

SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENCE

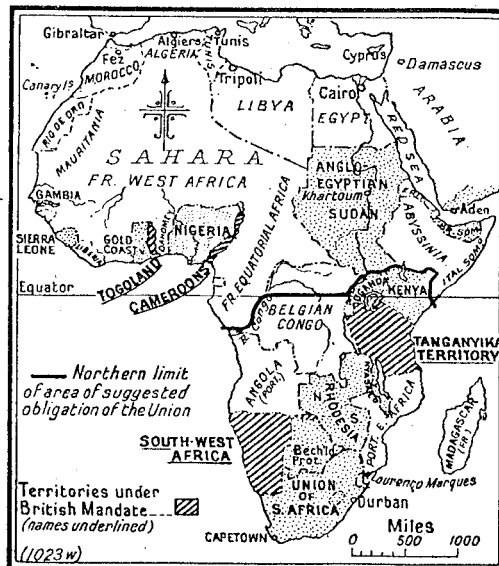
I.—DRIVE FOR MORE HEALTH

THE EXTENT OF LOCAL OBLIGATION

From Our Capetown Correspondent

The position of South Africa as a mandatory Power, as the controller of more than half the world's annual supply of new gold, and as the home of over 60 per cent. of all the white peoples of Africa, gives her a particular responsibility for self-defence of which her Ministers have shown themselves to be well aware. Public speeches merely give expression to an extensive programme of preparation and rearmament, of which the details have been capably and thoroughly set forth in a series of articles appearing in the *Cape Argus* and *Johannesburg Star*. The writer, who has the recommendation, if not endorsement, of Mr. O. Pirow, the Minister of Defence, goes carefully into land, sea, and air defences, and into the organization of the home front, physical fitness, and social discipline. He has had access to all such official information as is not confidential.

His analysis answers at an early stage the immediate questions why such comprehensive preparations for defence should be demanded from South Africa, what are her dangers and what her obligations. The Union cannot at any time be completely divorced from the consequences of European strife, and such a divorce has been



made much less possible by the occupation of Abyssinia and the chance of an extensive use of black troops to redress the changing balance of man-power between European rivals. In modern totalitarian warfare, with the issue dependent more and more on issues remote from the battle zones, on supplies, "finance and credits," weakening of moral and material resources, and occupation of oversea territories, South Africa would inevitably be entangled.

Not even the international assertion of a

the tragic necessity of defence, nor would complete diversion of gold supplies. Access to vital necessities of manufacture and credit is not enough under the totalitarian concept of war, witness Manchuria. There must be some sort of control—monopolistic control by preference.

THE WHITE GUARDIAN

The writer, claiming that the real background to the defence problem is the distinct position held by South Africa in Africa, examines those areas in which South Africa has legitimate interests outside her borders and delineates a clear division between the interests in the sub-continent of the European nations and of South Africa. The Union is the homeland of a permanent white civilization, whose outlook is distinctively South African. Other nations have no such permanent interests in Africa, their main purpose being to use its resources (material and military) for the advantage of white populations rooted in Europe. The Union has inescapable ties of common interest with all areas in Africa where white populations are endeavouring to establish a permanent home, or where the settlement of white population is possible by reason of favourable topographical and climatic features. The security of these territories is a bulwark of the Union's civilization. They might roughly be defined as territories in which the interests of a permanent white civilization in Africa do at present, or can in future, legitimately predominate over the politico-military interests of the Mediterranean nations, or the primary interests of natives in what might be termed black man's country.

The areas in which the interests of the natives and the Mediterranean nations have become of paramount concern coincide more or less with the territories in which the Union under no conceivable circumstances could have economic interests, such as Abyssinia, or the Sahara, or Egypt, for example. Similarly, there can be no hope of making the jungle country held by European nations in Equatorial Africa the homeland of a white African civilization. In short, by first drawing a line south of the Sahara, the Sudan, and Abyssinia, then eliminating West Coast country down to and including French Equatorial Africa and much of the Belgian Congo, and finally including Kenya and Uganda along the backbone ridge of white population, we get the area in which the interests of the white African civilization are dominant and in which it is the destiny of the Union to act as the guardian of that civilization. The occupation by any strong foreign Power, especially a non-European Power, of any part of that territory would be a direct threat to the safety of the Union.

