Ghana and the Gold Coast Revolution

By ALAN DOYLE

"THE day after my release from prison I was invited by the Governor to meet him at nine o'clock that morning. . . . I left the Castle with instructions from the Governor to form a Government. As I walked down the steps it was as if the whole thing had been a dream, that I was stepping down from the clouds and that I would soon wake up and find myself squatting on the prison floor eating a bowl of maize porridge. -" Ghana—The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah.

KWAME NKRUMAH dictated this autobiography to his secretary in the "few minutes, whenever possible" that she persuaded him to set aside the multifarious affairs that beset him as Prime Minister and leader of his Party during the crucial period of Ghana's transition to political independence. In the circumstances it is hardly reasonable to expect him to have produced a profound analysis of the momentous events in Ghana. He was too busy making history to write it; but he has written a racy and extremely readable story of his own life and the highlights of the Ghana revolution. From it he emerges as a remarkable and engaging personality. He may seem too egocentric for our liking, but, after all, self-portraits are necessarily self-centred. Nkrumah's writing is refreshingly frank; there is none of the pompous stuffiness which makes the autobiographical writings of European statesmen works of concealment rather than revelation. He does not pretend to be modest. He has won success, and he glories in it; but beneath the glorification and the festival tone of the book, of which the quotation at the head of this article is a fair sample, there is a note of sober realism too.

For Dr. Nkrumah is not unaware of the greater problems now facing his country. The first aim of his Party, the Convention People's Party, he writes in his Preface, was to gain political freedom. But:

"Once this freedom is gained, a greater task comes into view. All dependent territories are backward in education, in agriculture, and in industry. The economic independence that should follow and maintain political independence demands every effort from the people, a total mobilisation of brain and manpower resources.

What is sadly missing in this book is a description, at least in outline, of the practical steps which the Nkrumah Government now proposes to take to attain that economic independence which it recognises to be essential to the maintenance of Ghana. True, there is a project to dam the Volta river and thus to generate electric power and construct an aluminium smelter. But this scheme in itself is insufficient to solve the many and pressing problems of the Gold Coast.

The Grip of Imperialism

Chief among these problems is that imperialism, with all its concomitant ills of exploitation, backwardness and wretched poverty still has a grip on the masses of the people. British and other foreign interests dominate the banks, the mines, factories and external trade of the country. Huge profits are drawn from the Gold Coast. It has a typical colonial monoculture—in this case of cocoa—and Lever Brothers' subsidiary, the United Africa Company, controls a third of the export trade. Exports exceed imports to the tune of £44 million a year (the total State revenue of Ghana is only £36 million) and although Britain has had to concede far-reaching powers of self-government, she retains a stranglehold over the rich resources of the country.

The results are plain to be seen. Wages range from 3s. a day for unskilled workers to 10s. for skilled men; cocoa farmers get only a third of the market price for their product; only 6 per cent. of workers are employed in manufacture.

Kwame Nkrumah repeats in his new book his faith in the anti-imperialist teachings of scientific socialism. "Today I am a non-denominational Christian and a Marxist socialist and I have not found any contradiction between the two," he reiterates on page 12 of his biography, and it is plain that, unlike many radical politicians who have achieved personal success, he has not repudiated the ideas which won him the support of the masses.

Socialism for Ghana?

In his preface to the book, also, Nkrumah declares that "Capitalism is too complicated a system for a newly-independent nation. Hence the need for socialism." But, though he proclaims himself to be a Socialist, the Convention People's Party, which he founded and now heads, does not. Does the advance to socialism not require a workers' party based on scientific principles? Will Nkrumah, like Nehru, find himself the prisoner of his bourgeois nationalist organisation the moment he seeks to disturb local vested interests?

Moreover, as a socialist, Kwame Nkrumah fails sufficiently to stress the economic roots of imperialism in Ghana, which remain even though Britain has been compelled to relinquish office to the elected representatives of the people. Although he speaks of "the economic independence that should follow and maintain political independence," he apparently does not envisage that independence to be realised for a very considerable time. Speaking in the Legislative Assembly in March, 1954, he declared that the country lacked capital and personnel to develop industry, and "that the Government would encourage as much as possible the entry and investment in industry of foreign capital."  

