

HAIL TO THE PEOPLE OF GHANA!

WEDNESDAY 6th of March will be remembered by the future historians of free Africa as a great day in the long and bitter struggle of the people of our Continent against colonial slavery.

With flags and fanfare the people of Ghana (formerly called the Gold Coast) celebrate their independence from this date, the 113th anniversary of the seizure of the territories by the British Imperialists. Ghana, with its five million people occupying an area of 100,000 square miles, is today the star attraction on the World Stage.

WORLD STAGE

By Spectator

tion on the World Stage. People from all over the world, representing great nations and small, have flocked to Accra, the capital, to witness the independence celebrations. From Britain has come the Duchess of Kent concealing with an air of graciousness the gall that the Tories must feel now that another of their possessions has broken free.

From the U.S.A. comes Vice-President Nixon, baby-patting and backslapping in good American electioneering style, no doubt anxious to fill the "vacuum" created by the political withdrawal of the British. "Rubbing shoulders" with Nixon, as the newspapers put it, are representatives of the Soviet Union, which has consistently championed anti-colonialism, and of the People's Republic of China, which not so long ago celebrated its own liberation.



Sidelight

An interesting sidelight on the invitations sent out is the fact that the only two persons from British Guiana asked to attend were Cheddi Jagan, leader of the People's Progressive Party, and Fred Burnham, former Vice-Chairman of the P.P.P.

Other representatives come from the governments of colony-owning countries, hiding their alarm, and from the newly independent states of north Africa and Asia, openly expressing their joy at the addition to their number. Even the Nats are swallowing their racial pride and have sent a representative on behalf of the S.A. Government.

Not officially represented, but there in spirit, will be the peoples of the vast territories of Africa who still languish under colonialism—the peoples of the British, French, Portuguese and Belgian colonies, and the people of 'free' South Africa.

Yet the most important persons present at the celebrations are not the foreign dignitaries, but the common people of Ghana themselves, who have trekked from all over the country to rejoice on the day which their years of struggle have brought about. By foot, by cart, and by train they came, the urban workers, artisans, petty traders, market women and fishermen, clerks, teachers and peasants.

The Heroes

These are the heroes of Ghana, the people whose selfless struggle gave Kwame Nkrumah the strength to lead his country to independence. Apologists for colonialism are trying to represent the grant of freedom to the Gold Coast, as Ghana was called until this week, as an act of liberality by the British Government to a people whom they had trained to rule themselves.

The truth is that it was militant action by the masses of the common people, during which scores of their leaders were thrown into gaol, that forced the British colonialists to make a dignified retreat if they did not want to be thrown out altogether.

In any case the people of the west coast of Africa were ruling themselves before William the Conqueror brought a bit of 'order' to England. A thousand years ago the Empire of Ghana stretched over the area, an empire marked by its high political development and outstanding artistic productions.

Slavery

When the British first came to the Gold Coast it was not to teach the people how to rule themselves, but to strip the country of its black gold—African slaves. With the development of modern large-scale industry human beings were replaced by raw materials as the chief object of plunder.

Africans from the Gold Coast have a wry saying

that the mosquito has been their best friend, because it was only the prevalence of malaria which prevented the development of a large White settler population such as has so fiercely resisted African freedom in other parts of the Continent.

The British were forced to rule through 'good boys' who helped them buy up the rich produce of the peasants for a song. All trade, transport, mining (gold, manganese and bauxite), the police force and the army were in the hands of the British rulers and their agents. More than half the world's cocoa production brought fortunes to the British monopolies which marketed it, while the producers were forced to live in hunger, illiteracy and misery.

The last world war, which saw so many fortresses of imperialism crash to the ground, had a powerful impact on the Africans of the Gold Coast, many of whom fought against Fascist imperialism in Europe and Asia. In the post-war years feeling ran deep against British rule, but there was no leadership for the people. The spark that started the fire came in the person of Mr. Kwame Nkrumah, a man with a powerful personality and organisational ability.

