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TALK



MOTHER AND CHILD
(A drawing by Kaethe Kollwitz)

GROUP AREAS PLUNDER

DORIS LESSING ON

CENTRAL AFRICAN FEDERATION

THE SUEZ CRISIS

AFRICA BEFORE 1652

Articles by CECIL WILLIAMS—PHYLLIS
ALTMAN — DIEGO RIVERA

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"FIGHTING TALK"

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COMMENT

THE farmer is still the backbone of the country, Strijdom told the conference of the Transvaal Agricultural Union. So he added, the State would go on doing everything to help him.

No wonder it's a case of curvature of the spine, with every aspect of the national life buckled, twisted and contorted to fit into the farmers' frame.

The airy Tomlinson talk of separate development for Africans is the sheerest cant while the farming community raises its voice for the removal of "black spots," the little land Africans do own, and vetoes every single attempt to acquire the land for Africans which was a solemn undertaking of the legislation of two decades ago.

The platteland demands for labour: convict labour, forced labour, shanghai'd, labour, any labour so long as its cheap, jolts the arm of the state into one new law after another to fill the farm prisons, uproot African labour in the cities, keep wages down.

So the people assail together the land monopoly ownership of the big farmers and the tyranny of the government that legislates for them.

The old forms are mishappen and in their struggle against them the people will mould the new.

FROM THE SIDELINES

By
L. BERNSTEIN

THE SIGNIFICANT thing about the Nationalists' apologists who staff the State Information Offices is not so much what they say as what they hush up. Take the Group Areas Act as an example. Since 1950, there has been a steady outpouring of "explanations" to persuade the world the whole thing is honest, above board and desirable, and imposes equality of sacrifice and opportunity on all racial groups. The flood has dried up since the publication last week of the first instalment of Johannesburg's scheme. Understandably so; for this is the reality of a big steal which makes Chicago gangsterism look like small potatoes. Sacrifices there are, in plenty. But they will all be made by the Non-White people. Indians, Africans and Coloureds will be expropriated from Newlands, Newclare, Sophiatown, Martindale, Pageview, Albertsville, Albertskroon. For the Coloured people there will be a ghetto in Coronationville; for the Indians exile to Lenasia, twenty-two miles from the City; for the Africans "ethnic grouping" in the vast South-Western location complex. Europeans—what the Act calls the "White Group"—will fall heir to property, with as little pricking of conscience as troubled the brigands who collected the gold-filled teeth from the corpses at Dachau's gas chambers. By the law of the land it is, one regrets, legal. But morally it is burglary. Let the State Information Office whitewash as it may. This is something that will be chalked up for the settling by the South African people when they place their own criminals before the tribunal of the people at the day of their liberation. Strijdom's conquests by force, though they take place within the country's borders, are as morally reprehensible as Hitler's. That they will be set aside when the people come into their own goes without saying. But that is no reason for silence now, and no justification for acquiescence by the White citizens of Johannesburg. Those who receive the spoils of burglary make themselves as guilty as those who commit it. It is time for White Johannesburg to speak out—or become accomplices by default.

THE CASE of Mr. Duma Nokwe has gained a lot of publicity in the Johannesburg press. He is the fall guy of the Urban Areas Act, stable mate of the Group Areas Act. Mr. Nokwe, the only African barrister in Johannesburg, has been refused permission to occupy an office in His Majesty's Buildings, where all the other barristers work. His presence, we are told, would be "contrary to Government policy" — Group Areas Act policy. Mr. Nokwe is bluntly told to seek premises in an African residential area. That this would mean in fact that Mr. Nokwe would be cut off from contact with lawyers, clients, courts and other barristers is clear enough to move even the editors of the daily press to protest. The callous and casual fashion in which Government policy becomes the excuse for wrecking a career is shocking and intolerable. But is Mr. Nokwe's fate any different in principle from the fate which awaits thousands of Indian shopkeepers if they are moved to a single Indian ghetto at Lenasia, where there will be neither work nor livelihood for them? Those who are moved so easily to pity by a single case of brute injustice should ask themselves the question: are their protestations about Mr. Nokwe genuine? Or are they cheaply salving consciences which are burdened with guilt of indifference to the vast and multiple injustice of every application of the Group Areas Act?

OUR COVER DRAWING

KAETHE KOLLWITZ'S drawings depict and are deeply imbued with sympathy for the suffering. Born in Koenigsberg, Prussia, her art went unrecognised and she was silenced by the Nazis when they came to power in an attempt to still her cries for social justice.

GROUP AREAS PLUNDER

By L. BERNSTEIN

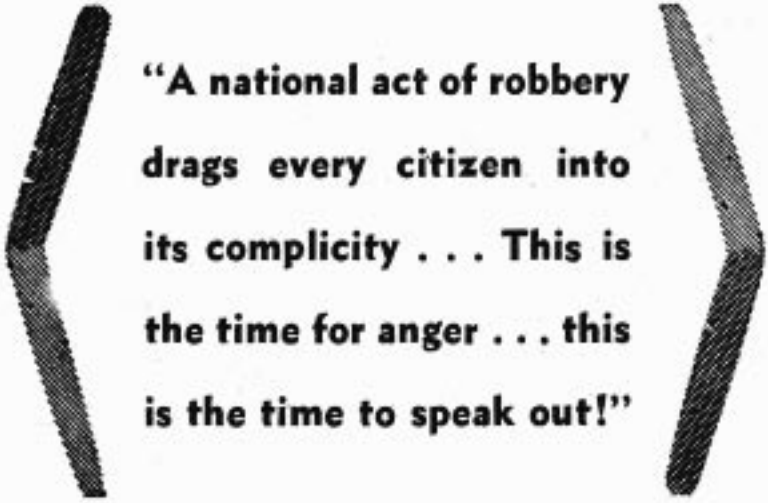
WHEN the air is heavy with the smell of pogrom, vultures begin to gather. So it was in Hitler's Germany. Big vultures—the Schachts and the Goerings—killing by remote control, pogromists as a matter of state policy, killers in the cause of aryan survival. Middle vultures, the pretty bureaucrats, office-bearers and administrators, planning, promulgating and codifying the killing, pogromists in the line of duty. Small vultures, the black-jack and knuckle-duster squads, the end-of-the-line little men, with blood on their hands.

SO it is in South Africa. The Group Areas Act gathers the vultures together for the day of pogrom—sanctimonious Cabinet Ministers preaching mediaeval concepts of race purity; bigoted public servants and sycophants, turning those concepts into grinding, body-and-soul-destroying schemes of zones and buffer strips and barriers; pinch-penny speculators and grave robbers, scratching in the foulest muck of Nationalism for the slimiest pennies. An unholy alliance of the most depraved and inhuman forces of the land, for the most depraved and degrading act in our history—armed robbery in the name of law—the Group Areas Act.

Mad Dog Racism

To creatures such as these, I have nothing to say. Words—honour, decency, principle—words do not touch them; silver is their token, loot and power are their lodestar. Their palms itch for the large stakes—not for the Rembrandts of a Goering or the Ethiopian empire of a Ciano, but for the sites, the shops, the goodwills and the buildings of the “unassimilable” three-hundred-thousand South African Indians. To them, I have nothing to say. Let history deal with them as it dealt with Mussolini, swinging dead by the heels for his victims to spit upon. Let me speak rather to the good neighbours, to the good citizens, to the quiet people of all races, who neither covet their neighbours property nor sharpen long knives to get it. Why do YOU not speak out? How long can you stay silent and not become accomplices to the crime? Must you wait till they pull the gold-filled teeth from living people before your conscience revolts?

I am told I go too far; South Africans, I am told—even the mad-dog racials who devised the Group Areas



“A national act of robbery drags every citizen into its complicity . . . This is the time for anger . . . this is the time to speak out!”

Act—could not stoop to such bestiality. No? Consider the evidence.