I realised that it would be many years before the Gold Coast would be in a position to find from its own resources people who could combine capital with the experience required in the development and management of new industries and that the country would therefore have to rely to a large extent on foreign enterprise.

This seems to me to be an absolutely crucial point in the development of Ghana towards full independence, which is obviously a matter which does not concern Ghana alone, but is of tremendous significance for the whole Continent.

No one can deny the inspiration to the whole of Africa of the victory of the people of Ghana under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah. The outward symbols of political power, the fruits of office, even the moving of the Prime Minister into the traditional British Governor's residence at Christianborg Castle, all these are of tremendous importance and value, which only an abstract armchair socialist would deny.

Yet, so long as the keys to Ghana's economy remain in alien hands, so long will true independence be absent, and its fruits in the form of higher living standards, health and social services and all the other amenities of modern life will be withheld from the people.

Other criticisms, too, could be levelled at this book and its distinguished author. As I said above, it is an autobiography and not a political thesis, and one expects...
formed the politics of his country by breaking away from type mass party of the common people. In this task he the conception of a national movement as a debating ordinary achievement of Kwame Nkrumah. He trans­tribute and acknowledgement must be paid to the extra­the terrible dangers of building a cult around an indivi­tive leadership by the Executive of the Convention cabinets that were formed from time to time.

And not enough of the people. The lessons of recent his­sidered," "I decided," "I appointed." Not enough "We." And not enough of the people. The lessons of recent history are far too much in our minds for us to overlook the terrible dangers of building a cult around an individ­

Yet, when all these criticisms have been made, full tribute and acknowledgement must be paid to the extra­ordinary achievement of Kwame Nkrumah. He trans­formed the politics of his country by breaking away from the conception of a national movement as a debating society for middle-class intellectuals, and building a new­type mass party of the common people. In this task he showed himself to be a magnetic personality, a brilliant orator and a first-class organiser.

Always the People

The advance of Ghana towards independence has important lessons for the peoples of Africa, the last Con­tinent to remain largely dominated by colonialism.

In the conditions of the second half of the twentieth century, with imperialism totally in retreat on a world scale, the advance of the rest of the Continent to national liberation cannot long be delayed. As has been shown in China, India, Burma, Indonesia and other Asian lands, by the Arab States of the Middle East, and now by Ghana, the colonial powers are no longer able to hold subject peoples under their domination once the masses of the people are organised for political action.

The conditions of emancipation have varied greatly from one country to another, according to the special circumstances prevailing in each area. And in Africa, as in Asia, it would be wrong to expect a common pattern to mark the conditions of emancipation in each country. The details of the road followed by the people of Ghana cannot be expected to be found or to apply to other African territories in different conditions.

Yet one thing is common to all the vast areas and populations which have won through in the struggle against colonialism over the past decade. They were not handed freedom on a plate, nor did they obtain it through skilful diplomacy of their leaders. It was the masses of the people, organised in mass action, who enabled men like Nehru and Nkrumah to sit down as equals with those who but the day before had held them in imperialist prisons, and negotiate the terms of self-government.

As in the past, so in the future, that is the rule for emancipation: Through the people, and only through the people, shall we win salvation. On their organisation, political understanding, determination, vigilance, sacrifice, depends the winning and maintenance of freedom.

TREASON TRIAL PROFILE: DR. G. M. NAICKER

Horrors of a society that does not care: starvation, tuberculosis, slums . . . the suffering of children. And because he cares, because he loves and values life, Dr. Naicker did not don the blinkers but entered the fight for a just society in which life will be fuller, will be more joyous and the tragic waste of life be banished forever: the struggle for freedom.

A veteran leader, a courageous fighter—he opposed the Pegging Act passed by the Smuts government during the war years. He opposed and exposed the compromise leadership which accepted residential segregation. The expulsion of the "nationalist bloc" from the Natal Indian Congress led to the formation of the Anti­Segregation Council of which he was president. It aimed at non-European unity and can be regarded a fore­runner to the co-operation of the Congresses. The Anti­Segregation Council was on a mass basis and embraced a militant programme. Some of the members are in the dock with him today: Debi Singh, M. P. Naicker, Mannie Pillay. At the general annual meeting in 1945. Dr. Naicker was unanimously elected pres­ident of the Natal Indian Congress, a position he has held ever since.