His Story

After studying for some years in the U.S.A. and Britain, Nkrumah returned to his homeland and became secretary of the United Gold Coast Convention in 1947. A paper organisation, this body consisted of chiefs and lawyers who followed a policy of "gradual evolution" relying on memoranda and petitions to obtain concessions.

The only member of the Convention who did not come from a wealthy or middle class background, Nkrumah, the son of a village goldsmith who worked as a dockerman to pay for his studies, set about transforming the nature of the organisation's activities. Advancing a policy of 'positive action', he began a drive in the towns for membership prepared for open struggle against colonial rule.

So frightened were the U.G.C. leaders at the prospect of an all-out struggle that they deposed Nkrumah from the secretaryship. Nkrumah walked out of the Convention and set up the Convention People's Party in 1949, turning directly to the workers for support.

The response to his policy was immediate—the common folk rallied in their thousands, conducting boycotts, strikes and mass demonstrations to further the struggle for independence. Many were killed, scores thrown into gaol. In 1950 Nkrumah was sentenced to two years imprisonment, but before he had served the full period, the British realised that they could no longer rule the Gold Coast in the old way, especially since there were too few White settlers to maintain their supremacy.

Constitution

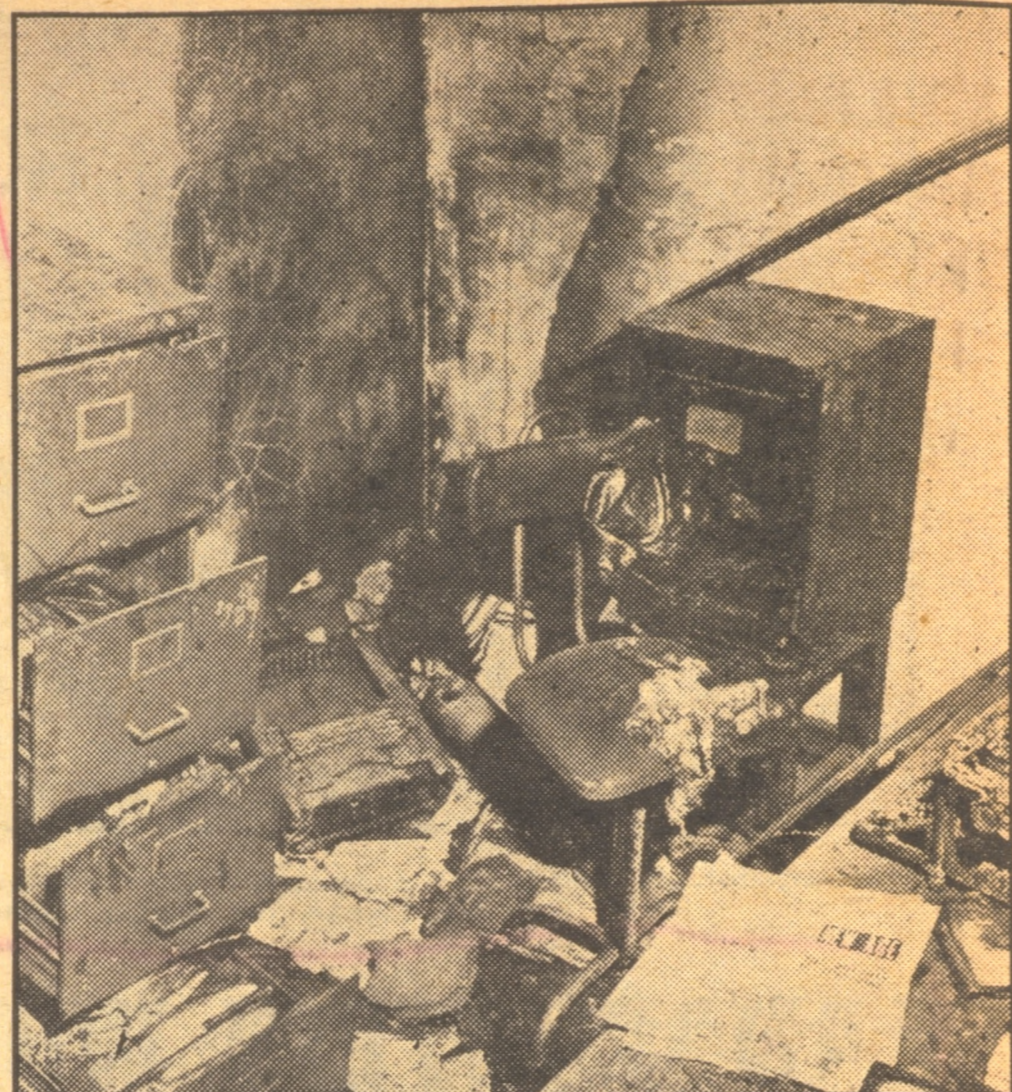
In order to save what they could of the rapidly sinking ship, they agreed to a new constitution in terms of which a general election was held for the first time in the country's history. Though most of their leaders were still in gaol, the C.P.P. won a sweeping victory, and Nkrumah emerged victoriously from prison to become Prime Minister.

