

## THE REAL ISSUE IN SOUTH AFRICA

### Not Republicanism Nor Imperialism—By F. A. W. Lucas, K.C.

MEN LIKE Dr Malan and General Kemp, Mr Pirow and Mr Strydom, men who claim to be serious-minded and concerned about the affairs of the country, have found nothing better to do than to address meetings and conferences on formulas about how to get, or to try to get, a republic in South Africa. They know or ought to know that hundreds of thousands of our white people to say nothing of millions of natives, are to-day not getting enough nourishing food to eat and are crushed with anxiety about how to make a living.

All those politicians can offer these hundreds of thousands of people is republicanism, when what they need is food. Nero fiddling while Rome burned was in comparison a model of serious-mindedness. What use is a republic or a president to a starving man and his family? They can't eat either.

What could a republic do for them that could not be done to-day with our present form of government? Is there any legislative measure which a republic could pass which our M.P.'s if we chose the right ones, could not pass just as easily and just as speedily? The politicians who make a republic the chief plank in their platform know that quite well, but with our history and our national differences the easy way is to stir up passions and bitterness.

It is obvious that our people are divided on the question of a republic. It is certain that the great majority of them could be united in a real fight to end poverty. They want to end the awful curse of poor whiteism. But our politicians, with their ancient policy of "Divide and rule," apparently don't want to end it. It is much less trouble to keep the people poor and to inflame their hatred against other people who can be made to appear as the cause of their troubles, than to tackle the powerful vested interests that batten on the poor. Starving men are a fruitful field in which to sow the seeds of Nazism and Communism, of racialism and anti-Semitism.

None of our old political parties or their offshoots ever made a practical suggestion for ending poverty, and no government, not excluding the present one, ever has made much of an attempt even at alleviating it. Some time ago Colonel Reitz, now Minister of Native Affairs, claimed there was no unemployment and no starvation in this country. When he said that, the jobs offered to the unemployed, which hunger compelled them to accept, were jobs at 5s. 6d. or less a day. Those who took them were condemned to slow starvation instead of rapid. There was no hope for the future for such people. The prospect at best was 5s. 6d. a day, 33s. a week, on which to maintain a family, and if they could hold out till they reached the age of 65 a meagre old age pension.

Now, Mr Madeley, the Minister of Labour, comes along and tells the unemployed that in six weeks' time there will be more jobs than men. When that time is up and unemployment is more terrible than ever, he extends the time for another month or two. Meanwhile people are suffering from want and fear and nothing is done which can in any way end poverty.

Nothing can end poverty but destroying its cause. And that cause, as this paper constantly shows, is our land system which requires us to buy permission to work. No one of us can work anywhere but on land or in a building built on land, but we may not be there until we have first paid a landowner his price. We must buy a place to live, to breathe on, to work on. The Creator made it necessary for us to work to live and provided

the place to work, but we have allowed a few people to monopolise that place and demand a ransom from us before we may use it.

That is the problem we have to tackle, the problem of monopoly, of injustice. When we have tackled it we can have unlimited opportunities to produce all we need for a full and a prosperous life. The problem is not republicanism or Imperialism or Dominion Status. We can't eat them. What we need is a mass movement of the people against every politician, no matter what his party, who will not put the ending of poverty before and above every other question. When that movement begins to gather strength our politicians will turn from futile questions, such as the form of government to be adopted here and we shall be on the way to real prosperity for everyone.

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### WILLIAM MUNN

The cause for which this journal stands has lost an able and devoted servant in the passing of William Munn. On Saturday, 17th February, he was at his desk as usual, but on Monday he was too ill to leave home. His doctor found him suffering from bronchitis and at 6 p.m. that day he passed away.

He came as a junior assistant to the office of the English League in January, 1890, and had long been assistant secretary of the League when he left its service in 1934. Since May of that year he has worked in the office of the United Committee. In both capacities, he has rendered steady and devoted service to our Movement, not only by his knowledge of the book trade, but by his special knowledge of, and interest in, the literature of our Movement. Although his modesty prevented him from advocating our cause on the public platform, many visitors to our office could testify to the ability with which he could state our case in quiet talks with enquirers. The writer of this note was indebted to him for many shrewd suggestions, apt quotations from his extensive reading, or useful, out-of-the-way illustrations from the history and antiquities of London, on which he was an authority.

His body was committed to the grave on Saturday, 24th February, at the Mitcham Cemetery. Among those present were A. W. Madsen, Fredk Verinder, Chas Morley and A. Pursglove from headquarters.

His colleagues at Knightbridge Street mourn the loss of a faithful and well-beloved co-worker and extend their heartfelt sympathy to his widow, his sons and the other members of his family.

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