Like freedom fighters the world over, Dr. Naicker, too, is a "prison graduate." In 1946 he led a batch of volunteers defying the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act. For this he served a prison term of six months and one week. To­gether with Dr. Dadoo he attended the First Asian Conference, visited India travelling the riot areas with Gandhi. Came the historic Defiance Campaign. Dr. Naicker led the first batch to launch the campaign in Natal. He was sentenced to one month's imprisonment. But others are imprisoned outside prison: cut off from their people, gagged, restricted in their movements, In 1952 he was banned from gatherings for two years. In 1954 he was restricted to the magisterial district of Durban. In 1954 he was again banned from gatherings for two years. This ban expired two years before the national theatre was swept.

He is president of the S.A.I.C. and a leading Gandhiite. Today in the dock he can say: "I have abundant rights in the future of South Africa. History has taught us that the freedom-struggle cannot fail. . . . We are bound to achieve what is innermost in our hearts: for the struggle is for democracy, and human dignity . . . ."

In a sense it is the new South Africa that is on trial; the South Africa that is the dawn . . . ." A. HUTCHINSON.
STORY from TAUNG

By HENRY G. MAKGOTHI

THERE is a calendar which the Native Labour Recruiting Corporation distributes widely in the reserves and rural areas. The drawing depicts an African youth gleefully milking a big, well-fed cow. The cow produces not milk but coins and notes by the bucketful! The caption above the drawing reads something like this: “Milk it, son, for its milk will make you strong, healthy and prosperous.”

When I was in Taung, near Vryburg, recently I found this calendar adorning the earthen walls of many a hut I entered. Sometimes it hung next to another calendar that advertised the popularity of a local White trader, and on which appears a drawing of Jesus Christ bleeding on the cross.

The calendar of the N.R.C., of course, purports to tell the story of conditions of work on the mines. Only it is the story from the point of view of the peasants keep, apart from fowls. The next meal would be in the early morning, and would consist of mealie porridge and a cup of milk.

The Irrigation Scheme, I discovered, was nothing short of a monstrous bluff practised on the people. A man who joins the Scheme must work full-time on the lands and is not allowed to take up any other form of employment or to find some other way of augmenting his income—a condition that does not apply to European civil servants or to a favoured few who are thriving wonderfully. He is then supplied by the Government with implements and seed which he is told he need pay for only after his crop has been gathered. He goes on to his piece of land to work it. But then he is told that three-quarters of the land must be placed under lucerne. Lucerne grows well and is soon ready for the market. But the peasant finds that he is compelled to sell the lucerne to a speculator who has bought the contract from the Native Affairs Department, without the people knowing anything about it. The speculator is never around at the time that he is most wanted, and so the lucerne piles up and starts to rot. Then eventually the speculator comes and buys up the lucerne for a song.

“But then, how do the people pay their debts?” I asked my informant with amazement.

“The people are getting deeper and deeper into debt. In fact, the majority can never hope to square their debts. They do produce a few bags of wheat, but it is just sufficient in many cases to enable them to meet some of their taxes, and to pay for the machinery that is sometimes hired out to them. The Government is the first to see that its accounts are met. In fact, it is not uncommon for a man to receive many accounts which he does not understand at all—the majority of the people are illiterate. As he watches his crop of wheat being grabbed in payment for the accounts, to break down in tears when the official rudely leaves him half a bag of wheat for seed, and tells him to work harder.”

“Surely,” I cried in desperation, “the law does intervene at times?”

“The law here operates in strange ways. A neighbour of mine lost his two children a few months ago. It appears that the children were on their way to school one morning when they were accosted by two European men who were driving in a van. They asked to be directed to a certain farmstead and pretended to be confused when the children tried to direct him. So they asked the children to climb into the van for some distance. The children eagerly obliged, for had not the Native Commissioner made an appeal that the people should be friendly and helpful towards their White neighbours?