Since that date the country has been beset by many problems, and Nkrumah has often shown a tendency to turn away from the people who put him into power and to allow himself to be swayed by the interests of the rich and powerful who earlier had disowned him. Yet his personal popularity has remained high, for he is the symbol of independence, and under his leadership the people of Ghana have finally realised the goal for which they made so many sacrifices.

Political independence will not of itself solve all of the many difficulties facing the country. British capital still dominates the country's economy. There is great dissatisfaction at the low price of cocoa. The Ashanti and other people of the North fear for their autonomy. As the Congress Party in India has come to realise, the political revolution must be followed by a social and economic revolution if the country is to maintain true independence and advance the interests of its people. The construction of socialism, to which the C.P.P. has pledged itself (the first ruling party in Africa to do so), will not be easy.

Yet now is a time for celebration. The problems of tomorrow can confidently be left to the millions of ordinary folk whose noble battles for political independence have paved the way for a great social reconstruction of the country.

Hail to the people of Ghana!



EXTENSIVE DAMAGE TO NEW AGE OFFICES

Our pictures show (left) a wrecked filing cabinet, in each drawer of which documents had been burnt. In the corner next to the safe there used to be a bookcase, now completely disintegrated. The covering of the chair has been burnt and the stuffing forced out by the heat. Burnt documents litter the floor. On the charred desk is a typewriter, now no longer serviceable.

(Below) a corner of the records room, showing back copies of New Age blackened and charred. On the left is a gaping hole which used to be a window. In the foreground is the wreckage of a cupboard. On the right a chair has lost its seat and back.

Violence Threat To Boycott Leaders

JOHANNESBURG.

Mr. Maimela, one of the Pretoria boycott leaders, has been admitted to hospital following his assault by unknown persons. Last week another Pretoria boycott leader Mr. P. Mogan received an anonymous letter threatening him with violence.

In Johannesburg a number of boycott leaders were visited by PUTCO employees who told them that they would demand jobs from them if they were sacked by PUTCO as a result of the bus boycott.

The reaction of the people in Johannesburg to the threats was so violent that none of the leaders here have been touched.

The letter written to Mr. Mogan warns him that 'the gods' would visit him and would strike with a hard hand.



BOYCOTTERS SAY WHY COMMERCE OFFER WAS REJECTED

JOHANNESBURG.

THE proposal by the Johannesburg Chamber of Commerce to set aside a fund of £25,000 out of which pennies would have been refunded to passengers to make up the difference between the old fares and the increases which have brought about the present boycott, has been rejected at public mass meetings in the various areas which are boycotting the buses.

A statement issued by the Witwatersrand and Pretoria Joint Co-ordinating Transport Council says:

While appreciating the sincere motives of the Chamber of Commerce, it is necessary to explain the reasons why the scheme did not prove acceptable. Among these reasons are the following:

- 1. The scheme would have been difficult and inconvenient to administer. Having already waited in a long and tiring queue to catch the buses, passengers would have to join another long and tiresome

queue to claim their pennies. Passengers alighting at intermediate stops would either have to forego the penny or walk some distance to reclaim the penny.