The Golden Plum

In 1887—when Johannesburg was a tiny wood-and-iron mining camp, an area was set aside for occupation by Indians; these were the nameless pioneers, contributing as much in their way to the building of the town as those others, Von Brandis, Jeppe, Eloff, whose names are recorded on the map. In 1937, the legality of Indian ownership and occupation was reiterated by Act of Parliament, and again in 1941. That area is Pageview. In it live about one third of Johannesburg's Indian population of some 15,000 souls. They share the overcrowded area with perhaps three thousand Coloured people, and some two thousand Africans. For years the pressure on space has grown worse; there has been no municipal housing for Indians at any time in the history of the City. And over the past fifteen years, the segregationist bug of Group Areas has crept in. A City Council, alternately right-wing Labour and right-wing United Party, has gradually coralled the Indian population into Pageview, by the simple and effective device of “planning” industrial rights in all those townships where Indians and Coloured people live, raising the value of ground beyond the capacity of private tenants to pay. Gradually Pageview has become the last unsubmerged island of Indian occupation in a rising flood of racialism. To a desperate, beleaguered group it has meant many things—a roof over their heads; a community where they feel neighbourly and at ease; an investment, a place of business, a slender straw of security in an insecure life. Last month, by single decree in the Government Gazette, all that changed. The law is not what Kruger said it was in 1885, or Hertzog in 1937, or Smuts in 1941. The law is what the Minister of Interior Donges says it is in 1956. And Donges says that Pageview is the property and heritage of what current officialdom calls “the White group.” By August 1957 a large part of it is to be vacated by its present occupiers, sold by its present owners; the rest of the area remains under suspended sentence, the White man's plum which will be plucked when the mood takes him—a golden plum, worth perhaps £4, perhaps £5 million, now going cheap to the vultures who are not dismayed by the smell of charring flesh.

Squeeze to Lenasia

I am told I go too far. Zoning Pageview for "the White group" is no parallel for Dachau's gas chambers. Not yet. But there is more to come. From Pageview there is only one retreat for Indians—Lenasia, a township which lies twenty-one miles outside the city, a privately owned township, in which more than one City Father and more than one Indian speculator has a finger, a derelict white elephant of a township, doomed to bankrupt its promoters until the Group Areas Act—conveniently—empied the jackpot into their outstretched palms. Here, it is said, Indians will live. How they will live, under what roofs, by the grace of which landlord, working at what occupations—these trivia remain unexplained by officialdom, which concerns itself only with the broad principles of robbery, not with its victims. It is said that Lenasia will put an end to the rent profiteering which flourished in Pageview. Lies. The worst of Pageview's rackrenting landlords have secured themselves a corner for operations in Lenasia. And this time the squeeze will be bigger, because there is nowhere for the tenant to go; here he either stays and likes it, or he just stays. And yet they will live. Some few will live by trade. And the rest? They will live, somehow, so we are told. It is said, officially, that this predominantly mercantile community will have to change "their way of living." Perhaps they will have to stop eating. But somehow, it is said, they will live.

And still I am told this is better than being bludgeoned into Hitler's gas chambers. Perhaps so. But this is Johannesburg, the liberal storm centre of South Africa, the home and castle of the radical and progressive cause—Johannesburg, which once elected a Communist Councillor but which has voted Nationalist only in 8 of 42 wards. Johannesburg's City Council pleaded before the Group Areas Board for the Indian traders of Pageview to be allowed, at least, to keep their trading licences and trading sites. And because this is Johannesburg, we will have Lenasia, which is better than the gas chamber. But Lenasia will not be the pattern for the country. It is the concession to the almost un-South African radicalism of Johannesburg, a sop to its uneasy conscience, and a bribe with which to buy its silence while worse crimes are committed elsewhere.

Blood and Soil Myths

What can Durban expect? The Durban City Council ran ahead of Nationalism, agitating for a Group Areas Act for the very purpose of expropriating the Indian community. It was the first to propound the new blood-and-soil mythology of South Africa in March 1953:

"Residential neighbourhoods should, therefore . . . be such as to reduce the possibility of one group spilling into another's area, or of casually crossing the border. Effective segregation therefore demands effective boundaries. Some natural features, e.g., rivers, steep valleys, cliffs and hill tops are very effective barriers, whereas a narrow vacant green belt tends simply to become a communal park and thus encourage contact."

The Durban City Council proposed to the Group Areas Board a "plan" for Durban. It called for the eviction of

156,000 Africans, Indians and Coloureds, for the expropriation of almost seven thousand acres of Indian owned land and some £9 million of land and buildings. If Johannesburg gets Lenasia, is it too much to suppose that Durban might get Belsen?

I am told I go too far. Perhaps so. Forget Durban. Even there, self-interest rose superior to jingoistic racialism; even those City Councillors recognised that Durban could not survive without the 145,000 Indians who live and work within its boundaries. But what can one say of Lydenburg, Wolmaransstad, Nylstroom, Nelspruit and Carolina? What can they expect, where Dutch Reformed Church and Town Councillors combine to urge that the tiny Indian communities be driven out, miles outside, to sewerage farms, to wasteland, to anywhere so long as they were well outside the built-up limits of the town.

And still you will say, "Better than the gas chambers." Maybe so. But madness has a motion of its own. What seemed outrageous in Durban appeared like the voice of reason and sanity at Wolmaransstad. And what seemed outrageous at Wolmaransstad became the voice of reason and sanity at Ventersdorp. Here the real Belsen madness showed itself. Ventersdorp Municipality, at a public hearing of the Group Areas Board, demands *no* Group Area for Indians. Let the Indians disappear! Let them go somewhere else! Ventersdorp does not want them! To the bottom of the deep blue sea!

This is the demented logic that led six million Jews through the doors of the gas chambers at Belsen and Auschwitz. Let no one tell me I go too far!

Stolen Property

I speak to the decent, the neighbourly, the just and the upright South African citizens of all races! But above all I speak to my White compatriots, because you—whether you wish it or not—are in on the share-out of the spoils of the pogrom. You are inheriting the stolen wealth and property, *and the right to occupy that property, to corner that wealth, whether you exercise that right or not!* 476 stands in Pageview; 1600 stands in Sophiatown; 322 stands in Martindale, 600 stands in Newclare, 1500 stands in Albertsville. And this is only the start of the haul. This is only the beginning of Johannesburg's grand larceny. And you, my White compatriots—you and I—acquire the right to live, occupy and speculate in the fruit of that larceny; we share in the spoils, and become parties to its theft. A national act of robbery with violence drags every citizen into its complicity. It is small solace to say that we are not among the gathered vultures. No. They have blood on their hands. But we are only being stamped with the mark of Cain.

How can we now keep quiet, and keep calm? This is the time for anger, for impassioned action before the foul deed is done and finished. This is the time to speak out! A crime is being committed in your name! If you would sleep at night, now you dare not keep quiet!

The Claws still Sheathed

**DORIS LESSING
ON CENTRAL
AFRICAN FEDERATION**

PARTNERSHIP is a word new since I left home; it was minted to sell the federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland three years back to the Africans who solidly opposed it. They were promised in a thousand speeches full social, economic and political partnership. Not immediately of course: they would be junior partners until they had proved themselves "civilised." The period of this apprenticeship varies with the orator, from 50 years to 500.

For seven weeks I have been in Central Africa, taken round by public relations men so efficient I do not blame people not familiar with the set-up for being won over. For these are no cynical peddlars of racism, like Strijdom's men; their advantage as propagandists is that they sincerely disapprove of what is going on in the Union, genuinely believe in the virtues of "partnership."

Two Tags

In Central Africa the formulation of White supremacy is paternalist; in South Africa, outright racist. Yet Southern Rhodesian Africans who have worked in the Union say they prefer it; because within the framework of the segregation laws—and they are almost identical—there are greater economic opportunities in the Union. They say "apartheid" is an honest word; "partnership" nothing but hypocrisy.

Mr. Garfield Todd, Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, is the symbol of "partnership." He is a missionary, a big, likeable, energetic man enthusiastic for African advancement. He dislikes the colour bar, likes Africans as people—a rare quality among White settlers—is proud that some Africans consider him a saint. At the same time he deports strikers at the drop of a hat, and refuses the leaders of the African Congresses in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland entry into his territory. Scarcely an extremist—yet compared with his White electorate he is advanced indeed; and there is already a party forming to oppose his dangerously liberal ideas.

His policy and Lord Malvern's (Prime Minister of the Federation) is one of intelligent self-interest. They want to create a class of Africans with a little property and some voting privileges to act as a cushion against discontent. But all these liberal administrators (a liberal in this part of the world is a person who wants "to do something for our natives," not one who thinks they should have political rights) say the same thing.