“No sooner had the children jumped into the van than the Europeans drove off at top speed, till they reached a farmstead and brusquely told the terrified children to knock at the back door. They were received as if they were looking for employment.”

“But this is plain kidnapping!”

“Well, when the father went to the police to report that his children were lost, the police listened to him and suggested that the children might have been drowned as they were crossing a stream. Maybe the father should make a search along the banks and come back to inform the police...”

“He did eventually trace the children to the farm, and he made his report to the police and the latter promised to make enquiries. A few days afterwards, he was informed that his children had gone to the farm looking for work, and as the farmer was rather short of hands at that time, why, he had taken them on. When the parent protested that the children should be at school, the police spoke about the period of notice that the children would have to serve. After the children had served their notice, it was discovered that on the day prior to their

(Continued at Foot of Next Page)
NURSING APARTHEID

By a Correspondent

THE Government is this session introducing a Bill for apartheid in the nursing profession. Evidence on the subject, given before a parliamentary Select Committee, has been published by Dr. Eiselen, speaking as Dr. Verwoerd's mouthpiece, wanted Bantu nurses for Bantu patients, a training which "would fit them for their particular task," lower wages and a separate Non-White nursing organisation. That insidious "cultural" body, the F.A.K., advocated separate registration of White and Black nurses, different uniforms and insignia, and it has sponsored the Afrikaans Nurses' League as a pressure group within the S.A. Nursing Association "to concentrate on the things that really matter"—i.e., "standing together against integration" and encouraging wider use of Afrikaans.

Squeezing Non-Whites Out

The 1944 Transvaal Nurses' Act created a Nursing Council, to which all members of the profession could be elected, and a Nursing Association to which all qualified nurses must belong. A. Van Reenen, Transvaal Director of Nursing Services, Non-White nurses were admitted on an equal basis because there were then too few to constitute "a problem" and large scale training of others was not foreseen. "If we had known that this would be Provincial policy, i.e., for one, would certainly not have agreed to the 1944 Act. We would have fought it to the last ditch." It was largely at the instigation of Mrs. Searle that Dr. Stals, the Nationalist Minister of Health, in 1948, drafted administrative regulations to keep Non-White Nurses off the Nursing Council and the Board of the Nursing Association.

One may well ask why? Facts and figures are virtually unobtainable except in the carefully selected form published by the Nursing Council. It says that in 1954 there were 1,210 Non-White nurses out of a total of 13,309. It will not publish comparative figures of cases and failures by race groups on the formal ground that "our single register does not state the nurse's race." But a member of the Nursing Council, Adv. Van Reenen, told the Select Committee that in 1956 of the European and 51 per cent of the Non-European entries were re-entries (i.e., previously failed), that "for the last three years" European percentage passed had been cent, whereas Non-Europeans began with 82 per cent in 1952, fell to 46 per cent in 1945 and to 35.5 per cent in 1953.

In order to meet this "situation" Adv. Van Reenen requires powers to "effect separation in all aspects of the nursing services, to differentiate in the training between the different races, keep separate registers, differ in their method in respect of the training according to existing needs, in other words, for shifty and less shifty nurses, with regard to both race and duties." Adv. Van Reenen, Mr. A. Nothard (all of the Nursing Council) recommended "a basic and practical syllabus which will be of help to the Non-European students, and in education for their outlook on life was different, their training must be different "if in the end we want them to have the same sense of responsibility, once you train them differently you must register them differently," which precludes their exercising the same responsibilities and thus learning (in the only practicable way) "a sense of responsibility."

There appears possibly to be some ground for the contention that on average it may take an African nurse longer to qualify than a European. This is not (as the F.A.K. said) due to "centuries of tradition, culture and civilisation which determine the European nurse's superior status." It is due primarily to inadequate education, if anything, their education (now aggravated by its Bantu-isation) and in facilities for nursing training. Mr. Vaf Reenen, Miss Nothard and Mrs. Searle marred many joint training as wrong and "put a stop to it" because the training staff for Non-White nurses is often inadequate and less experienced than for Whites; there are no facilities in the Union for orthopaedic nursing, theatre technique or motherscraft ("we allow Non-Europeans to practise midwifery within the hospital grounds provided they do it in the same way as it is carried out in their kraals").