ARMING FOR PEACE

Whither such affinities may ultimately lead the Union the writer does not speculate in his review, contenting himself with a mention of the dream of a Confederation of African States south of the Equator, or of an African Commonwealth of all the white civilization States. The need and opportunity for close consultation among the white African territories must inevitably and frequently arise, and may one day lead to a military understanding between the Union and its neighbours, and thence to a regional Pact outlawing from Africa the jealousies and racial bitterness of Europe. Such an ideal should at all events be the aim.

Finally, the late failure of the scheme of collective security and the sovereign status of the Union impose on South Africans real obligations of service and discipline. South Africa has no dreams of expansion. But in this age of general insecurity she would not be making a contribution to peace by demonstrating to the world that she has neither the will

nor the means to preserve from aggression the life of this nation and her legitimate interests in the permanence of white civilization in Africa. Hence the long-range preparations for defence which are the subject of these articles.

In war under modern conditions the armed men and the victory-willing people would be as military factors one and indivisible. Analysis in peace-time chooses a convenient division between the problems of the home front and the problems of the military front. The home front, which will be considered first, may be subdivided into the moral elements, such as fitness and social discipline, and the material elements, such as man-power and industrial preparedness.

Social discipline, far from being the same as regimentation, ranks first in importance among the moral elements and is an urgent need.

South Africa is a young nation, but recently come of age, not yet rid of the instabilities and turbulent impulses of early manhood. Its cultural roots have done little more than begin to grow down into the soil. There are qualities of softness and ease bred in the indolences of our climate that make South African youth an easy prey to the incessant temptations of our out-of-door pleasures. Lack of application is a besetting fault here of many brilliant youngsters whose promise is so high and whose achievement is sometimes so small.

There is, too, a real problem of declining national physique, astonishing in such a climate. Poverty and malnutrition have created an alarming incidence of tuberculosis, and the figures of the net rate of increase of the population due to natural causes have of late (to quote a recent pronouncement by the Minister of Health) "shown a disturbing decline." The general organization and encouragement of physical training and health and beauty culture is the obvious approach in South Africa to a disciplined public mind in a healthy national body.

TOO MANY UNFIT

The South African Government's plans for a national fitness campaign, recently announced, aim at general physical training for boys, girls, men, and women, and at training and discipline by specialization in all forms of sports and athletics. Although under present laws all young men must register for military service at 17, military training is not compulsory until 21, and in peace-time only some 25 per cent. of the nation's manhood receive training. A higher proportion than is conscience-comforting is medically unfit. Some 4,500 are posted annually to Active Citizen Force units and a small number to the R.N.V.R. for peace training, while the surplus majority are nominally posted to defence rifle associations, but with few exceptions receive neither training nor discipline.

In future the Defence Force will continue nominally to call up every young man liable to military service, and, in the case of all those who cannot be posted at once to Active Citizen Force units, will encourage them to undertake, as volunteers, a thorough and systematic course of physical training, combined with foot drill and route marching. The training facilities and organization will be available as soon as the young man registers at the age of 17. It is hoped that the great majority of young registered citizens will regard it as a matter of personal honour to put in three or four nights of "physical jerks" and discipline.

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schools. The cadet forces, which were once about 50,000 strong, have been reduced in two stages to 20,000 in numbers, with the purpose of affiliating them with the national military organization. Only boys of 15 and upwards are now taken on as active members of the school cadet corps, not all even then. The change has made the efficiency, smartness, and physical fitness of the cadets still more striking. Probably in future all boys from 12 up to school-leaving age will be enrolled nominally as cadets and given regular courses of physical training and disciplinary exercise; and girls too will undergo training in physical exercise classes at school.

HUNDREDS OF TRAINERS

The campaign for women and adult men must be quite voluntary. The plan here is to introduce a national organization—in which, it is hoped, the Olympic Games Council will take a leading part—with branches all over the country, in which every athletic enthusiasm will have an outlet and the State and local authorities help by providing instructors and accommodation. The whole scheme calls for close collaboration between the Defence Department and the educational authorities. The Education Department's contribution is a scheme for a three-year course of training of specialist teachers in physical education. The Defence Department's contribution can and no doubt will be immediate, thanks to the foresight that led the Minister of Defence to give discipline and a hope in life to many hundreds of aimless youths in the days of the depression. The Special Service Battalion, a great medicine for poor physiques, will be able to handle almost all the initial requirements of the major campaign for "P.T." trainers. Special instructors by the hundred can be supplied from its resources.

The second phase of the campaign—that is, the further promotion of national fitness through specialization in sport—is

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