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EDITORIAL

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW

"The African in every territory of this vast continent has been awakened and the struggle for freedom will go on. Our task is not done and our safety is not assured until the last vestiges of colonialism have been swept from Africa."

— KWAME NKRUMAH.

ALL Africa is celebrating the birth of Ghana.

The Union Jack, the symbol of oppression, gives way to the black-starred tricolour banner of Free Ghana; Kwame Nkrumah and his comrades, but a few years ago behind prison bars, take over the Government as elected representatives of the people, amidst the universal congratulations of the leaders of America, India, Russia, China, and every other country — even the Union of South Africa. Bonfires are lit in Accra and people dance through the streets with joy.

We echo that joy. In Kenya and Uganda they sing; in French colonies that border Ghana and in the Congo their hearts dance; in Portugal's slave colonies, in Ndola and Salisbury and Johannesburg and Durban and Port Elizabeth, the people rejoice. Ghana's victory today is a promise of ours tomorrow. It marks the beginning of the end for imperialism and white domination from the Sahara to Cape Town.

Ghana's winning of political independence is a triumph for the determination and sacrifice of the Ghana people in many long years of struggle. But it is also a mark of the declining power of British imperialism, which like its French counterpart finds itself unable to retain by violence the vast territories conquered by violence in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when capitalism was at the peak of its power and strength. The last ten years have been absolutely crucial in the long drawn out struggle between European imperialism and the colonial peoples. And, on the whole, imperialism has suffered a crushing defeat from which it can never recover.

The emancipation of China was the first of a long series of retreats by the imperialists. Britain has lost Ireland, India ("the brightest jewel in the British crown"), Burma, Ceylon, the Sudan and a host of key positions in the Middle East. Ghana has gone; Nigeria is going; Malaya (after eight years of bitter fighting) is all but lost; Kenya and Uganda cannot much longer be held off. The Empire is vanishing; it has all but disappeared; and the so-called "Commonwealth" which is supposed to replace it is becoming more and more a myth.

France has lost Syria and Lebanon, Indo-China, Tunis, Morocco; she is battling bloodily but vainly to hold Algeria; her departure from her vast territories in Central and West Africa is but a matter of time.

Holland has lost her main colony: Indonesia.

America has had to concede political independence to the Philippines and was chased out of North Korea; in South Korea and Japan and Taiwan she is clinging desperately to her ill-gotten gains, but it is becoming more and more troublesome and expensive to do so. Even the sprawling Yankee empire in South America where dollar diplomacy has largely replaced machine guns as the weapon of conquest, is becoming increasingly restive as the people rise to settle accounts with the corrupt politicians who sold their independence.

Portugal is already faced with serious trouble in Goa, and she need not deceive herself that her vast slave-empire in Africa will long remain immune from the world contagion of freedom and independence; the same applies to Belgium whose tight hold over the Congo will prove to be illusory and short-lived.

GAMBLERS' THROW

The reckless Anglo-French invasion of Egypt a few months ago was the last, desperate gamblers' throw of the imperialists. It was intended to restore the lost fortunes and prestige of the aging monsters who had so long held so much of the world in subjection by terror and violence. It seemed the colonial darkies no longer feared the monster; they wouldn't pay blackmail to it any more; they said its teeth were blunt. "All right", said Eden and Mollet, with jackal Ben Gurion yapping at their heels, "We'll show them." Nasser and his Egyptians, they thought, would die with fright at their mere approach; they would advance triumphantly to Cairo, instal Farouk or someone like that; regain the Canal; and put the fear of God into all the rebellious Arabs, Cypriots, Asians and Africans who were giving them such a lot of trouble.

Instead of this optimistic picture being realised, the mad adventure ended in the most ignominious failure in the history of British and French imperialism. It may seem early to count the cost; but in the last analysis London and Paris will find that they staked the whole of their overseas territories and possessions in Egypt last November — and lost them.

Gone is the picture of benevolent Britain kindly granting independence to colonial peoples as soon as — in the opinion of Downing Street — they

are sufficiently "advanced" to receive it. The whole world has realised that only violence holds the empire together; that the imperialists are impotent to resist a powerful challenge; that any people which is united and bold enough to claim its freedom may have it for the taking.

HOPEFUL SUCCESSOR

The big business-men who run the U.S.A., who have a keen nose for possible profits in any corner of the world, have been quick to sense that Egypt spelt the end of British and French imperialism in the Middle East and elsewhere. And seeing these vast and wealthy domains about to be lost by their former owners they have been quick to claim for themselves the right of heirs and successors. That is the real meaning and import of the so-called "Eisenhower doctrine" propounded with so much pomp and hypocrisy at the beginning of this year. "Here is a 'power vacuum'," they say. "We must step in and fill it."

Of course, the Americans have come to realise that they cannot just reconquer the former British and French domains the way they were conquered in the first place, with bullets and cannon. They learnt that in Korea. New techniques are needed, they feel; what soldiers can't conquer, perhaps, dollars can buy. Exactly how this is to be done is explained with great detail and thoroughness by Mr. Nelson Rockefeller in this issue of *Liberation*: we shall allow his letter to Eisenhower to speak for itself.

Of course, the Americans have had and will have a certain amount of early success in this plan of bloodless conquest and dollar domination; indeed they have already penetrated deeply into the economy of our own country where, doubtless, they are pursuing the same aims with the same techniques.

But in the long run, they must fail. The colonial peoples have bought their independence at too dear a price in suffering and sacrifice to sell it for a mess of pottage. They have no desire to exchange overlords from Europe for masters from America. And they will not be so simple or short-sighted as not to see the cunning tricks which Mr. Rockefeller prescribes for them. Bait the hook as temptingly as he likes, they will not bite. The fish will not take the bait, when he can see the hook. In vain the fowler spreads his net in the sight of the bird.