Keeping Control

That these considerations of the Non-White nurses' "own good" were not the only reason for paramount reason behind the move for nursing apartheid clearly emerges from other parts of the evidence. Mrs. Searle said that one of her greatest difficulties in recruiting White nurses was the fear that they, "in rural ground the "one single control in any sense" of a Non-White nurse or doctor, "It is not for me to indulge in ideologies, I have to be practical."

Miss Mrs. M. M. Van Reenen, Secretary of the Nursing Association, and Miss Nothard were very averse to allowing Non-White nurses to have a separate organisation, as "highly dangerous," and the latter stated that it "will obviate any question of competition for their services. Not a bit of it! Mrs. Searle hardly paused to draw breath before expounding the necessity of a colour bar, not merely to prevent Non-Whites obtaining supervisory posts but also to prevent "completely free competition which could wreck the nursing services." Mrs. Searle described with horror "it only lasted for half an hour after I arrived on the scene, how she had found Non-White nurses supervising non-White wards in which White student nurses also worked. "It was during a time of great shortage and they did it to keep the Non-European wards open." In future are they to shut in similar circumstances? And then she warned that the private employment of Non-European nurses "must be stopped" or else these "mere technicians" will undercut and debar the White nurse from private duty nursing altogether.

Finaly, it was interesting to find Mrs. Searle and the Transvaal Administration at one about the danger of "swamping" in an "integrated" service. The Hospital Boards of such enlightened places as Wolmaransstad, Kimberley, and Klerksdorp (see their Group Area records) had embarked on a correspondence about swamping, enjoying refreshments together, attending meetings and social functions together and thus "disrupting the segregation" which is, "inter alia, equality." So the Transvaal Executive Committee endorsed "the traditional South African way of life, viz. that the European must hold his own and the non-White must do his job." But the imposition of a legislative nursing colour bar and a ban on the private employment of Non-White nurses by Whites is one of the silliest and most absurd of the lot, and the only thing that "the European can hold his own" only by erecting artificial barriers to keep the "inferior" Non-White out.

* * *

I stayed just a little over two days in Taung. But what I saw and learnt in that time gave me a good idea of what a defenseless people could suffer at the hands of the unholy alliance of native Department officials, arrogant White farmers and unscrupulous traders.
THE SUEZ DEBACLE

THE merit of Paul Johnson’s “The Suez War” lies not in any new light it sheds on the British action against Nasser, but on the clarity with which all the public and widely known facts are assembled together to produce a devastating indictment of the British Government. Here are recorded as so many press reporters’ books are, which led Britain to its greatest military and political debacle. It is written, in order to drive home a single, simple point. “Our leaders are guilty men. So long as they go unpunished, all of us are accessories after the fact.” Johnson, assistant editor of the New Statesman and Nation, hits hard at Eden and the Tories. “The ablest of his generation,” he writes of Eden, “had been killed in Flanders; he soon won preeminence in the Tory Party.” And, as is to be expected from an experienced reporter, he makes the story not only yesterday’s revolutionary hero, but also the symbol of today’s revolutionary martyrs.

The theme of witch-hunting appears to have become something of an obsession with Fast. I say this not in criticism so much as in sorrow. The theme runs powerfully through the majority of the stories in “The Last Supper,” and is the whole theme of “Lola Gregg.” That it is so is understandable; Fast has been persecuted, hunted and imprisoned by the American witch-hunters. Such a life as his in the past ten years, such an hysteria as America’s in the past ten years, cannot fail to leave deep-stiched scars upon a writer of sensitivity and courage. But they are not the great compassion and humanity of Fast at his best. Perhaps, significantly, both these stories keep off the well-trod path of the witch-hunt obsession. From this it does not follow that all the many stories about the witch-hunt fall short. Some do. But others, and, significantly again, those which are not so close to the reality of Fast’s own life and agony, come close to his very best work. “Upraised Pinion” tells the tale of a former Communist who decides to make a deal with the F.B.I. at the expense of his comrades, while “A Walk Home” reverses the pattern to a profoundly moving story of the simple worker who refuses to deal in human lives with the F.B.I. because he places too high a value on his mankind. Like everything he writes, this collection of Fast’s stories is based on the generalised experience of life as interpreted through the artist’s eyes, but on an actual incident which happened to an American Communist war hero, Robert Thompson. In this final lunatic act of the McCarthy era, Thompson was brutally assualted in prison by a fellow prisoner, a Croatian charged with a breach of the immigration laws, who hoped thus to demonstrate his thorough “Americanism,” as it is defined by McCarthy mania. Perhaps there is, in the Lola Gregg version of this horror, validity. But certainly there is no greatness.