They are frightened, not of the Africans, whom they seem to think they can control; but that a flare-up of racial feeling on the part of the die-hard White electors will prevent them from "giving" the Africans enough to stave off revolt. Thus the speeches of men like Malvern, Todd and Welensky are to be judged not on their content but on the audience they are meant for. Addressing the outside world, they sound like good-hearted philanthropists, full of moral disapproval for those reactionary Nationalists down south, but talking to their White electors they boost the virtues of White supremacy.

Gap

But the gap between what White prejudice will allow Government to "give" the Africans, and what the Africans are already demanding is too great to be so easily bridged.

Unless Federation is prepared rapidly to advance to full racial equality, then it must inevitably regress to full

repression. The present halfway house inhabited by optimistic paternalists like Garfield Todd cannot be tenanted for long.

How is it possible for them to be so optimistic? Because they judge their system not in the light of the advance to African self-government in West Africa, or the absence of colour bar in the Congo, let alone the racial equality taken for granted in civilised countries, but against what Southern Rhodesia was like six years ago.

To call an African a "native" instead of a kaffir—he is not yet an African by law; to call urban segregated areas "townships" instead of locations; to state officially that the Africans as people are potentially as good as White people; that a few White liberals invite Africans and Indians to their homes—all this seems to them very progressive and remarkable.

So it is, judged by the ideas of the average White settler. *But the fact that the legal structure of segregation is almost identical with that in the Union is forgotten in a mood of enthusiastic self-congratulation.* It is not the Africans who are backward; it is the White people. One uses the language of twentieth-century militant self-determination; the other that of a benevolent nineteenth-century District Commissioner.

Sheathed Claws

The pattern emerging, then, with minor differences between the three territories, is that of "apartheid," but apartheid with its claws still sheathed. And Southern Rhodesia, being the most industrially developed of the three countries, will shape the two northern territories, just as the Union of South Africa has shaped Southern Rhodesia.

Battle

When the White citizens of Federation demand unified native policy," it means they want to spread Southern Rhodesia's segregation laws northwards. The legal framework for this already exists: passes, urban segregation, the colour bar, are all there, in the North, but are not so severe. It is a question of enforcement.

Africans in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland fight to retain the shreds of their liberty; they want to keep what remains of Colonial Office influence in Government. Hard for us to see the Colonial Office in this light, but there it is seen as a protection against the rapacity of the White settlers.

During the next three years, then, battle will continue between the White settler governments—demanding dominion status, control of "the r" natives, and to get rid of Colonial Office "interference"—and the African national organisations who will try to contract out of Federation altogether, or at least to keep Colonial Office protection, because progressive opinion in Britain can influence the Colonial Office.

Federation was pushed through for three main reasons. One, to have a "safe" British area in Central Africa for strategic purposes; South Africa, under the British-hating Nationalists, could not be counted on if there were another war. Two, Southern Rhodesia, too ambitiously in-

(Continued on Page 6)

Diego Rivera on Soviet doctors, painters

Diego Rivera, the great Mexican painter and muralist is back in Mexico after a long stay in the Soviet Union. He went there to get medical and surgical treatment for his cancerous ailment.

While Rivera was attending to official papers at the Mexican airport, when he arrived, a group of popular Mexican singers and guitar players were singing him a Mexican "corrido" in the airport waiting room. Some of the verses (in Spanish) went like this:

Diego went to Russia
To look after his health
And some learned doctors
Cured him in Moscow.
They cured him with cobalt
Which is used to make bombs
But they learnt to use it there
To do good to mankind.

In parts of the interview Rivera gave on his return he declared: "It would be impossible to describe, unless you are a literary genius, the very fine treatment, the profound human tenderness and delicate sensibility in the care and therapeutic applications of the Soviet doctors and nurses."

He continued: "I have a vivid sensation of returning not from another country, but from another planet in which humanity is living in history and already has completely left the prehistory phase in which we still live on this side in which capitalism continues to rule."

Rivera made it clear that treatment in the 20 cancer clinics in Moscow is given equally to agricultural labourers, industrial workers, intellectuals, artists or high government officials. In other words the treatment that he received was not given to him because he was Diego Rivera, but because he happened to need it and, being in the Soviet Union, he was entitled to it like anybody else.

Diego Rivera explained: "It is not a question of paradise or of a miracle, but of a human society that is at a very high level of development and, though only 28 years after the socialist revolution, their system is at an interplanetary distance from the old capitalist system of exploitation of man by man in which we live."

Rivera was in the Soviet Union in 1927. He described the tremendous changes that have occurred in all fields of endeavour in the USSR since then.

"Of course they have some bad painters among the thousands of painters that they have," Rivera acknowledged. Then he continued: But the Soviet painters have resolved the problem of really modern painting, that is, socialist painting, because after all, the only thing that we could call absolutely modern is socialism."

He finished by saying: "The man of this modern society demands a clear art, without disguise, depicting what he does, what he constructs and enjoys, without veils or subterfuges that are not needed at this late date. In short, socialist realism."

CENTRAL AFRICAN FEDERATION—Contd.

dustrialising herself, was bankrupt; and Copper Belt money from Northern Rhodesia paid her debts. Federation is a better proposition for investors. Three, Federation makes dominion status and self-government more probable.

Inviting Africa

Central Africa is proving attractive to investors, even drawing money from South Africa, because of the danger there of a racial flare-up. Industrialists are already leaving the Union and establishing themselves north. American money is coming in; it is largely American money which finances Kariba and other big projects. Asia is lost to world capitalism, but Africa is large, potentially very rich and scarcely developed. Above all, it is almost empty.

Federation is an area as large as Northern Europe; it has 7 million inhabitants. Two hundred thousand are White, with a very high standard of living, but the wage for unskilled African workers is about £3 a month. Food and accommodation given by the employers work out at about £2/10/0 to £3 a month. In the Copper Belt where wages are higher than anywhere in the Federation, unskilled workers earn £7 or £8. A minority earn more. An African is well off if he earns £15 a month.

Lop-sided Change

World financial pressure is, however, forcing an industrial revolution. This is lop-sided and violent: copper still finances Federation, with gold, chrome and tobacco a long way down the list of money-makers. A slump in the price of copper would create economic chaos.

Government is trying to balance development by encouraging secondary industry and agricultural projects, like Kafue (described as another Tennessee Valley scheme, when it gets under way) citrus, sugar, and the

Sabi Valley schemes. But the point is, all this is avowedly based on sweated African labour and the internal market is extremely small. Nowhere can one see the basic contradiction of capitalism more nakedly than here; and no one sees them more clearly than the big industrialists. World Bank representatives, reporting on the possibilities of Central Africa as an investment, complained that the appalling poverty of the Africans and the industrial colour bar are hamstringing development.

It is the White trade unionist, fighting to retain his status as White man, insisting on the industrial colour bar, who blocks African progress most; it is paradoxically, the industrialists who are now fighting to break the industrial colour bar, to develop African skills, to raise the African standard of living so as to increase internal markets. To pay an African worker four or five times what he is paid now would still be cheaper than to pay what White workers demand!

In short, African economic advancement is to the interest of capitalism; African political advancement is not. One is being encouraged; one brutally suppressed.

At the moment the struggle takes a straightforward racial form: a mass of exploited Africans doing all the unskilled work and barred by White trade unionism from acquiring skills (there are exceptions, notably in Northern Rhodesia) face a privileged White class. But rapid industrialisation is bound to crack the industrial colour bar, and create a situation where poverty is not necessarily equated with a dark skin.

There seem to be two big imponderables: if there is a slump in America results in Central Africa may be explosive.

And, in any case, African bitterness is so deep, it may take the form it did in Kenya or make it necessary for White supremacy to clamp down as in the Union. Either way, the prospects for uninhibited capitalist development are, to say the least, dubious.

PHYLLIS ALTMAN ON THE WOMEN'S ANTI-PASS PROTEST

DAUGHTERS OF 1919

A JOURNEY of 10,000 miles begins with but a single step," says a Chinese proverb, and the Women's Protest Day Meeting against Passes in Pretoria on Thursday, 9th August, 1956, was a step, neither the first nor the last, along the road to freedom. This road has been walked by many women. In "Time Longer than Rope," Edward Roux writes that in 1919 "the women followed a policy of passive resistance. They refused to carry passes. Hundreds were sent to prison, particularly in the towns of Bloemfontein and Winburg. At the latter place the prison became so full that the authorities were powerless to deal with the resisters... This passive resistance on the part of the women was successful; the authorities were forced to withdraw the pass law for women."

