

SOUTH AFRICA: FIFTY YEARS OF UNION.

Celebrating its Golden Jubilee, the Union of South Africa, certainly prosperous Johannesburg, forgot Apartheid and remembered the settlement of 1910, by which the Dutch and British out there became one nation. But still revered is the memory of Paul Kruger, Britain's implacable enemy of the Boer War. He died six years before the Cape Town Parliament began its career as the legislature of the new nation. The Boer War legacy of bitterness largely faded as the first cabinet of the Union of South Africa - Louis Botha its first Premier assumed office. General Smuts, for many years, continued Botha's enlightened policy, till in a general election he was voted out.

From country obscurity emerged Dr. Malan. Apartheid was born, though few outside South Africa then realized its significance. High up, near Bulawayo, visited by the great and humble alike, lies the tomb of Cecil Rhodes; not in South Africa, but in the country of his creation, Rhodesia. Ironically the famous Empire Builder, in his commercial activities, turning the early diamond-rush into a vast industry, sowed the seeds of Apartheid. For the diamond fields did more than turn Rhodes and his friends into millionaires, they called for cheap labour - negro labour - and into South Africa came hordes of coloured men, till now they outnumber whites three to one. If it became five to one, ten to one, how long could South Africa remain a white man's country? For, not often appreciated in Britain, is the fact that before the diamond and gold industries started the influx of coloured labour, South Africa was a white man's country. There, the white man is the native, not the black.

Unfortunately, the rulers of South Africa want matters both ways; cheap labour and segregation. Hence the recent rioting against having to carry passes. The pass files themselves were systematically burnt. But even then little concession was made by the government. Outside criticism meant nothing to the Premier Dr. Verwoerd.

It was at that gathering that Dr. Verwoerd was shot. In a matter of minutes the Agricultural Show was turned from a local event into a world wide, front-page sensation. Miraculously the Premier was not killed, and as the would-be assassin was a white man, no race riots resulted.

So, on this Golden Jubilee, the shadow of Apartheid lies over Cape Town and the whole of South Africa. Yet the fifty years of union now being celebrated have for the most part, been a credit to the nation formed in 1910. All the Commonwealth hopes that South Africa will overcome her difficulties, and that the next half-century will bring justice, prosperity and peace to all her people.