No. The hopeful successors to the older empire stake their claims in vain. The day of the empires is past. And the sturdy sons and daughters of Africa and Asia arise to claim their birthright of freedom.

"FLAT-EARTHERS"

As the sun rises in the morning, it does not cast its rays everywhere at the same time. When it is dawn in Peking, it is still dark and people are slumbering further to the West. We know that, as the earth rotates about its axis, the morning will come everywhere.

Yet, in this dawning of mankind's liberty which is taking place in our lifetime, there are still people who seem to believe that the sun of freedom, though it shines brightly elsewhere, will never arise over their part of the world. Like the men of olden days, who thought the earth was flat, they imagine they live in some sort of political, cultural, moral and economic island, apart from and unconnected with the universe.

Such people are to be found in the Government of the Union of South Africa. Everywhere, amidst songs and rejoicing, the peoples are casting away the chains of slavery, racialism, colour-bar, baasskap, segregation, indignity, prejudice, ignorance, exploitation, inequality and man's inhumanity to man.

But in our country, we seem not to have heard of this glad casting away of chains. We have a factory in Cape Town which is busy day after day manufacturing new chains. That factory is Parliament.

Already the people are groaning under the burden of all the heavy chains this factory has made in past years. Pass Laws, and passes for women. Land laws for Africans and Indians. Group Areas. Suppression of Communism. Bantu Education. Bantu Authorities. Native Labour. Industrial Conciliation. Coloured Franchise. Need we go on? There are many more such, and every one wrings a cry from the heart of every democrat.

And now they are busy making more.

Native Laws Amendment Bill: aimed at smashing African political and trade union organisations and destroying the spirit of human brotherhood in church, cultural, political and ordinary social relationships.

Separate Universities Bill: aimed at smashing real University education, not only for Non-Europeans but also for the all-White Universities too — doomed to be cut down to the level of what a Strijdom considers suitable training-institutes to turn out good-enough lawyers, doctors, engineers and teachers.

Police Bill — to make the policeman the boss in the police state.

Another Budget for the rich.

Increase of Poll Tax for Africans.

And plots and schemes to gag the Press, declare the Congresses illegal, banish people's leaders on a mass scale

WHAT PARLIAMENT IGNORES

That's how it goes in Parliament, with the official United Party "opposition" dead scared to utter a word of serious criticism in case the Nats. call them "Kafferboeties" in next year's election (which they will do any-

way) or perhaps in case Swart names them too. And the whole task of opposition in the Assembly falls on the gallant trio of Labour M.P.'s.

While Parliament has been debating all these hateful Nazi measures introduced by the Ministers, it has practically ignored all the great issues of our times being hammered out in the streets and in the world beyond the four walls of the House of Assembly.

They listened to Mr. Schoeman's silly and spiteful little Bill to prevent any new bus company taking over a boycotted route. But they did not pause to think what it meant that a hundred thousand people were foot-slogging up to twenty miles a day over a penny increase. Couldn't they sense the desperate poverty behind the boycotts? The burning anger?

Do they know what Mr. Swart's police are doing to the African people in the townships, week after week? Thousands of people thrown into pick-up vans, into prisons, into farm jails, for trivial meaningless infringements of permits and pass laws — do the M.P.'s know about that? Do they care?

Do they know or care about the furious resentment and indignation of the people at the arrest of their best known and most-loved leaders — as shown in the extraordinary scenes outside the Drill Hall in December in January?

Do they realise that a mighty movement of workers' organisation is spreading throughout the country to demand £1 a day minimum wage?

Parliament does not discuss these matters. It goes grimly ahead, churning out ever more gruesome and horrid laws to burden the people. It does not discuss Suez or Ghana, or any of the other stirring events of our fast-moving world. Other Parliaments, in other countries, are talking about war and peace and the dread menace of the atom unchained that hangs over our generation like a pestilent cloud. But the Cape Town Assembly of little men goes on spluttering at the English newspapers and surrendering more and more unlimited powers into the hands of Police Minister Swart and the Great White Father Verwoerd.

DEMOCRACY IN DECAY?

"Democracy in South Africa is in an advanced stage of decay," wrote Alex. Hepple, the forthright leader of the Labour Party, recently. He was, of course, writing about Parliament, where he has to spend so much of his time. Indeed, it is a sorry spectacle of decay.

But we must not forget that the House of Assembly (nor the Senate) is not "democracy in South Africa." It never was.

If instead we turn our attention to the townships, farms, reserves and factories of our country, where the people are stirring and discussing and thinking and organising, as never before, we shall find that democracy in South Africa is very much alive and kicking!

The students are out in the streets with placards against academic segregation.

The bishops and clergy are out on the public platforms against group areas and church segregation, collecting funds for the Treason Trial accused.

The women are organising up and down the land, in every town and village, pledging resistance to passes.

The workers are flocking into the trade unions to demand £1 a day and an immediate increase in pay.

People arrested for passes and permits are refusing to plead guilty and defending themselves.

"Asinamali!" "Stand by Our Leaders!" "Azikhwelwa!" "Mayibuye!" "The People Shall Govern!" "No Taxation Without Representation!" The air is filled with stirring battle-cries.

People are talking everywhere, about Nkrumah and Nasser; about the Freedom Charter; about the boycotts; about rotten wages; about not buying goods made by firms bossed by well-known Nationalists

No decay here! Here's the vigorous, young democracy that's driven its strong roots deep into our land, that will not be denied, that is blossoming, beginning to bear the precious fruit of liberty!

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