- 2. Without casting any reflection on the good faith of the Chamber of Commerce, we must point out that the scheme was not legally enforceable and could have been withdrawn at any time.
- 3. The proposal was for a temporary period only, and the people feel determined to effect some lasting settlement of their ever-recurring transport difficulties.

UNDERTAKING

The leaders of the boycott made an undertaking to place the Chamber's proposals before the public and they carried out this undertaking. It would help towards an understanding of the people's attitude to remember the justified feelings of indignation and determina-

P.E. RAILWAY AND DOCK WORKERS BAN OVERTIME, DEMAND HIGHER WAGES

Shipping Seriously Delayed

PORT ELIZABETH.

DEMANDS for higher wages have been lodged by the railway and dock workers in Port Elizabeth, and have been backed by a refusal to work overtime until their demands are met.

Railway traffic and shipping has already been drastically affected by the workers' action.

The P.E. dock workers, whose wages per week depend on the number of days there is work for them, are demanding 25/-, as against 11/6 per day which they are now earning.

As the workers had been pressing for higher wages for some time they immediately backed up their demands with a refusal to commence work earlier than 8.30 in the morning and to continue work later than 4.30 in the afternoon. They have also refused to work on ships over the week-end unless their demand for higher wages is met.

DOCK MEETING

When the workers carried out their decision, the police special branch, Native Commissioner, Labour Bureau officials and M.R.A. representative—the international strike breakers—came to the scene. A large meeting of the workers was held at an open space in the dock area.

After the interpreter had introduced the various officials the workers said they had never known the Native Commissioner to do any good for them, nor the Labour Bureau officials. They were therefore not prepared to negotiate with anybody or in the presence of anybody other than their employers, nor would they enter into any discussions in the presence of the police.

Further, the workers demanded that there should be an interpreter into Afrikaans for the Coloured workers.

When the Native Commissioner persisted to talk, the workers rose in a body and walked away to

The Railway workers have refused to work after 5 in the evening unless their demands are met. In the meanwhile the goods shed and platforms are packed with perishable fruit. Feverish meetings are taking place amongst the employers.

NEGOTIATIONS

After a brief meeting with the relieving System Manager, the railway dock workers were told that the question of their demands was still under consideration. The workers returned to their homes and refused to work.

When the workers threatened not to work over the week-end they were persuaded to continue working, as a definite reply to their demands would be given on Monday morning.

When the relieving system manager told them on Monday morning that the matter was under consideration, the workers stated that for the last three years that song had been sung. When no satisfactory arrangement could be reached they walked away.

New Age learns that in future the workers will resume work at 8.30 a.m. and stop at 4.30 p.m. Like the stevedores they are not willing to work overtime, nor over the week-end.

Although they were at work this last week-end, all efforts by the investigation department to infiltrate into the ranks of the workers to get information about their plans were futile. During meal-times the workers are reported to have talked about everything but the present trouble.

FAREWELL TO PUTCO

JOHANNESBURG.

ON the eve of the withdrawal of the PUTCO buses, thousands of enthusiastic Alexandra residents flocked to the meeting. Those who remained at home, even many streets from the place of the meeting, heard the report as the voices thundered through the air of the township. Never was the shout "Azikwelwa—Bye-Bye PUTCO", more clear, more harmonious.

It was a victory claim. The monster had fallen. The PUTCO bus monopoly, whose ever-extending tentacles had held an undisputed grip on the Non-European transport service in Johannesburg and Pretoria, was staggering under the blows of the people.

MAGIC SPELL

Many went to the meeting thinking that they would shout "Azikwelwa" for the last time. For the past eight weeks they had shouted that slogan which dogged the PUTCO buses like a magic spell.

But on Friday March 1, the day of the withdrawal of the buses, it appeared as if the monster was showing signs of revival and was raising its ugly face again. Last-minute terms for settlement were being made which required the people to pay the increased fares into the hands of PUTCO and get a refund from somewhere else later.

