

# 'A Revelation and A Tonic'

A South African now in exile because of his fight against apartheid, BRIAN BUNTING here describes his impressions of a recent visit to Accra.

I spent a week in Ghana in March of this year as a delegate representing South Africa at the conference of the Pan-African Union of Journalists called to consider methods of training African journalists. Outside the conference room we delegates spent some time touring Accra and its environs, visiting various of the institutions of the new Ghana, the Tema Harbour and Township, the Volta River Dam, the University at Legon.

A week is a very short time in which to become fully acquainted with the problems of a developing country like Ghana, and I do not pretend to be in any position to pass judgment on what I have seen. But perhaps the first impressions of a white South African, gained on this first visit to a free African country, may be of interest to your readers.

I am not, of course, a typical white South African, filled with racial prejudice and my reactions to Ghana would undoubtedly be quite different from those of Dr. Verwoerd. I spent most of my adult life fighting against racial discrimination in South Africa until I was forced out of the country in 1963.

## UGLY PAST

I am still as politically active as I can be in exile, and look forward to the day when we can all return to a free South Africa, in which all people will enjoy equal rights and opportunities and the horrors of race discrimination will be just a memory of the ugly past.

Coming from a country in which the African people are cruelly oppressed, denied any say in the government of the country, educationally crippled by the process of indoctrination known as Bantu Education, deprived of economic opportunity by job reservation and other restrictive practices—coming from this prison house of over 13 million South Africans who do not have white skins, Ghana was quite simply a revelation and a tonic. Here was a country where the Black man ruled.

We journalists had the good fortune to be received by Kwame Nkrumah with whom we chatted for about an hour, and from the President downwards all the way to the meanest hawker in the streets, what impressed me most was the assured self-confidence of the Black man exercising power—not, like the White Supremacists of the south, as a boss or an overseer not as people claiming the divine right of inheritance not as people demanding special rights or privileges, but simply as human beings. Black by chance, but fundamentally the same as human beings anywhere else in the world whatever their race or colour.

## HEWERS OF WOOD

In fact, Ghana is a country in which, for the first time in Africa, I ceased to be colour conscious. At first I was thrilled to see Africans in charge everywhere, Africans running the government, the broadcasting corporation, the printing presses and newspapers, African linotypers and compositors, African technicians and technologists, African professors and harbour masters.

You see, such things are impossible in South Africa, where the African was told by Dr. Verwoerd, when Minister of Native Affairs in June 1954, that "there is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour".

Africans in South Africa are for the most part the hewers of wood and the drawers of water, prevented by law and custom from rising above a certain level in society.

The African is nowhere his own boss, not even in his "own" Bantustan, the Transkei, which is still ruled under emergency proclamations issued by the all-white Government in Pretoria in 1960 in terms of which any Transkei citizen can be arrested and held indefinitely in jail without trial.

## CASE OF ONE AFRICAN

The Verwoerd Government claims that its aim is to create two parallel but equal societies in South Africa, one for Blacks and the other for Whites. The White man will be boss in his state, the Black man boss in his. Each will enjoy no rights in the territory of the other.

I won't even discuss the morality of allocating 87 per cent of the country to the Whites, who constitute only 20 per cent of the population; nor the practicability of confining the 70 per cent of the population who are Black into that 13 per cent of Bantustan.

For the whole Bantustan concept is a fraud, and I will prove it by quoting the case of just one African, Mr. Reginald Boleu, aged 22.

Mr. Boleu, after receiving a Johannesburg City Council bursary, passed his matriculation examination (with a distinction in mathematics) within three months of writing his junior certificate examination. He studied at Fort Hare University College, and later at the tribal University College of the North.

This year he was awarded a coveted scholarship in nuclear science at Uppsala University, Sweden. Mr. Boleu wants to become a nuclear physicist, but in South Africa he is unable to do so.

## NUCLEAR PHYSICS

There are no facilities at the segregated African universities for students wishing to study nuclear science. Such facilities exist at the White universities, but it is a criminal offence for an African to register at a White university.

So Mr. Boleu applied for a passport to take up the bursary at Uppsala University. His application was backed by the Dean of his faculty and the Rector of the University of the North, who testified that he was a brilliant student and that there were no facilities available for him in South Africa to study nuclear physics.

But the Verwoerd Government rejected his application, giving no reasons for their refusal. Mr. Boleu then applied for an exit permit, and this was granted. This means Mr. Boleu will be able to study nuclear physics, he will be able to acquire qualifications which are vitally needed in his country, whose first nuclear reactor has just reached the "critical" stage.

But Mr. Boleu will not be able to return to South Africa, because holders of exit permits are forbidden by law to return, and in fact by a recent amendment to the law are automatically deprived of their citizenship.

Mr. Boleu sobbed as he left Jan Smuts Airport on March 29. Members of his family wept too as they said goodbye in the concourse. He said to them: "I do not know whether I shall see you again. I have become stateless simply because I wanted to further my

education overseas."

In South Africa, nuclear scientists must be White, and in the Bantustans there must be no nuclear scientists at all. This is the policy of the Verwoerd Government.