Howard Fast, at his best, is very, very good. But not even his most ardent admirers will be able to claim that his most recent works are anywhere near his best. That he is versatile is shown by the fact that his three most recent works are a play (General Washington and the Water Witch), a collection of short stories (The Last Supper), and a novel (The Story of Lola Gregg). But in none of them does he approach the great writing of which he is capable, and which reveals itself only in his historical novels.

Not that one can brush aside any of these recent works as worthless. They are all from that. But they are, perhaps, unworthy of the talent which created them. Of the play there is little to say. It is a fantasy, woven around that fateful moment at which Washington decided to lead the beaten, broken and battered remnants of the revolutionary army back across the Delaware River, to attack a vastly superior force of imperial troops—the moment which turned seemingly certain defeat into a crushing victory. “My opinion,” writes Fast in a foreword, “is that (in this work) he is a more truthful Washington than I presented in ‘The Unvanquished.’” Perhaps so. Certainly he is more human, more given to human weaknesses than the cold, aloof character of ‘The Unvanquished,’ published at the beginning of World War II. But he is also a less heroic figure, a less historic figure than the earlier Fast portrait of the great bourgeois revolutionary leader. And therefore, it seems to me, less valid. This is the portrait of less validity and power than Fast’s earlier one. The fantasy links the revolutionary past with the witch-hunt of revolutionary ideas of the present, making of Washington spring dramatically alive and gripping.

But, as so often happens with books by reporters rather than historians, the story is told on a rather shallow, superficial level. There is, for example, no explanation offered for the United States’ policy toward Nasser and Suez, other than the personalities and petty rivalries of John Foster Dulles. Dulles’ dyspepsia, it would appear, is the reason for the sudden withdrawal of the U.S. offer to finance the building of the Aswan Dam, which set in motion the whole trail of events leading to the Suez War. In the same strain is the childish story that “... reading a copy of the British weekly ‘Illustrated’ (Hussein) saw an article entitled ‘Glubb Pasha Uncrowned King of Jordan.” In a moment of childish anger after reading the article, Hussein ordered his dismissal.” This piffling nonsense may serve the Sunday newspapers, but it is not to be expected in a supposedly serious study by a serious writer. Nor can one condone the failure to mention, even in passing, the feelings and outlooks of the Egyptian people and government about events which, after all, concerned them more than anyone. This glaring omission serves to underline the insidious anti-Egyptian, anti-Nasser, flagwagging Britishism of Johnson’s views, coupled with anti-Soviet prejudices which weaken Johnson’s desperate and sincere attempt to indict the British Government, and so restore the honour and prestige of the British people, who, by large and large, opposed Eden in his great adventure.

THE SUEZ WAR. By Paul John­son. Published by MacGibbon & Kee. (With foreword by Aneurin Bevan.) 12s. L.B.
organised by the African National Congress and it reacted to this intrusion of “political” influence into a “purely economic” dispute by wild allegations of intimidation and re­sentment among P.E. Africans. With some reason I felt in a better position to assess the facts than the writer. However, I have also had several years of writing letters to this paper and understand that the game must be played according to certain rules if you want to get published at all. I therefore tempered my length and language to what is usually acceptable. And I confined myself to correcting certain errors of fact in the editorial and to stressing the simple, if obvious, point that if African demands for redress of genuine economic grievances are always treated as a “trial of political strength,” inevitably the demand must come for the radical alteration of the existing political system. This having been the course of the bus boycott dispute, I suggested that there was little point in continuing to differentiate between “economics” and “politics.” I did not add, as indeed I felt, that the distinction had long lost any worthwhile meaning. But the letter went unpublished.