The people had already said goodbye to the retiring bus company which had held a gun—in the form of a ten-day ultimatum—over their heads. They prepared themselves for the nightmare of facing the future without transport. That

is why the speeches at the Friday night meeting were picks and shovels designed to bury PUTCO once and for all.

"If they are not prepared to charge 4d. let them go," said the people. The new proposal only meant queuing twice on every trip—for the bus and for your penny.

THEIR TRIALS

PUTCO had made the people walk for two months in all sorts

By Tennyson Makiwane

of adverse weather. Police raids, arrests had been intensified since the boycott. Little wounds that people feel deserve a direct and permanent settlement.

Opinion had gained ground amongst the people that if the 4d. was not restored then PUTCO must go. The withdrawal of PUTCO, they felt, was as good as victory. One African policeman had said at the beginning of the boycott: 'These people are fools, who can ever beat PUTCO?'

It was widely believed that PUTCO was so entrenched that nothing could move it. People complained that if you sued PUTCO you would get nowhere. PUTCO inspectors had told those who com-

Royal Navy Climbs Down

CAPE TOWN. Following widespread indignation and protests caused by the notice warning seamen on a visiting British warship against having anything to do with Non-Europeans (New Age, February 21), the Royal Navy has decided to alter the offending section.

The notice deals with contact the crew of the warship might have with Non-Whites ashore, and made references to the incidence of venereal disease and prostitution among them, and to the Union's Immorality laws.

Mr. Crawley, Director of the United Kingdom Information Office, said that no insult to the Coloured people was intended, but the Commander-in-Chief, Vice-Admiral Robson, directed that future issues of the notice were to be amended.

"Women Would Choose Jail Rather Than Carry Passes"

JOHANNESBURG.

"Women of the Transvaal would choose jail rather than carry passes," declared a resolution adopted at a special Women's Conference called by the ANC Women's League recently. Over 200 delegates from all over the Transvaal and as far afield as Bechuanaland attended.

Speakers emphasised the need for a countrywide campaign to teach women the consequences of accepting passes. The conference saluted the action of the Ventersdorp High School girls who decided to go home sooner than accept passes.

After prolonged discussion on Bantu Education the conference resolved to recommend to the ANC leaders that the campaign of withdrawing the children from the schools be revived. The police action of arresting the Cultural Club leaders was bitterly condemned. Other resolutions supported the bus boycott, and urged women to collect for the Treason Trial Defence Fund.

plained about long queues to 'get up early.'

THE END?

At the meeting held last Wednesday people danced wildly saying "Bye Bye PUTCO"; cyclists waved their bicycles in the air shouting "These are our buses."

The PUTCO buses raised the dust behind them as a convoy left for Pretoria. "Poor PUTCO," said one boycotter.

Textile Workers' Demands

CAPE TOWN.

The Industrial Council for the blanket, flock and Kaffir sheeting sections of the textile industry broke down recently when the employers flatly refused to meet the demands of the workers.

The Textile Workers' Industrial Union has been negotiating for a new agreement for three years, demanding higher cost-of-living allowances, overtime pay at time and a third on basic wages plus c.o.l. and, in the flock section, a 10% increase in basic wages.

The employers demanded that the workers accept a reduction in their basic minimum wages—from £3 to £2 6s. 6d.

The Union will now negotiate directly with each employer in the hope of winning its demands.

INDIAN FAMILY BEATEN UP BY POLICE — "ALL A MISTAKE"

JOHANNESBURG.

POLICE assaults in the Western Areas of this city do not stop at Africans. An Indian family attacked in their Sophiatown home one night last week were later told "It is all a mistake," but to this day they do not know why the police invaded their house.

One of those attacked, 52-year-old Mr. Shunmughan Naidoo, is still in hospital with a fractured arm.

Mrs. Mummy Govender of Gold Street, Sophiatown, said that on the Saturday evening her father was in bed and she and her sister Miss Gladys Naidoo were in the kitchen when two European constables in uniform and a number of African policemen burst into the house.