This is the reality of the fake doctrine of "separate development", which is just another fancy term to disguise White domination.

To see Ghana after this is to see a state in which there are no limits to the development of the Black man, where a tremendous national effort is being made to advance the level of the people on all fronts, where Africans are training in every branch of science and technology, where those who are already trained are making their full contribution where they are most needed.

As I have already said, when I, as a South African, first came into contact with life in Ghana, I found this tremendously stimulating. Every time I saw an African linotyper or compositor, train driver, ship's captain, I experienced a thrill of satisfaction, saying to myself: "This couldn't happen in South Africa."

## NO CHAUVINISM

Here there is no White man boss or overseer. The African in Ghana is running his own show and already has tremendous achievements to his credit. White expatriates have helped and are still helping a great deal. But the Ghanaian keeps control firmly in his own hands.

By the end of my week in Ghana I was already ceasing to be conscious that I was amongst Africans. Africans had ceased to be Africans, and were just people. There was no chauvinism amongst the Ghanaians I met, no special attitude towards me as a White man, no suspicion or rancour.

Oh yes, Ghana has tradition and culture of which it is exceedingly proud, and Ghana is very conscious of the fact that it is part of Africa. But of the race atmosphere that surrounds one wherever one walks in South Africa, I found not a trace in Ghana.

One began to realise how genuine friendship will be able to flourish between all the peoples of South Africa once the chains of racialism have been finally broken.

## RESTRICTIVE RACE

Furthermore, having seen the tremendous strides which have been made in Ghana since independence—the construction of Tema harbour and the industrial complex nearby, the Volta River project, the housing schemes which are going up on all sides, the big public buildings in the new Accra—one realises just how much the development of South Africa is being crippled by the restrictive race laws of the White Supremacists. If only our people were free, how quickly we could advance.

Ghana, starting with so little, has achieved so much in eight years. There is no limit to what South Africa, already the most highly industrialised country in Africa, producing twice as much electricity and steel as the rest of the continent together, could achieve if only the abilities of the whole people were utilised to the full.

And here I want to say something in refutation of the oft-repeated boast of the Verwoerd apologists that the African lives better in South Africa than he does anywhere else in Africa.

It just isn't true. African

miners on the Zambian Copperbelt can rise higher and earn more than any African miner in South Africa. And the average Ghanaian earns more than the average African in South Africa.

It is difficult to establish with certainty exactly how much the average African in South Africa earns. Proper statistics are not kept, and all that is available are estimates which vary a great deal from one expert to the next.

The Industrial Legislation Commission of Inquiry reported in 1951 that, judging by 1936 figures, the Africans earned 19.6 per cent of the national income. Speaking at a conference in Durban on February 17, 1965, the head of the economic division of the Africa Institute, Dr. G. M. E. Leistner, said that the African share of the total population's personal consumption in 1963 was 17.6 per cent. This would imply that the African share of the national income had declined by two per cent over the last 27 years.

Let us assume, however, that the African receives 20 per cent of the national income. In 1964, South Africa's

national income was £3,708,500,000—20 per cent of this would be £741,700,000, which, with the total African population of just under 12 million, gives each African an annual income of £62.

As compared with this, the national income per head in Ghana in 1962 was £74, thus demonstrating clearly that the average Ghanaian lives on a higher level than the average African in South Africa.

## THE COMPARISON

And this comparison is based on an income figure for South Africa Africans which is probably much higher than the facts warrant. According to the Johannesburg 'STAR' of March 11, 1965, the Department of Bantu Administration estimates that the purchasing power of the Africans "now approaches £500 million a year".

The same paper on April 1, 1965, quoted the director of the Bureau of Standards, Dr. A. W. Lategan, as estimating African purchasing power at £600 million a year. We have based our calculations on a figure of £741 million a year.

If accurate statistics were available, they would probably show the gap between South African African and Ghanaian standards of living to be even greater than I have indicated.

One mustn't, of course, press comparisons too far. South Africa is a very different country from Ghana, at a different level of development.

South Africa is cursed with the problem of apartheid, race oppression and race hatred, but Ghana, too, has its problems, its battle to free itself from the shackles of imperialism and neo-colonialism, its internal conflicts, the remnants of tribalism, shortage of capital, fluctuating prices of basic commodities, imbalance of payments, conflict of interest between the public and private sectors of the economy. And the Ghanaian would be the first to admit that, as a young country they have made their quota of mistakes.

Nevertheless, one cannot but be impressed by the dynamic approach of the Ghana Government and people to the tasks of development. Well aware of their shortcomings,

they are determined to overcome them, to build up their country as an industrialised socialist state in which the interest of the whole people will come first.

In his discussion with us journalists, Kwame Nkrumah expressed his conviction that only through socialism could the evils of the past be eliminated and the state be developed on a sound basis.

And referring to South Africa, he reiterated that only through socialism could the race problem be solved peacefully.

It is capitalism and imperialism which have brought in their wake class and race hatred. Only socialism can heal the wounds of the past and enable all sections of the people to live together in harmony.