Daughters of 1919

1919 to 1956. No Government has yet succeeded in forcing the African women of South Africa to carry that document of degradation and humiliation—a pass. It is the daughters and granddaughters of those courageous and determined women of 1919 who are carrying on the struggle.

There were 10,000 women at Pretoria, many of them with babies on their backs. Only a camera could record the richness of the scene: the gay headscarves; the Pondo women in their ochre dresses; Indian women in bright saris; women from Bethlehem in the Free State wearing embroidered A.N.C. shawls; other delegates wearing skirts in black, gold and green; the Port Elizabeth delegation which had travelled in special railway carriages which had cost them £800; the volunteers in their green blouses, who lined the route to the Union buildings and then, as in a moving tapestry of vivid colour, took their places in the amphitheatre. One needs to be an artist to sketch the faces of the women; old faces, lined by life; others, young, gay, made-up in European style, but in all a solemnity, dignity and a tremendous confidence. It was so quiet, so disciplined. It was a serious occasion yet there was no fear, no tension; simply this confidence, this determination.

The mixed delegation of African, Indian and White women went to the Prime Minister's office to present the thousands of petition forms. As they walked in single file (with detectives weaving amongst them) the women saluted them with cries of *Mayibuye and Afrika!* On their return, having been permitted only to leave the petitions in the Prime Minister's office, they called for the

women to stand in silence for thirty minutes as a symbol of their resistance.

Thirty minutes! It is nothing in time—yet it is an eternity. Complete silence, except for the crying of babies. The sun was hot above; the magnificent lawns and gardens of the Union Buildings lay peacefully below. The women were immobile, graven images, their thumbs uplifted in the *Afrika* salute. Thirty quiet minutes.

What did I, a White woman, think during that time? I was moved to tears; I had a moment of complete identification with those women which is rare for those of us who live unwillingly on the other side of the colour line; my own tensions disappeared. Then I looked at the White civil servants lining the balconies of the Union Buildings, watching this mighty gathering of women and I wondered briefly what they were thinking. Did they dismiss us all as a collection of "Kaffirs, with a few coolies and White Communist agitators amongst them" or was there any sympathy or understanding? Or was there fear? FEAR? Perhaps when the next gathering is so large that the eye cannot encompass it there will be a pricking of fear; a realisation that these women are people; not object, digits and black inferiors.

Women, All Women

And then I became angry for it suddenly seemed so stupid that there should be any need for a gathering such as this; to me it is so clear that we share a common humanity that my anger is an expression of my disbelief that others cannot see this. In the play "Deep Are the Roots" by d'Usseau and Gow the Negro mother of the returned soldier cries out to the White woman: "Is my woman's body less sacred than yours?"

This is the question which White South African must answer. Is any one human being worth less than another? Must these women be subjected to sudden arrest; manhandling by the police; imprisonment; must they be dragged from their children; must their homes and their lives be disrupted to serve the blind interests of those who have cut themselves off from compassion and from life?

The thirty minutes silence ended and 10,000 voices, in magnificent four-part harmony sang "Nkosi sikeleli Afrika" and "Morena Boloka." The singing reached the sky and then I knew a moment of triumph. Nothing will defeat these women, these wives, these mothers. "This is it!" I thought, "This is it!"

The women in Pretoria that Thursday, the women who demonstrated throughout the country, will not submit. They will fight for their right to freedom and to life.

THE WOMEN TOLD STRIJDOM :

For hundreds of years the African people have suffered under the most bitter law of all—the pass law which has brought untold suffering to every African family.

Raids, arrests, loss of pay, long hours at the pass office, weeks in the cells awaiting trial, forced labour—this is what the pass laws have brought to African men. Punishment and misery—not for a crime but for the lack of a pass.

We African women know too well the effect of this law upon our homes, our children.

In the name of women of South Africa we say to you, each one of us, African, European, Indian, Coloured, that we are opposed to the pass system.

We shall not rest until the pass laws and all forms of permits restricting our freedom have been abolished.

KRUSCHOV ON SOV

"WHY should we want war? We don't want it. As a matter of principle we renounce any policy that might lead to millions of people being plunged into war . . . War is not fatalistically inevitable . . ."

THESE were the words of Nikita Krushov, first secretary of the Soviet Communist Party in his opening speech to the 20th Congress of his party.

THIS speech, dealing with Soviet policy in the field of international relations, in the fields of Soviet and world economy, and in the field of Soviet living conditions, education and leisure, has not been published in our press. An authoritative expression of opinion and policy by a leader of the Soviet state is clearly of interest to all, and the views expressed here are of particular importance to all concerned with the preservation of world peace.

THE emergence of socialism from within the bounds of a single country, and its transformation into a world system, is the main feature of our era. Capitalism has proved powerless to prevent this process of world-wide, historic significance.

"Figures show that in 26 years the Soviet Union, despite tremendous damage to its economy by war, increased its industrial output more than twenty-fold, while the U.S.A., which enjoyed exceptionally favourable circumstances, was only able to slightly more than double its production.

"The economy of the capitalist world is developing extremely unevenly, and has become still more unstable. The United States is losing the monopoly position it held during the post-war years, and the economic struggle between capitalist countries is developing all the time, aggravated by the reappearance of West Germany and Japan, who, like Britain and France, had practically regained their pre-war positions in world markets.

"As before, the main conflict is that between the United States and Britain. Anglo-American antagonism embraces a wide range of questions. Under the slogan of 'Atlantic co-operation' the transatlantic competitors are grabbing the principal strategic and economic positions of the British Empire . . . It is not surprising therefore that in Britain and in France too there is a growing desire to put an end to a situation in which Atlantic co-operation is of advantage to only one partner.

The Fight for Peace

"A vast zone of peace, including peace-loving states, both socialist and non-socialist, of Europe and Asia, has emerged in the world. This zone embraces vast areas inhabited by nearly 1,500 million people—that is, the majority of the population of our planet.

"The Communist Parties had proved to be the most active in the peace struggle in the capitalist countries, and had withstood many hardships and trials with credit.

"At the same time, many other sections of society are also opposing war. The effectiveness of their activity would be greater if the various forces upholding peace overcame their disunity. The unity of the working class, of its trade unions, unity of its political parties—Communist, Socialist and other workers' parties, is acquiring exceptional importance.

"The interests of the struggle for peace make it imperative to find points of contact, and on these grounds lay the foundations for co-operation, sweeping aside mutual recriminations.

"Here, co-operation with those circles in the Socialist

movement who have views on the transformation to Socialism differing from ours, is also possible and essential.

The People of the Colonies

"The disintegration of the imperialist colonial system now taking place after the victorious revolution in China, and the winning of independence by India, Burma, Indonesia, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Sudan and other former colonial territories is a post-war development of world historic significance.

"A big part of the African continent, some countries in Asia, Central and South America still remain in colonial or semi-colonial dependence.

"Contradictions and rivalry between colonial powers for spheres of influence and sources of raw material are growing.

"To preserve and in some places re-establish their former domination, the colonial powers are resorting to the suppression of the colonial people by force of arms. They have also resorted to new forms of colonial enslavement under the guise of so-called 'aid to undeveloped countries', which brings colossal profits to the colonialists.

For Peaceful Co-existence

"The Leninist principle of peaceful co-existence of states with differing social systems had always been, and remained, the general line of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union.

"Is there a single reason why a socialist state should want to unleash aggressive war? Do we have classes and groups that are interested in aggressive war as a means of enrichment? We do not. We abolished them long ago.

"Perhaps we don't have enough territory or natural wealth? Perhaps we lack sources of raw materials or markets for our goods? No. We have sufficient of all these and to spare.

"Why then should we want war? We don't want it. As a matter of principle we renounce any policy that might lead to millions of people being plunged into war for the sake of the selfish interests of a handful of millionaires.

"Do those who shout about the aggressive intentions of the USSR know all this? Of course they do. Why then do they keep up the old monotonous refrain about some imaginary 'Communist aggression'? Only to stir up mud to conceal their plans for world domination—for a so-called 'crusade' against peace, democracy and socialism.

BEHIND SUEZ LIES OIL

By LESLIE GREIG

EVERY time you buy a gallon of petrol you pay more for it than you should. Every motorist in dozens of countries contributes to the enormous profits made by British and American oil companies.