Mr. Naidoo asked them what they were doing in the house but they pulled him out of bed and one constable said: "We are looking for liquor."

"My father asked him where his search warrant was and he said 'the warrant'," said Mrs. Govender.

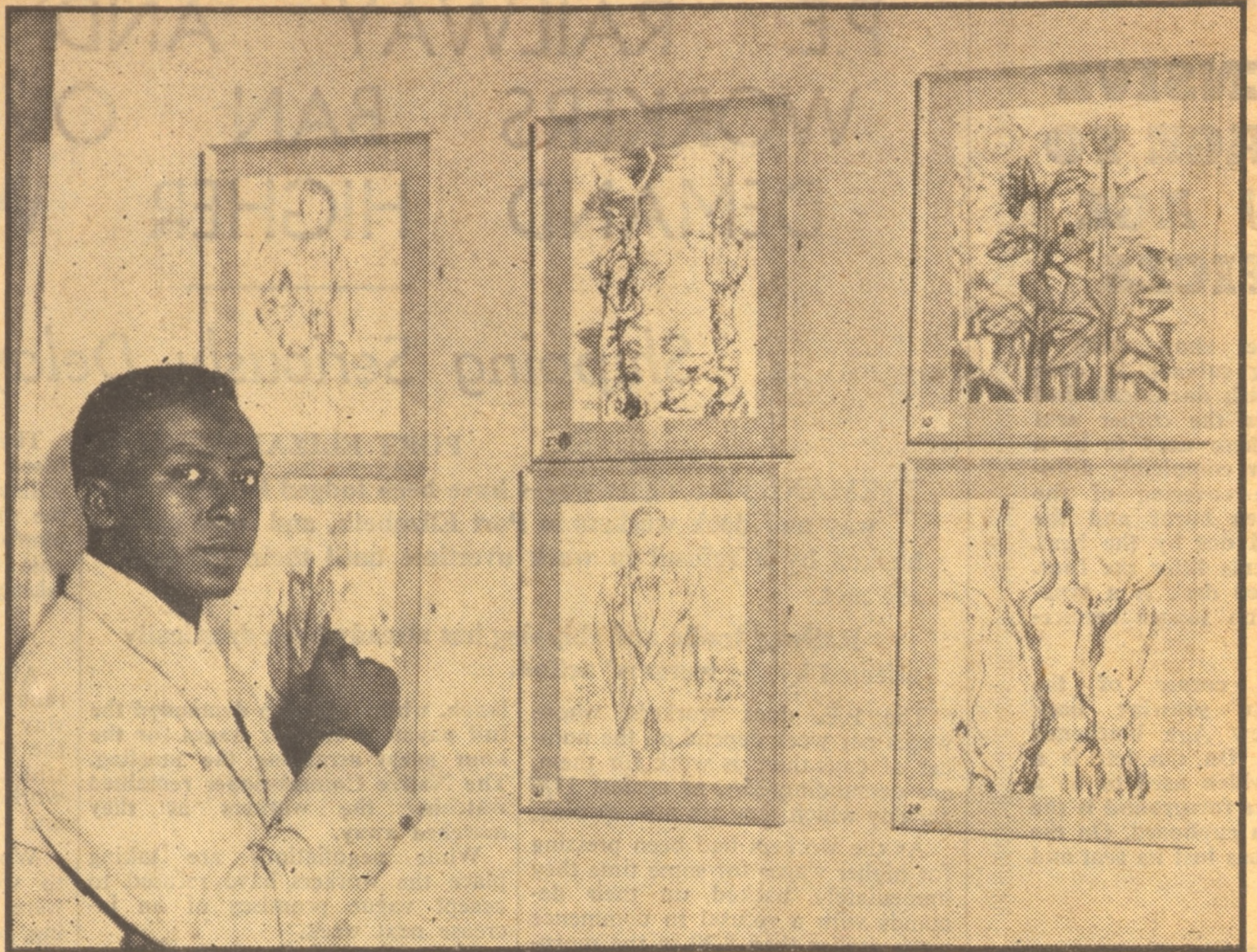
"The police then started beating my father. I came in and asked them to take my father away decently if they had a charge against him. Then one of the African constables beat me about the head and all over my body with his baton.