Dr. John Dube has written “Intsila ka Shaka,” which ranks very high among Zulu literary works, that Zulu writing began to grow firm roots. From about 1930 onwards, we find a constant stream of new writers employing a variety of themes and styles, all making their contribution to Zulu literature. While Stuart was an Englishman, the modern Zulu writers are almost without exception Zulu-speaking Africans.

Dr. Dube’s “Intsila ka Shaka” is patterned as a novel although some critics contest that it not one. It has its setting and background in Zululand. It depicts life at the Zulu court and portrays Zulu gallantry very well. Other works by Dr. Dube are “Isitha Somuntu Nguye Ugobo Lwakhe” (A Black Man’s Enemy is Himself); and “Ukuziphathatha Kahle” (Good Manners). Both these are didactic and moral essays.

In the early thirties appeared the first works of Mr. R. R. R. Dhlomo, the present editor of the Zulu weekly, “Ilanga Lase Natal.” He has specialised in historical novels, portraying Zulu monarchs like “Ushaka,” “UDingane,” “UMPande” and, lately, “UCetshwayo.” His works are written in good prose, but as historical works they have the weakness of being incomplete and dependent on Zulu history as told by the White historian. Dhlomo’s books, as almost all Zulu works, are written for use in the schools. They have to be passed by the Literature Committee of the Bantu Education Department. This might explain some of the obvious omissions of certain events in Zulu history.

Apart from the historical novels, Dhlomo has written “Indlela Yababi,” in which he ridicules the morals of African youth in the cities and paradoxically portrays the virtues of the old way of life—the humble existence in the kraal.

First Novels and Poetry

In the late thirties the late Dr. B. Wallet Vilakazi emerged on the literary scene. He was a Doctor of Literature and a brilliant scholar of Bantu philology and linguistics, a lecturer in Bantu studies at the University of the Witwatersrand. He introduced a new feature into the realm of Zulu literature. His work “Inkondlo ka Zulu” was a book of Zulu verse modelled after the great works of the English 18th and 19th century poets, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Byron and others. Most of Vilakazi’s poems are works of “art for art’s sake.” Except in a few cases, he does not portray the life of the Zulu people, their suffering, their pleasure, their hopes and fears. He wrote about Nature and the glory of the Great Kings, Vilakazi is also the first man to introduce a true Zulu novel. His “Noma Nini” is a brilliant romantic novel with its background in

“The third in a series of articles on African literature

THE FIRST PIONEERS who landed on Zulu soil wrote what might be described as a tourist’s view of life in Zululand. Captain Allen Gardiner was one of those who visited Natal and Zululand during the last century and he is known for the books he wrote in English, like his “Journey to the Zulu Country,” in which he described Zulu social organisation and the strong bias in favour of military organisation and discipline. It is to Allen Gardiner that we are indebted for the pictures and descriptions of the Zulu personalities which are in James Stuart’s Zulu books.

The first Zulu literature emerged about 60 years ago, near the close of the 19th century. Stuart’s books ranged from Zulu legend and mythology to historical accounts. He reduced to writing many of the “Iziniganekwane” (tales and fables) and would earn the zakithi” (Reviver of our own stories) meaning. But the letter went unpublished.

By M. B. YENGWA, Author of “Inqaba ka Mabelemade”

The second incident concerned the other paper which had much longer retained its “sympathy.” When it reported the “contemptuous” rejection of the offer of the Chamber of Commerce and a consequent decline in White sympathy, I wrote to say that thought this a pity—both because the Chamber’s offer had been “ingenious” only, because it was pointedly aimed at an African’s, but also because the “contemptuous” meeting was open to other possible interpretations. I then went on to quote the first-hand account given me by a very experienced British journalist on whose judgement I completely rely. To him the most marked feature of the whole boycott campaign was its spontaneity, its growth from the roots up, the absence of any “imposed” leadership or tactics. The rejection meeting of March I was “contemptuous” only if it is regarded as “contempts” for Africans to go on fighting for their solution and to do so with ebullient good humour, near unanimity, complete discipline and absence of violence.