It is the highly profitable oil industry that is responsible for the political pressures behind the Suez crisis. The giant corporations know that Arab nationalism is on the march and that one of its goals will be the nationalisation of oil. Fresh in the memories of the oil magnates is the defeat suffered by Britain five years ago when Iran successfully brought the Anglo-Iranian company under national control. The Persians then compelled the British to accept the fifty-fifty principle, that is, the division into equal shares of all the profits so that the Arab countries granting the concessions benefit not less than the foreign investors.

Quite Legal

There is, of course, nothing unlawful about nationalisation, as Britain

This is the reason for the hysteria, for the cries of "another Korea," "economic measures" and last but not least for the proposal of an international conference. In the usual way this is a conference whose decision has already been declared, namely to put the Canal under international control—in fact imperialist control—and a conference to which Australia, Denmark, Western Germany and Pakistan are invited as interested countries, but to which none of the Arab countries has been invited.

Let the imperialists suggest whatever they like. The decisions do not rest with them. Meetings of all sections and strata of the Egyptian people are taking place everywhere and every day, and decisions are taken to mobilise the people's forces in a united national front to defend our rights and our land.

The Canal is Egyptian. It passes through Egyptian territory. We nationalised an Egyptian company. But we here declare that it is in our interests that navigation through the Canal should be free for all ships and countries, because we believe that the promotion of free trade will strengthen world peace.

discovered when she tried to bring the Iranian case to the International Court in 1951. Every sovereign state has the right to change the national laws governing its own resources. There was an outcry when Mexico nationalised her oil in 1938, but even the United States had to recognise in principle that she was entitled to do so. As in the Iranian affair, the foreign oil companies tried hard to prevent Mexico from producing and marketing her own oil. But after a time the Mexican victory was acknowledged. Today "Pemex" supplies Mexico with petrol at a lower price than ever prevailed when private profit was the first consideration.

"Tell me," said Harold Ickes, who was controller of petrol in the United States in 1944, "the sort of agreement that the United Nations will reach in regard to the world's oil resources when the war is over, and I will tell you how long the peace will last." In the event, no international agreement (except about prices to the consumer) was ever reached. The United States and Britain took care that it was not. Although they are rivals, especially in the Middle East, these two countries between them control the greater part of the world's oil. In 1947 a detailed plan was presented to the United Nations. Its aim was to provide equal access to oil supplies, assuring all nations, large or small, the right to buy oil on an equal footing, and to prevent price discrimination in favour of some buyers and against others. This plan was too hot to handle. Only Norway and Colombia supported it with enthusiasm. Within a few years even the discussion of the idea was abandoned.

Feudal Fortunes

In recent times the Arab governments have shown themselves determined to get a share of the wealth that comes from their lands. True the wealth *within* the Arab states is retained by the ruling feudal class of land-owners and these states have still much to learn about social justice and human equality. They have at least learnt that there can be no progress at all until the greed of foreign in-

vestors is curbed. Moreover, the foreign oil companies cannot even claim credit for introducing modern ideas into the feudal setting of their activities. In Saudi Arabia, for instance, where the richer oil fields exist, trade unions are illegal and so are workers' clubs, indeed, organisation for any public purpose. The powerful companies have done nothing to modify the prevailing medieval atmosphere, the political tyranny, or the social structure. They pay King Ibn Saud many millions of dollars in royalties, but the American press has no criticism to offer of the way the King spends his fortune.

The British press now uses the argument that Nasser will waste the £10 million in annual profits that the Suez Canal company has hitherto enjoyed. As if there was anything to restrain the French and British share-holders from squandering their profits. Once investors are allowed to grasp what profits they can—whether from the canal itself or from the oil fields behind it—who is to say how those profits should or should not be spent? And the last thing the British politicians want to do is to end the profit in oil. They also insist that the Arab share of the profit be paid in sterling, thus compelling the Middle East to buy British goods.

Blundering Down

Nasser has a right to nationalise the canal company which was built on Egyptian soil with Egyptian labour. As for impeding ships of other countries from passing through this waterway, he has not done so, except in the case of ships or cargoes destined for Israel. And when he did this, years ago, no one in Britain got excited about the issue, or lifted a hand. No one then called Nasser a fascist. For Sir Anthony Eden, the definition of a fascist is a dictator who is disrespectful of Britain's vested interests. After all, among Britain's allies are those well-established fascists, the dictators of Spain and of Portugal, and no British diplomat denounces them as fascists.

So it all looks as if Britain has blundered into a position from which she will painfully have to climb down. No one wants a war, least of all a war between east and West. Arab nationalism in action may not be an entirely pretty picture; yet it has features that British imperialism (and oil monopolies) don't pretend to have before the eyes of the world.

Who built Zimbabwe? Were there early African civilisations before White Settlement?

AFRICA BEFORE 1652

By MOSUPETSI

THE flimsy text book curtain which for so long has obscured the pre-European history of Southern Africa is getting a trifle moth-eaten.

Vistas from our past which have been sealed off from view because they fell on the wrong side of an arbitrary date line—1652—are being focussed, putting a new perspective on Southern African history.

In recent months we have seen Jaspán's article on "Civilisation in Southern Africa"; Basil Davidson's series on ancient Africa in the "New Statesman and Nation"; and a heated dispute in "The Listener" over Dr. Biesheuvel's contention that Africans had no prior "civilisation".

These are signs of an awakening interest in Africa's past—an interest which, sad to say, has evoked no echoes among South African historians, and is confined, at present, to overseas scholars alone.

We need hardly be surprised by this, for local history books have always neglected and ignored this aspect of our history. Indeed, one gains the strong impression that South African historians do not consider the pre-van Riebeeck period as forming part of the real history of their land. It is regarded as something apart on the same plane of relevance to "modern" history as our flora, fauna and climate.

Myths and Prejudices

The outstanding reason for this is the insidious effect, on the historian, of the myths and prejudices in the cultural superstructure of our society. Were historians, who belong to the privileged dominant group, uninfluenced by these myths, they would probably be less than human; but because they are, they are certainly less than historians.

A startling illustration of how deeply prejudice can eat into the historian's consciousness, is Prof. Eric Walker's standard "History of South Africa" (which devotes 23 out of 623 pages to pre-European history). He contemptuously dismisses any idea that Africans could have mined gold in southern Africa because of his personal bias that the Bantu were not capable of doing so.

"... Unless Bantu human nature has changed radically since, it is hard to believe that the Bantu dug gold of their own mere motion," he says.

Two Expeditions

"Bantu human nature" notwithstanding, the weight of modern scientific authority tends to the view that the flourishing civilisation which existed in southern Africa in olden times was African in origin.

Most of the decisive evidence has been collected in the two great archaeological investigations to the ruined mines and cities in southern Rhodesia. Their detailed findings need not concern us here, but the opinions of MacIver (leader of the first expedition) and Caton-Thompson (leader of the second) are of great importance.

According to MacIver there is no "trace of an oriental or European style of any period whatever" in the architecture, nor is there any evidence that the ruins were

constructed "under the dominance of a foreign race." The artifacts which were excavated were "quite African"—with the exception of articles like beads and porcelain which were obviously imported.

Caton-Thompson in her book "Zimbabwe Culture" fully corroborates the African origin of the ruins.

There is, moreover, a striking similarity between the types of construction at Zimbabwe, and the buildings of the Shona, Venda, and peoples living today in the general region of the ruins. A stone-fortress built on the same pattern as Zimbabwe has been found in the northern Transvaal.

Of the skeletal remains excavated at the ruins, all, according to Jaspán, are negroid types.

Early Writings

The historical side of the picture is filled in by writings of Arab, Indian and Persian travellers from the ninth century onwards. We know that Sofala (today a fishing village on the Mozambique coast) was the port from which the Zimbabwe empire conducted a flourishing trade with the great civilisations of the ancient world. What was the nature of this trade? Metal articles, pearls, knife handles and slaves were exported to Asia and North Africa, while porcelain, beads, loom-woven fabrics, glass and glazed pottery were imported.

We also know that the "Kingdom of Monomotapa" (as the 15th century Portuguese called it) declined and collapsed with the exhaustion of the gold deposits, which in their time had yielded £75,000,000 worth of the precious metal.