"They were like madmen. The African policeman went into my grandmother's bedroom. She was sitting on her bed. The police grabbed her and dragged her off the bed and pushed her about the room."

"When they took my father outside he was in his pyjamas. We asked them to allow him to put his clothes on, but they just laughed at us."

Mr. Naidoo's arm was broken in the melee, and he had to be taken to the Coronation Non-European Hospital.

No charge was laid against him. After he and his daughter, Mrs. Govender, arrived at the police station at Newlands, they were told that it was "all a mistake. We are sorry, and you may go now."



Mr. Peter Clarke seen with some of the paintings at his exhibition.

ART MUST HELP SOLVE LIFE'S PROBLEMS, SAYS COLOURED ARTIST

From Mervyn Bennun

PPETER Clarke, the Coloured artist whose first exhibition of paintings has been on view at Oranje House, Cape Town, is a

shy, simply-dressed, soft-spoken young man of 27 with decided views about the role of the artist in society.

Born in Simonstown, he started painting and drawing from the age of four.

"At that time," he said, "my family were not very interested in that sort of thing. I had no paper, so I used fly-leaves of books."

He chuckled. "I didn't ask for permission, so I was in trouble quite a lot. I used to sketch when I should have been doing other things, too. Often, when I was sent on an errand, I would run away and draw."

He has three brothers and two sisters, none of whom gave his efforts a sympathetic reception at the time. I asked him how they felt about it now. He smiled again. "Now they are very interested indeed!"

SCHOOLING

He went to school till Standard 7, at the Livingstone High School, in Claremont. His parents could not afford to keep him at school any longer, so at the age of 15 he left and went to work in the Dockyard in Simonstown as a ship's painter. "Even though the job had a lot to do with brushes," Peter Clarke said, "I did not like it!" He worked in the Dockyard stores till recently, when he left to devote his full time to his painting.

Peter Clarke has had no formal training as a painter. In 1947 he was a member of the St. Phillip's Group in District 6, under the leadership of John Copelands. The Group used to meet for discussion and criticism on cultural topics. In 1948 the Group moved to the Technical College, and he left. Apart from what he learned from the Group and hints picked up from books, he has been entirely self-taught.

DISREGARD LIFE

Peter Clarke feels that today too many artists disregard life itself. There are too many "nice" pictures — "no getting down to the realities of the world about one."

His own exhibition does not contain many pictures which could be described as profound social studies, but: "From now on there will be a change," he said firmly.

"If one can help solve these problems through one's art, one should do so. The idea should be not only

to SELL pictures, but to DO something through them too."

The Coloured people were formerly not interested in art, he said. Before, he could be sitting doing a drawing in District 6, and would be ignored. Nowadays, people would come up and speak to him, make comments and ask questions.

I asked what he thought this was due to. He thought a moment.

"To the events in the country," he said. "People are becoming politically conscious. They are forced to take sides. As their political consciousness grows, so their cultural outlook advances."

"Before, I was just another Coloured man. Our people took it for granted that only the Whites could do such things. Now, people are becoming aware of the fact that they can do these things too; that they are also human beings."

Asked about his future plans, Mr. Clarke said he hoped to exhibit again soon. "I would like to go overseas for a while, to study. But not to leave permanently. That would be running away. Many Coloured people would like to do that, and some have done it. But it is no answer."

Mr. Clarke feels there is a great future for art in this country.

"People are busy now with other problems. That will change in time, and then our art will really flourish," he said.

Boycotters Arrested For Traffic Offence

JOHANNESBURG.

Bus boycotters from Alexandra Township arrested and prosecuted for crossing against a robot in Louis Botha Avenue were kept in the cells for one and two nights before the crown finally agreed to withdraw the charges against them.

Bail had been fixed at £1 each and only a sprinkling of the 76 men arrested managed to pay that amount. The rest were held in custody.