The paper published my letter with its entire core missing, leaving only just some amiable requests for continued White sympathy and a reference to Government intransigence. I do not at all imagine that every word I write is valuable or sacrosant. But surely such mutilation of a signed letter deserved at least an acknowledgement that it had been abridged? If not, when is such an acknowledgement ever to be made? One knows that there are many occasions when harassed sub-editors have to cut to fit letters into available space. But the cuts in this letter were not in that category. Nor was the counter-interpretation of the “contemptuous” meeting offensive or even sharply phrased.

One is forced to comment that the fight for a “free” press would be more convincingly waged if that press would free itself, at least in its avowedly “free correspondence” columns, from some of its own inhibitions and special pressures on racially controversial topics—especially when “the Natives” look like asserting their own strength and rights, as Minister Schoeman’s intransigent folly has taught them to do.

* ZULU WRITING *

By M. B. YENGWA, Author of “Inqaba ka Mabelemade”

Fighting Talk . May, 1957

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ZULU WRITING
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the Groutville Mission Reserve, during the early years of civilisation in Natal. Incidentally, Umvoti, better known as Groutville, was the birthplace of Dr. Vilakazi. Vilakazi also wrote "uDiniziswayo ka Jobe," a historical novel about the prominent chief of the Mtetwa tribe and at one time the most powerful tribe in Natal, later conquered and annexed to the Zulu tribe by Shaka. His other novel, "Nje Nempela," is based on Bambata's armed resistance of 1906. It is well plotted and the use of language is very good. In collaboration with his colleague, Dr. C. M. Doke, Vilakazi also produced a Zulu-English dictionary.

Eman H. Made is another writer who has made a name for himself. He started writing by producing "Amaqawe Omlando," a survey of European history from Julius Caesar to Alfred the Great. His novel, "Indlafka Yase Harrisdale," is well written and he produced also a collection of poems entitled "Umtithi Wokwazi Nezinye Izingoma." He has been writing consistently since the publication of his first books, and his later works show great improvement.

C. L. Nyembezi, a professor of African Studies at Fort Hare, has written "Mtanami Mtanami" (My Child, My Child), which is considered the best Zulu novel to date. He depicts the changing scene in African life from the patriarchal and pastoral economy to the industrial and capitalist economy, and its attendant evils. His pen has also produced "Ubudoda Abukhulelwa," a captivating novel.

The forties saw quite a number of new writers on the scene. To mention only a few, B. J. Malinga wrote "Umbazwane" and other works, L. Mcwanga wrote "Manhla"; J. W. Nxumalo wrote "Uzvelonke" and I wrote "Inqaba ka Mabelemade."

In the field of poetry, too, others have followed Vilakazi and Made, among them the late Mihembu, Kunene and Dhlamini.

Drama has been neglected to some extent in Zulu literature. Ndobele's "UGubudela ka No Matshali" is a fine play, cleverly written, which is based on an old Zulu legend of a man who outwitted the cannibals. Other works in drama are translations from English. K. E. Masinga, a Zulu announcer at the Durban station of the S.A.B.C., has produced a few Shakespearean plays translated into Zulu. Another man who has translated Shakespeare is O. Shange.

Zulu literature is still in its infancy, but there is no doubt that in the last 20 years it has made tremendous strides. Writers first produced collections of short, unrelated stories, mostly about old Zulu history and folklore. After Dr. Vilakazi's "Noma Nini" writers have produced stories with good plots and far more original and imaginative in conception. They have drawn their plots by and large from rich Zulu history, though many have plotted their stories from the changing social and economic conditions of African society.

Censorship
However, African writers have thus far not been able to interpret African life as it truly obtains today. Their characters are those of the mine boy, baffled and afterwards corrupted by city life. They have not yet characterised a Mandela, educated, independent and politically victimised. They have not yet created an Alexander, rich, successful and prosperous in business.

It is obvious why the writers avoid such plots and characters. These books would not be accepted by the Literature Committee and the only market of consequence for Zulu books is the schools. The picture painted by writers might be accurate of the present day South Africa but, even if real, such themes would illuminate the situation that officials policy tries to suppress: the emergence of Africans to full equality with other South Africans, despite attempts to keep them in perpetual subjugation.
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FEDERATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN 1954-1963

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