From the evidence available, it is possible to reconstruct a fairly accurate picture of how the people lived.

"At the time (the ruins) were built," says Neville Jones "the art of working in iron was generally practiced; the art of building in stone had been acquired; agricultural and animal husbandry were practiced, and contacts had been established with countries outside Africa, whence came many imported objects . . ." In addition, some of the architecture, stone carvings and irrigation schemes display an advanced level of artistic and constructional skill among the inhabitants.

How old was this pre-European civilisation? Over a thousand years, according to the most reliable scientific estimates. Carbon dating tests carried out on the spot show that the ruins were already built in the sixth century.

In spite of the evidence, however, there will always be romanticisers and racialists who will try respectively to enshroud the origin of this civilisation in mystery, or attribute it to a non-African people. Ever since a Boer hunter accidentally stumbled on Great Zimbabwe in 1868 (more than 500 similar stone structures as well as hundreds of mines were subsequently discovered) and so posed "the chiefest riddle in the history of Southern Africa" (Walker) no speculative holds have been barred.

Just about every important ancient people has found some enterprising writer who was prepared to suggest

that they were in some way responsible—the Egyptians, Chinese, Arabs, Phoenicians, Indians, Persians and Greeks. A fashionable variation of the "foreign" theory is to cast Hottentots and Bantu people in the role of labourers who worked the mines under the supervision of others.

For a long time, even after the decisive findings of MacIver and Caton-Thompson, only the boldest of the bold dared suggest that Africans built the ruins.

Arabs and Indians

Of the non-African theories, only two bear scrutiny the school which believes that pre-Islamic Semites (Sabaeans, Arabs or Phoenicians) were responsible, and the Dravidian Indian school.

Between 2,500 and 1,400 years ago, Arabs were colonising northern Madagascar and founded trading stations on the east coast of Africa; about 610 B.C. Phaoroah Neco commissioned Phoenician sailors to sail round Africa, and according to the historian Herodotus, completed the voyage in three years. This early contact with the east coast of Africa led to the establishment of settlements and increased trade between the Arabs and Africa.

The Sabaeans, an ancient seafaring people referred to in the Bible, who hailed from where Saudi Arabia is today, are said to have exploited the gold fields and used Indians, Africans, and Hottentots as labourers. Place names like Sabie and Sabie River are supposed to indicate links with the Queen of Sheba, Seba the grandson of Noah and the Sabaeans. Needless to say those who

look to the Bible as a literal account of history would derive considerable comfort from the knowledge that the mines of King Solomon were in southern Africa.

Supporters of the Indian school can likewise point to many centuries of trading between ancient India and Africa's eastern seaboard; there is a close similarity between the Zimbabwe ruins and other built by the Dravidian Indians; and the mysterious absence of any inscriptions at Zimbabwe is explained by the simple fact that the original Indians (unlike the Sabaeans) did not write.

Both the theories are on firm ground when they claim contact with Africa; but they become rather *hypothetical* in trying to show that foreigners *originated* civilisation here. Neither the archaeological nor historical evidence hitherto available bears on their contentions.

As matters stand, the general outlines of the picture are clear, although many details have yet to be sketched in. A great deal more research has yet to be done.

There are, for instance, the pre-European mine workings found in the Transvaal and O.F.S.—very similar to the Angola, Rhodesia and Mozambique mines. Almost nothing is known about these workings. What is their story? Who built them? Are they connected with the Zimbabwe? Was there, in fact, a mining civilisation in the Union before the West discovered South Africa?

Fascinating questions! But it looks as though we will have to wait until South Africa has peoples' historians before they are answered.

BALLYHOO IN TECHNICOLOUR

ARE YOU a simple sort of guy? Have you a homely sort of face and a friendly smile? Are you so politically unconscious that you wouldn't know the Suez Canal from the Indonesian Straits? If so, and you are over thirty-five and born in Gawd's own country, then you have every chance of becoming President of the United States of America.

Of course, it's not as simple as all that; you first have to attend a Convention. A Convention is a gathering of thousands of America's leading citizens in a hotel ballroom in Chicago or San Francisco or Philadelphia, Pe. There you don a cowboy hat, drink champagne and watch a drum-majorette in ever-so scanty panties parading round and round, followed by a brass band. This goes on until your delegation leader hands you a slip of paper with a name on it and tells you to cheer for it (the name). The slogan can range from anything like "Missourie Backs Honest Tom" to "I'm all Gooney for Looie".

I don't know whether Aesop ever wrote a fable called "The Donkey and the Elephant" (the symbols of the Democratic and Republican Parties respectively), but if he had, he would have had to stretch his fabulous imagination to the very limit to beat the modern version, the biggest fable of all—the fable of Democracy At Work.

In theory, of course, it is democratic. Each State sends its delegation with a strict mandate to nominate so-and-so for Presidential Candidate, but with an option to sell should so-and-so's chances of winning the nomination prove too remote.

In point of fact, however, the particular brand of democracy displayed on these occasions is about as genuine as

my affection for Vice-President Richard Nixon. The gigantic political machine without which no would-be President could hope to be nominated, bargains, threatens, bullies, buys and sells with great efficiency. Since a new President also means a new administration, there are plenty of good jobs for good pals.

Against this it must of course be realised that the final choice rests with the American public, and since, despite rumours to the contrary, the American public would unhesitatingly reject any man whose integrity was open to question, it is up to the political bosses to ensure that their man is at least one who can measure up to certain essential political specifications. People like Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt do sometimes get elected, but the modern trend in American politics seems to be to lay undue emphasis on earthy types. As Clarence Darrow once said, "When I was young, I was told that anybody could become President of the United States. When I grew up, I found, to my horror, that this was quite true."

The present contest has every sign of breaking all records for enthusiasm. Stevenson, has at least condemned MacCarthyism and anti-Negro discrimination. He has called for peaceful co-existence and has promised to amend some of America's vicious anti-labour laws. What he would do in practice is of course, another thing entirely. As one American columnist put it, the choice is between Adlai Stevenson and his Latin quotations and Eisenhower with his weak heart. The outcome of the election is naturally vital not only to the United States, but to the whole world, and we have no choice but to follow the circus wherever it goes.

VIC EDDY

THEATRE IN SOUTH AFRICA

FROM the vantage point of Johannesburg one sees an impressive amount of theatrical activity. There are shows at the Brooke, Reps, Technical, Library theatres, more or less continuously and there are frequent additional shows at the Y.M.C.A. and Windmill theatres. When, however, one looks at the rest of the country, one is struck by the paucity of productions in the live-theatre. One hears that the Johannesburg Reps have discontinued their presentations in Pretoria and that the Brooke company has closed, at least temporarily, its Cape Town theatre. There is no professional, regular theatre in Durban—the Intimate Theatre was compelled to close down several months ago—none in Port Elizabeth, East London, Bloemfontein, or Kimberley. All in all, the condition of the theatre in South Africa is in a bad way.

Live Theatre Eclipsed

This is a surprise and a pity — a surprise, because theatre flourished in the Cape as far back as 1800, when the "African" Theatre was built in Cape Town on Riebeeck Square and in Johannesburg as far back as 1889 when the old wood-and-iron "Royal Theatre" was soon followed by the Gaiety, the Standard and the Amphitheatre, where Frank Fillis staged his exciting circus displays. It is a pity because we all have need of live-theatre. The theatre can "take us out of ourselves" by entertaining us, educating us, giving us an emotional uplift, refreshing us for the day-to-day common round. How is it, then, that we are deprived of something which is, socially, so desirable?

Our theatres cater for the small audience-potential of two and three-quarter millions, scattered far and wide over a very large country, the distances between centres being so great that tours and exchanges are prohibitively expensive. Small audience-potential means short runs, so that the ratio of expenditure to income is absurdly uneconomic. When the entertainment monopoly, African Theatres, dropped live-theatre for films, especially after the introduction of the talkies, they condemned a whole generation to a theatre-less cultural life. In consequence, thousands upon thou-

sands of citizens have not seen the inside of a theatre, though they know scores of bioscopes as well as they know their own homes.

By

CECIL WILLIAMS

One recognises, too, that the films have lamentably debased general taste, purveying sensationalism, lack of realism, intellectual "sardouledum," cheap escapism, all of which disables audiences for the more rigorous mental and emotional and imaginative demands of the best theatre fare. Another consideration is that, although we pay enough in all conscience to go to the bioscope, cinemas provide very much cheaper entertainment than can the theatres.