An application for the release of the men on their own recognisances was turned down.

Dr. G. Lowen, Q.C., said in open court that the crossing of the robot was a "piffling" and trifling offence and "this cannot be anything but trying to bring these people back to the buses. That is not the function of the traffic laws at all."

WHAT THE BOYCOTT HAS TAUGHT US

From Govan Mbeki

PORT ELIZABETH.

AZIKHWELWA! rang out ghost voices in the dark in the evening of February 9 as in less than 48 hours the people of the Eastern Cape responded to the ANC call to boycott buses in sympathy with the Reef-Pretoria people. From Uitenhage, New Brighton, Veeplaats, Despatch, Kleinskool, Missionvale, Korsten, Schauder Township, Walmer, Salisbury Park and Fairview, large masses of men and women of all ages poured out daily.

WORKERS ON THE MARCH

Here were thousands of workers on the March; on the march to fulfil their daily task—to produce the commodities to satisfy the needs of mankind, and more significant, on the march to their destined goal—their own liberation. They had decided to walk in sympathy with the people on the Reef and Pretoria.

What could have illustrated better the glaring injustice of the situation in South Africa! Those who sweat to produce the wealth of the country do not enjoy the fruits of their labour; those who strain the muscle to build luxury houses are turned out on to the bleak veld a long distance away from their places of work. When they complain they cannot afford the extra 1d., the last straw that threatens to break the back of the African child, Ben Schoeman orders them to get on the buses. If they obey Schoeman's orders it is death for them—a slow death from starvation.

The people choose life, but to have it they must go through the mill, they must defeat Schoeman. They chose the battlefield on which to meet him; they chose the hard long road where they train themselves in long daily marches to

withstand the sufferings which the Nationalists are determined to inflict on them.

SHARP CONTRASTS

What a sharp contrast as trudging, suffering thousands walk along while sleek, smooth-sailing luxury glides past. Toe to heel the marchers follow one another along the narrow pavements, while bumper to bumper the privileged classes drive slowly past in luxury which has been created by those who trudge. The marchers look ahead as though they were not aware of this contrast, and the drivers and their passengers drive indifferently past as though those whom they passed were but trees.

MARCHERS' ENEMIES

Many are the enemies for marchers. There is the stifling heat; there is the gale; then a rainstorm—these sudden changes of the weather are a trial. Then there are the police at the check points—that gruff voice: "Hey, waar is jou boek?" The grab and a fling into the Sterry (Pick-up van) or Nylon (riot truck) because a reference book was left at home in the hurry to get to work on time.

The harsher the police the more steeled are the people in their determination to carry on the boycott. "It must be hurting the Nationalists, otherwise they would not use so many police to try to break a bus boycott which does not involve them in any financial loss," say the marchers as they go through the screening points.

One man is slapped on the face; a group of nurses from duty are

thrown out of their transport van while the driver is accompanied by an armed police escort to the nearest police station; women's shopping bags are turned out in a manner calculated to humiliate. But the spirit of the people is indestructible.

THE LESSON

On the way to and from work there is hardly ever a day when the road mate is the same, yet here on the hard road there has developed a new fraternity kneaded out of the sweat and blisters. Out of the long walks has been born an awareness that those who walk belong to a class that must assert its right if it is to live.

The marchers on the Reef, the marchers in the Eastern Cape, the marchers everywhere have forged unity with their feet—unity, their most effective weapon which the oppressor fears most. It is a weapon that can only be kept in a state of readiness for use if it is always sharpened in united action.

THAT IS THE CHALLENGE FOR THE LIBERATORY MOVEMENT.

Dr. Conco Arrested On Poll Tax Charge

JOHANNESBURG.

Dr. Wilson Conco, deputy president-general of the African National Congress and one of the 156 on trial for treason, was arrested in Sophiatown recently for failure to produce a poll tax receipt.

Dr. Conco produced an income tax receipt but was removed to the Newlands police station by the police.

Collection Number: AG2887

Collection Name: Publications, New Age, 1954-1962

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand

Location: Johannesburg

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