost unnaturally silent concerning his own life. Indeed, in recent years he has had virtually no life of his own to speak of, particularly since he began to work with the Africa Bureau in London. It is therefore appropriate that his biography - written at least two years ago, but only now published - should at last become available to the public. Entitled "A Time to Speak", and published by Doubleday, it is a revealing document. While a large part of it is concerned with conditions in South Africa, and with the issue of South West Africa, it also provides insights into Scott's own earlier life that go far to explain his present uncompromising stand for justice.

The son of a clergyman working in a dock-yard slum area, Scott from his early youth was acquainted with some of the worst living conditions England had to offer - and she was famous for her extremes of wealth and poverty. He knew better than most what struggles were involved in combating the vicious circle of illiteracy, underpayment, sickness, and dirt. In the circumstances of the 30s, it was not altogether surprising that he should come into contact with the Communist Party, any more than it was not altogether surprising that he should later reject this philosophy for a way of life based on satyagraha ("truth

"A TIME TO SPEAK". By Michael Scott.
Doubleday & Co. 358 pp. \$4.50

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BOOK REVIEW

THE MAN WITH SOMETHING TO SAY (Continued from inside page)

and love as a power to resist evil"). This insight, naturally, came from his time in India. Yet it was not until he was challenged to apply his belief in practical terms that his life - as the world has known it - began. When he joined the South African Indians in their passive resistance, he was taken to jail. It was after this episode (or episodes - since the South African Police had him in and out of court on more than one occasion) that Scott travelled up to Bechuanaland, to stay with Tshekedi Khama. While there he met the aged chief Frederick Mahereru, who had asked to see him. As a result, he travelled to South West Africa and made contact with the Herero people, in whose interest he has since worked untiringly.

The appearance of "A Time to Speak" is particularly topical in a month which has seen the South African Government return hat in hand to the United Nations to wheedle the rights of the South West African people out of the control of those international guardians in whom they are vested. It is also appropriate that it should appear in the same month as the Report of the Committee on South West Africa, which contains in much detail an analysis of current conditions in the territory. Any doubt that Scott does not speak for the majority is dispelled by the many petitions which this Committee's report contains, and from one of which the following passage is extracted:

"The treacherous actions, including the most horrible action of 1956, meted out against us the inhabitants of Hoachanas, an action through which our human dignity have been profane most horribly have not only shaken our little hope, expectations and confidence in the race who most wrongfully claimed to be God's chosen race to dominate over us the non-white races of South West

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Africa. They themselves have drive away the little confidence we had in them. Our onliest hope is thus vested in the United Nations Organization only, and we therefore with all the honesty of our hearts pray that the whole of South West Africa and not only a part of it without any further argument and delay be placed under the direct supervision of the International Trusteeship System of the United Nations Organisation. That is the onliest way through which we shall be freed from this eternal slavery...

"In emergency of war the white man call us brother, but even if tomorrow a war should arise, we would not raise a muscle to defend a country which did not defend us and wherein our manhood is horribly violated and denied."

The conclusion of this report, the conclusion of Michael Scott's book, and - surely - the conclusion of all who disagree with the statement of Mr. Van der Wath of the Legislative Assembly of South West Africa that: "God made heaven and earth and all the useful things in them... the Devil made the Kaffirs", will be that the Government of the Union of South Africa should take urgent measures to revise the existing policies and practices of "Native" administration in a manner which will ensure the fulfilment of its obligations and responsibilities under the Mandate.

There is little doubt that no better solution exists than to follow the wishes of the inhabitants, and to place the territory under the U.N. trusteeship system.

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