

reasons for his house-arrest met with a reply that the Minister, Vorster, was "not prepared to furnish" the reasons.

Nor were any reasons given by the Government for the closing down of *New Age*—not in South Africa, that is. It is true that, speaking at a private meeting in London, a leading South African diplomat declared that *New Age* "openly advocated Communism". It is not by chance that he made this ridiculous assertion in Britain, for the nationalists know that if they had made it at home they would have been laughed to scorn. According to the Suppression of Communism Act, it is and has been since 1950 a serious "crime", carrying a lengthy jail sentence, to "advocate or defend Communism or any of its aims".

New Age was a fighting defender and advocate of the people's rights, standing four-square with the national liberation movement in every struggle throughout the years in which it was published. But it did not break the Suppression of Communism Act or any other law—and the proof is that the Government never succeeded in getting a conviction against the paper in any court of law. This was not for want of trying. *New Age* was one of the defendants in the scandalous "Treason Trial", in which charges of Communism as well as treason were thrown out by the judges; and there can be no doubt that the special branch of the police eagerly studied every issue for grounds on which they could arrest the publishers and editorial staff and bring them to Court.

That they were unable to do so is precisely why Vorster made use of the slimy, underhand method of banning by decree, without having to produce reasons which could be tested and proved in a court of law. In just the same way, if Vorster had any valid evidence against the men and women he has placed under house-arrest and otherwise banned by decree, he would have prosecuted them instead of using this equally slimy and repulsive method of dealing with political opponents. His failure to prosecute is an admission and a proof that he has no such evidence. That is the hard fact and logic which no amount of wriggling and bluster can get around.

Anti-communism hysteria

In its attempts to arouse a wave of anti-Communist hysteria throughout the country, the Nationalist government—safe in the knowledge that its enemies have no legal right to redress or reply—has no scruples in sinking to the lowest depths of deliberate lies, abuse and libel. Yet, although it has at its disposal all the formid-

able resources of the State for propaganda and intimidation, the Government can claim little success in this campaign to influence the minds of the masses. There are many reasons for this failure.

Even simple people who know little about Communism have long learnt to regard all propaganda that comes from the Government with the deepest mistrust. Dr. Verwoerd—a product of the bourgeois school of psychology—is an adept at the art of calling things by their opposite names, as if words were more important than reality. The result is that he has become known as the very Father of Lies. His past “cleverness” is returning to condemn him, like chickens coming home to roost. He brought in a law to intensify the hated pass laws and extend them to African women: and called it the “Abolition of Passes Act”. He introduced a system which has greatly lowered standards of education for African children—and called it “Bantu Education”. He introduces a scheme of terroristic colonialism for the Transkei and other rural areas—and calls it “Bantu independence and self-government”. So when Verwoerd and his Ministers shout night and day against the so-called dangers and wickedness of Communism, most people are not impressed. They feel that if Communism is so much hated and feared by the oppressor then it cannot be a bad thing at all.

People ask: Why is the Government so much afraid of the Communist Party? The answer is given in a recent leaflet distributed all over the country by the underground South African Communist Party. The Government knows that, given a fair debate and a free choice, the overwhelming majority of the people will choose the Communist Party, with its policy of votes for all, land and freedom, rather than the Nationalist Party with its policy of apartheid and White domination.

As part of its propaganda drive the Nationalist Party attempts to equate “Communism” with liberalism and other anti-apartheid trends. The motive is transparently clear: to intimidate all its opponents and to drive a wedge between South African democrats of different schools of thought. It is saddening to find organisations like the Liberal Party falling for this ruse. In order to “prove” that they are not Communists they join in the sport of “Red-baiting”—making sneering and untrue attacks on Communism, under the shelter provided by the Suppression of Communism Act.

For example, the Liberal Party wrote to the *Rand Daily Mail* “replying” to a criticism published in our last issue, a garbled and incomplete version of which was reproduced in that newspaper. The “reply” consisted mainly of further attacks on the distorted pic-

ture of "Communism" customarily presented by Liberal spokesmen. Our criticism was directed not at liberalism as such but at the illiberal and obsessive anti-Communism of that Party, which vitiates it as an effective force against Nationalist tyranny. We did not suggest that the Liberal Party should undertake acts of violence, but asked that it should at least have the decency to refrain from criticising and sniping at those brave spirits who are hitting back against the ceaseless and ever-growing Government violence against the African and other oppressed people.

The burning issue in South Africa is not Communism but the rampant Nazi tyranny of Verwoerd and Vorster, which if allowed to develop unchecked will submerge the Liberal Party just as it has already outlawed the Communist Party, the African National Congress, the Pan-African Congress and the Congress of Democrats. It can only be checked if all democrats, Communist and non-Communist alike, stand together to bar the road. By feeding the flames of anti-Communist hysteria among Whites, the Liberal Party is, objectively speaking, hastening its own destruction.

Hitting back

The democratic masses of South African people are not taking the blows of the Nationalist Party ruling clique lying down. They are courageously and resourcefully hitting back, in a variety of ways. They are taking full advantage of whatever slender possibilities of legal political action still remain. The warmest tribute must be paid to the African people, at Langa and elsewhere, who hold mass meetings under the noses of the sten guns and batons of the police and pass militant resolutions demanding the release of Nelson Mandela and the leaders under house arrest, condemn the outrageous Government plan to expel all Africans from the Western Cape, and insist on the people's right to defend themselves against violence.

At the same time the underground forces of people's resistance are gaining strength and consolidating their forces. Despite the conditions of terror prevailing, both the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party have succeeded in holding national conferences—the former in Bechuanaland and the latter inside South Africa itself. The greatest spirit of confidence and militancy manifested itself at these conferences.

The S.A.C.P. conference was a historic landmark in the development of the Communist movement and the building of a