Paler Than Life

Our theatres themselves are not without their deficiencies. Too many plays are trash. Aiming at the box-office, they miss the hearts and minds of the patrons sitting in the auditorium. And therein, I believe, lies the explanation of the feeble appeal the theatre has even for those permitted to go to the theatres and having the money to pay the admission prices.

It is a remarkable fact that the theatre's greatest advantage over the films is also its greatest disadvantage. Because in the theatre one is confronted with live human bodies and not photographs, because in the theatre one perceives and reacts to emotional moods, expressive gestures, vocal nuances, as strongly as one does to one's own moods and gestures, then what comes across from the stage has an impact as large and nearly as strong as real life. But here is the rub. If the play is weak, false, a travesty of real life, then all its inconsistencies, its untruths, its superficialities show up twice as glaringly as they would on the films. And too many people, too often, visiting our theatres, leave at half-past ten feeling vaguely frustrated. It is as if they have spent the evening with dull, insipid, ostentatious, un-

intelligent acquaintances. They have by no means had their money's worth.

Look at the plays we are offered—not all bad by any means, but when do we experience a play that deals with the realities of our South African life? Never. Our theatre, instead of giving us insight and inspiration into our own personal and social problems, borrows from America and England—and not always wisely at that. The theatre, from being one of the most inspiring institutions in our social life, is debased to the level of cheap entertainment, giving us neither emotional enrichment nor intellectual stimulation. No wonder people stay away.

Colour Cancer

But equal in morbidity with the claptrapism of our plays is another disease which cancerously eats away the vitals of "living" theatre in South Africa. That is the colour bar which prevents four-fifths of the population from enjoying the theatre and from making their contribution to our theatrical cultural life. Just think of it—while theatre promoters are gasping for increased patronage, laws, statutes, regulations, conventions and prejudice lock the theatre's doors in the faces of four out of every five passersby. And — let us remind ourselves—they are kept out, not because they don't want to come in, not because they aren't intelligent enough, but solely because their skins aren't the same colour as the doorkeeper's, the usherette's, the stagehand's, the small-part player's. Slap a film of theatrical make-up on the black and brown faces and all would be well. What nonsense!

A meeting of professional actors and actresses, meeting recently in Johannesburg to discuss the cultural colour-bar, stated unanimously that they desire to play to Non-Europeans as well as Europeans. They decided unanimously to make representations to relevant authorities to create the conditions in which theatrical productions will be available to all races. The professionals know that from an economic point of view their bread-and-butter will be secured and that there will be more of it.

(Continued on page 13)

The Depression — Back to Normal?

By M. MULLER

WHAT the New Year bells in America saluted was People's Capitalism. This is the force which lifted the United States in 1955 to the highest peak of prosperity yet achieved on earth . . .," wrote the *Rand Daily Mail* in January this year.

Just about 28 years ago Coolidge, who was then the President, told the United States Congress:

"No Congress of the United States ever assembled on surveying the state of the Union has met with a more pleasing prospect than that which appears at the present time. In the domestic field there is tranquility and contentment . . . and the highest record of years of prosperity."

Less than one year later America and the whole capitalist world was well into the Great Depression. During the next ten years there were never less than 8,000,000 jobless people in the "land of prosperity." In 1933 there were 13,000,000 unemployed, or one in four of the working population. In 1938 one in five workers were still without jobs. Only with the war in 1941 did the value of goods produced in America again reach the value produced in 1929.

"Back to Normal"

These facts are not recalled idly. During the past few weeks we have had a number of ominous reassurances from our local capitalist prophets:

"... There would not appear to be any justification for regarding recent economic developments in the Union as evidence of an incipient depression . . . In point of fact, however, the change in the economic climate . . . merely provides evidence of a return to healthier and more normal conditions."

So said Dr. Arndt, Deputy-Governor of the South African Reserve Bank at the Bank's annual meeting.

Right along with the bankers are the Nationalist politicians, like Dr. van Rhijn, who believes that the financial hardship which so many people now feel is nothing to be worried about. "Instead of being frightened," he says, "people should welcome this return to more rational standards." This speech *The Star* reported under a big headline, "WORLD IS GETTING BACK TO NORMAL."

What is Normal?

Yes, the capitalist world is getting back to normal. While experts say that half the earth's population is underfed, American farmers are once again being paid, not to produce food, but to plough their crops back into the lands. In Britain, 6,000 motor workers were retrenched on a single day and in the American motor industry there are 214,000 unemployed workers.

We have seen some of the effects of such normal capitalism here in Johannesburg. Once large and prosperous firms have closed down. In several industries there have been wholesale sackings. Short-time has become a very common thing. *And this is still only the beginning.*

For the past seventeen years, thanks to World War II, and to the cold war and re-armament, capitalism has not been normal. A new generation of workers has entered industry who do not know the misery of the able-bodied man for whom there is no job at all. In South Africa, with its rapid war-time and post-war industrial growth, thousands of new workers have entered industry. To all these people, "normal" capitalism, not to talk of depressions, will be a great shock.

A New Struggle

A new element, a new dimension, will increasingly enter into the struggle of the workers and liberation movements: a struggle for the right to work. Periods of depression have always been times not only when the working-class is steeled, but also times when the ruling classes seek refuge in the most brutal forms of fascism. Malan's "purified" Nationalist Party struck its roots during the depression years, but the outstanding example is Hitler's conquest of power at the height of the Great Depression.

A depression in South Africa will greatly increase racial tensions. The Nationalists will try to exploit it for that purpose, as in fact they are already doing. In the Transvaal Garment industry, antagonism between White and Coloured, and Coloured and African workers has become more noticeable, *especially among unemployed workers.*

Nor should we believe that African workers, who will be deprived of even the "dole" (unemployment insurance) will be immune to the racial appeal. The danger of the rise of demagogues will be great—and demagogues directly or indirectly always serve the ruling class.

To ensure that the struggle for bread and freedom is not sidetracked into racial strife and quack-remedy dead-ends, requires a widespread understanding of the workings of the capitalist system and why it breaks down.

If we are to have work and bread we must have the unity of workers of all races: the policies for which the S.A. Congress of Trade Unions stand—not the divide and perish policies of the Trade Union Council and Mr. de Klerk.

NEXT MONTH: The Causes of Depressions

THEATRE IN SOUTH AFRICA

(Continued from previous page)

They felt, too, that all people should have the opportunity of being enriched by the dramatic culture of the world.

A Culture Enriched

What, perhaps, some of them did not realise is that such a throwing down of cultural barriers will not only enrich the lives of Non-Whites, but will make possible the enrichment of the White man's culture by the infusion of the existing and potential culture of the African, Indian and Coloured races. We could be so rich, but condemn ourselves to poverty. Shakespeare, Sheridan, Shaw are for all people. So are the dramatic legends, the songs and dances of Africa and of India. If thirteen millions instead of three are encouraged to write plays, we shall find our own playwrights, speaking to us of our own country, our own lives. We shall find our own Bernhardtts and Irvings and Terrys: our own Pavlovas and Fonteyns: our own Robesons and Chaplins: our own Brittens and Gershwins . . . and, what's more, they will stay here, fulfilled as artists, happy to live their lives among and for their fellow countrymen.

books

THE GOLD COAST REVOLUTION AND THE NKRUMAH CULT

ALAN DOYLE

THE African people of the Gold Coast (traditionally called Ghana, rendered into English as Guinea) have by their resolute organisation and mass action won important victories for their national liberation which have inspired colonial peoples everywhere, and especially in Africa, in their struggle against imperialism. The Ghana people have not yet achieved full emancipation, political and economic, from dependence upon Britain. But they have taken important steps along that road.

Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the present Prime Minister, has without doubt played an important part in these victories. A talented organiser and dynamic leader, he grasped the key importance of mass organisation and mass action in a way that Dr. Danquah and the other old-style intellectual leaders of the United Gold Coast Convention had failed to do. When Kwame Nkrumah returned to the Gold Coast at the end of 1947 to take up his appointment as secretary of the Convention he speedily began the transformation of the Convention from a middle-class debating society into a popular mass movement. When the older leaders resisted this process Nkrumah broke away to form the Convention People's Party, based on the slogan of "Self-Government Now" which speedily developed into a mass liberation movement of the Ghana people.