With these sentiments I, at least, am in hearty agreement. And what I saw in Ghana satisfied me that the President means what he says. Words are being turned into deeds. The country has made a brave beginning and all will wish it well as it continues to discharge its complicated and pioneering role in Africa.

# Battle for North African Oil

UNTIL quite recently Africa was not considered rich in oil. The output in 1957 came to only 2,700,000 tons, or about 0.3 per cent of the total in the capitalist world. And then suddenly vast deposits were discovered in the most barren part of the continent—in the Sahara.

In practically no time at all Algeria and Libya became major oil producers. Large-scale surveys are now in process in Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

## OIL RESOURCES

Africa's potential oil resources are estimated at 12,000 million tons. The known deposits are said to be in the vicinity of 1,500 million tons, of which about 1,300 million tons are in North Africa.

North Africa is also one of the richest depositories of natural gas.

Oil output in the north of the continent is increasing rapidly. The 1959 figure was below 1,500,000 tons, the 1962 figure was almost 30 million tons, and now specialists predict that within a few years Algeria and Libya will be producing up to 100 million tons of crude oil a year.

The discovery of large oil deposits in Algeria has enhanced the French monopolies' hopes of strengthening their positions in the capitalist world, especially in Western Europe. Algerian oil plays an important part in the French imperialist plans to "integrate" Europe under France's leadership.

The Common Market countries have practically no oil reserves of their own. Two-thirds of the oil their refineries need are purchased from American and British monopolies which control almost all the big oil areas in the capitalist world.

The Six spend between 10 and 20 per cent of the funds allocated for imports on the purchase of oil and give the British and American companies up to \$400 million a year in profits.

Now, with Algerian oil in the grasp, the French monopolies which could not control even the home market in the past, are now vying for European markets with such oil giants as ESSO (U.S.) and Shell (British).

French imperialism's interest in Sahara oil was one of the main causes of the protracted colonial war in Algeria. This

war continued even after the French Government had recognised the Algerian people's right to self-determination, because the French Government wanted to annex the oil-bearing parts of the Sahara. The Algerian delegates to the Evian negotiations in March 1962 were compelled to make serious concessions regarding the exploitation of oil deposits.

The Evian agreements preserved for six years the Sahara Oil Code which secures the French monopolies' rights. The French companies are given priority in the acquisition of new concessions and the right to dispose of the produce after Algeria's needs



have been satisfied.

The Sahara oil exported to the franc zone countries (more than half of it goes to France) is paid for in French francs and this is losing Algeria quite a lot of foreign currency.

Profits from oil sales are ostensibly divided equally. In reality, however, Algeria is making several times less than the French companies because the latter pocket considerable profits from oil deliveries and sales of all products.

At present the French make 750 million francs a year, and Algeria only 250 million francs.

## TWO DEPOSITS

By 1960 French state-monopoly capital was controlling about 80 per cent of all surveyed oil deposits in the Algerian Sahara. The French companies stepped up the output and export of Algerian oil fantastically.

Ninety-five per cent of all oilfields are operated by three

companies controlled by state and private capital—CREPS (Companie de Recherche et d'Exploitation de Petrole du Sahara), S.N.R.E.P.A. (Societe Nationale de Recherche et d'Exploitation des Petroles en Algerie), C.F.P.A. (Companie Francaise des Petroles, Algerie).

Almost all the oil in Algeria is extracted from two deposits, Hassi-Messaoud and Edjeleh-Zarzitine. It is piped to the Mediterranean ports, through three pipe-lines with an aggregate length of about 2,000 kilometres costing 1,300 million francs to build.

No less than 6,000 million francs were invested in the Algerian Sahara in the ten years

the leading oil purveyor in Western Europe met with resistance from their Common Market partners too. France failed to get their consent to her plan for creating most favourable conditions for Sahara oil by restricting oil imports from other parts of the world, particularly the Socialist countries.

Meanwhile, West German capital is penetrating French oil companies. The Italian state-operated ENI oil and gas concern is following an independent policy towards oil-rich countries. Under the agreements it has concluded with Morocco and Tunisia on the exploration and extraction of oil, these countries will receive 75 per cent of the income from oil deposits if found.

In Libya, whose oil riches are estimated at about \$120,000 million, the key positions are in the hands of the U.S. monopolies. Thirteen of the twenty oil companies operating there are American.

Standard Oil of New Jersey owns the Zeltan deposit which yields more than 20,000 tons of oil a day. Oasis Oil extracts 12 million tons a year.

## AGREEMENT

Libya oil has helped the Anglo-American monopolies to strengthen their positions on the West European market and repulse the French "oil offensive".

Under the shackling agreements imposed on the Libyan Government by the monopolies, the country receives a pittance for its oil wealth. The inequitable 50-50 principle is in operation in Libya, under which the monopolies give her half of the income from crude oil and keep the vastly greater profits from the sale of oil products.

In 1962, the American companies netted 52 million Libyan pounds from the sale of Libyan oil abroad, and all Libya got was 7 million pounds.

That is why the Libyan Government amended the oil law, increasing royalties and stimulating earlier payments. In 1964 Algeria also got the companies exploiting her natural riches to increase her share of the income.