In his biography "Kwame Nkrumah," the Gold Coast writer Bankole Timothy pays fully adequate tribute to all these merits of his subject. It must be conceded that Mr. Timothy is also occasionally critical of Dr. Nkrumah, and furnishes much material upon which a more balanced judgment can be based.

It is plain that Dr. Nkrumah, despite his merits and services, is too egoistic. He has fostered a cult founded on and centered in his own person. Thus, all the great achievements of the people of the Gold Coast, going back over many years, to force concessions from British imperialism are ascribed to Nkrumah alone. Even leaving aside the protracted struggles of the people before 1948, when Nkrumah first entered the picture, history shows that during the decisive stage of the struggle

which ended in Nkrumah's dramatic emergence from prison to Prime Ministership, he himself was undergoing a period of enforced inactivity. The general strike at the beginning of 1950 (that preceded and enforced the holding of a general election in which the CPP won its great victory, and Nkrumah's release from jail) was called not by the C.P.P. but by the Trade Union Congress. And the TUC was allied with but not controlled by the CPP.

As yet we have no book which deals fully with the historical events of the Gold Coast revolution of 1950. Mr. Timothy's book does not pretend to do this, being only a biography of Dr. Nkrumah. When this book does come to be written it is hoped that it will not be just another expression of the Nkrumah cult but will give full value to the actions and struggles of the people themselves.

Mr. Timothy greatly admires Dr. Nkrumah, and his book carries a laudatory foreword by Mr. Kojo Botsio, Nkrumah's closest associate and lieutenant. Yet the book, often unwittingly, exposes grave weaknesses in its subject. Nkrumah is shown as dictatorial, conceited, and lacking in principle. He has described himself, on different occasions, as "a Marxian socialist," "an undemoninational Christian," and a "disciple of Gandhi."

During the struggle for power, Nkrumah

had no words strong enough to describe the evils of British imperialism; he was a crusading radical, not afraid of being described as "an agitator," "a Communist," etc. Since he has become Prime Minister he has changed his tune. He hobnobs with the British Governor, praises the "British Commonwealth," and his Government persecutes Communists and radicals.

Does this mean that he has "sold out"? That would be an over-simplification. He is a representative of the Ghana middle class which genuinely desires to be rid of imperialism. But this middle class is capitalist, and fears the revolution of the workers and peasants. Therefore when the revolution of 1950 had placed the Nkrumah ministry in office this middle class sought to call it off.

But it is not easy to "call off" a revolution that has half-succeeded. In order to retain the support of the people in their still continuing struggles with imperialism the CPP leadership, one feels, must be compelled by historical imperatives to make more and more concessions in the direction of greater democracy, industrialisation and higher living and educational standards for the working people.

"KWAME NKRUMAH — His Rise to Power." By Bankole Timothy. Published by George Allen and Unwin Ltd. Price 20s.

The Un-American

"THE INVESTIGATOR," something less than a novel and more than a play, is a biting and witty satire on Senator Joe MacCarthy. It would be nice to think that the present eclipse of the red-baiting Senator was in part the result of Author Ship's barbed shafts. But reading the book, I am inclined to doubt it; there is a slightly muffled quality about the punches. But "The Investigator" was not originally written as a book, but as a radio play, broadcast from Canada with such phenomenal success that tape recordings of it were first bootlegged about the United States, and later recorded and released in Britain and America. I have not heard the

record, but by all accounts it is played with devastating effect, and with all the Star Chamber realism of a hearing before the Un-American Committee. I imagine that the record is the real "Investigator," and the book a slightly paler shadow. But wicked drawings by Ronald Searle add something which the radio play must have missed. For an evening's fun with purpose, try them both. L.B.

"THE INVESTIGATOR," by Reuben Ship. The book: Published by Sidgwick and Jackson, illustrated by Ronald Searle. Price 8/6. The record: Oriole longplaying 12-inch. MG 20006.

More Kettle than Bass

D"RUM," which Anthony Sampson calls "A venture into the new Africa," is new in some things, and old as the hills in others. New in the way that it attempts to say something about the forgotten men of South African literature, the African city dwellers whose outlooks, interests and occupations have stamped themselves so strongly across most of the pages of "Drum" magazine. Sampson, who edited "Drum" for some four years, has less to say about the magazine than about its writers, photographers,

pin-up girls and hep-cats and their bop, shebeens and Chicagoese slang. He says it with the vigour, raciness and readability of good contemporary American journalism, whose style both Sampson and "Drum" have copied. Unfortunately they have also acquired the superficiality which goes with the style. One suspects that there is something more in the lives of "Drummers" than shebeens and dives. But it fails to appear. Sampson writes of the surface only, although an occasional side-reference leaves the impression that he sees somewhat deeper but does not consider it good journalistic form to trouble with it.

This is the Hearst newspaperman's tradition. It makes the book readable but insignificant. "Drum," it appears,

has no gods save the god of circulation. Good is that which boosts the sales. It is a course without guiding principle, without social purpose; but one which apparently succeeds in taking magazines safely out of the red. By the same measure, Mr. Sampson's lively book should be a great book-keeping success. But it does less than justice to the "Drum" staff who have often lifted the lid on an unsavoury South African stew-pot of corruption, not because they worship at the feet of the great god "circulation," but—or so I hope—because the thing itself was worth doing.

L.B.

"DRUM," by Anthony Sampson.
Published by Collins. Price 16s.

NEWSHAWK IN TROUBLE

CLAUD COCKBURN, at that time serving in its Washington office, had a difficult time resigning from the staff of the London Times. Geoffrey Dawson, the editor, thought it was foolish to give up working for the paper "on account of one's political views," and even when it dawned on him that Cockburn had embraced Marxism, he took the news with the remark that must be the classic of the press world. "For myself," said Dawson, "I have always regarded the Times as something of an organ of the Left—though never, I hope, of the extreme Left!"

Still, Cockburn did get away, to bring out *The Week*, the bulletin that raised the lid of the scandals, intrigues and double-crossings of the political world during the phoney and then the full-scale war against fascism.

Everyone knew that Claud Cockburn, editor of *The Week*, and Frank Pitcairn roving diplomatic correspondent of the *Daily Worker* were the same man—everyone, that is, except the American Army censors who expelled Cockburn from Algiers in 1943 on a charge of leaking information to Pitcairn!

Racy, whimsical, witty, Cockburn is a born raconteur and there was clearly never a dull moment in his times of trouble.

"IN TIME OF TROUBLE." By Claud Cockburn. Published by Hart-Davis. Price 21s.

The African Worker

SINCE 1953 Alex Hepple, the Leader of the Labour Party, has been the real leader of the Opposition in Parliament. He emerged as such during the struggle in Parliament against the Native Labour (Settlement of Disputes) Act. One sensed then what a lonely struggle it must have been for him and his colleagues representing White voters largely disinterested in, if not opposed to African trade unionism, and deserted by the bulk of the leadership of the White trade unions.

Out of that experience this booklet must have grown. It is directed at overseas trade unionists and at the White workers in South Africa. It states the case why White trade unionists should fight for equal rights and opportunities for all workers.

Beyond that, it is directed at all White South Africans: "The factor which should stir their conscience is that the African cannot use the major weapon of democracy—the vote. Because he has no vote, the African worker cannot exert the necessary pressure upon politicians and their parties; nor can he use the vote to remove Government which oppress him."

In stating his case Alex Hepple makes

a remarkable survey of the law as it affects the African worker and his trade unions. Even people who deal with these problems daily will find here information new to them. For this reason alone, no active trade unionist, no intelligent person, must fail to get and read this booklet.

There are, of course, criticisms. The plea for the Trade Union Congress to implement the "collaboration" clause in its constitution is in fact now being put into practice—ironically in a way which can only help de Klerk further to divide and smash the African unions. Also, the African trade union picture, looked at from inside, does not seem to be one of such unrelieved gloom as it seems to be when recounted in cold print.

By the simple test: "Will this little book help the African worker?", this work was well worth writing. It must lead the African worker to a deeper understanding of his problems as a worker. It will win him many new friends.


M.

"THE AFRICAN WORKER IN SOUTH AFRICA." By Alex Hepple, M.P. Published at 2s. by the Africa Bureau, 65 Denison House, 296 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1.

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