

*Below, left* In addition to the large diamond mining operations along the coast of South West Africa, Consolidated Diamond Mines of South-West Africa is mining the foreshore, behind huge protective walls of sand, on behalf of Marine Diamond Corporation



*Below, right* Diamond mining is continued at sea off the South West African coast by Marine Diamond Corporation. In the foreground is "Pomona", a specially designed mining barge that went into service last July



*Bottom* The "hill of copper" at Akjouit, in Mauritania, which stands up from the desert plain as one of a pair of hills. The project to mine and export about 25,000 tonnes of copper in concentrates a year is being undertaken by Charter Consolidated



The control room and part of the plant for the treatment of refractory copper ores (TORCO), developed by the Anglo American Corporation Group. Its use in the planned expansion of the Group's mines in Zambia could increase production by about 100,000 tons of copper a year



*Below* A night view of the new Finsch diamond mine 100 miles west of Kimberley in the north-western Cape Province. Opened in 1966, it is expected to produce about two million carats this year

*Bottom, left* Part of the six-acre excavation for Carlton Centre, the development scheme in Johannesburg promoted jointly by Anglo American Corporation and The South African Breweries. The complex of buildings will include a 30-storey hotel, a 50-storey office tower, 400,000 square feet of shops and parking for 2,000 cars

*Bottom, right* Through associated companies the Corporation is interested in several major construction contracts. One is the Standard Bank Centre in Johannesburg, shown in this model. There will be 27 office floors above ground level, a banking branch, shops and a restaurant on the first level below ground, and on lower levels a computer department and parking facilities



# PIONEER OF ECONOMIC NATIONALISM

## AN AFRIKANER VIEW

Dr. J. E. Holloway

I have been asked to contribute an article to the issue of *Optima* which commemorates the fiftieth anniversary of the Anglo American Corporation. It is a challenge. That an Afrikaner has been requested to do so is in itself significant evidence of the progress which has been made since the days when mining houses were regarded as enemies of the Afrikaners.

The golden jubilee of Anglo American can well be portrayed as a cornucopia, bound by a gold ring, richly studded with diamonds. From this horn of plenty flow not only gold and diamonds but also a wealth of other mining and industrial products. These have been produced from a refractory and frequently obstreperous environment, subjugated by people of British, Afrikaner and Bantu stock, under the leadership of a man of German birth, who arrived in this country as a British national, and whose whole life was characterised by his devotion to his adopted country, South Africa.

For forty years the Anglo American Corporation was inspired by the high qualities of its founder, Ernest Oppenheimer.

It therefore becomes necessary to pay particular attention to the aims and ideals of this man and to trace the small beginnings which have now opened up a vista of economic co-operation between people of British and Afrikaner stock.

His biographer, Sir Theodore Gregory, says that his character was emotional and mystical. His son and successor at Anglo American has written of him that he thought major decisions were best taken by some intuitive process, and that his business judgments often looked like pure intuitions because the reasoning that led up to them was not disclosed. I observed a similar characteristic in my chief Mr. N. C. Havenga and this has perhaps enabled me better to understand it, the more so as their economic objectives had much in common.

In one of his essays Ralph Waldo Emerson says that "every individual man has a bias which he must obey, and that it is only as he feels and obeys this, that he rightly develops and attains his legitimate power in this world". He refers to this as "hearkening to the privatest oracle."

This must be understood to be an all-enveloping objective, towards the attainment of which his judgments and his actions have to be directed.

What was this bias, this privatest oracle of Ernest Oppenheimer?

He clearly wanted to attain wealth, but the mystical in him would never have allowed him to hold the view that the search for wealth alone could constitute a full and satisfactory life. He would probably have regarded the search for wealth

as a final objective to be a rejection of the finest things that life has to offer.

As I have stated above he soon gave his heart to his adopted country, South Africa. It is clear, in historical retrospect, that he considered that the exercise of his own economic activities must also redound to the economic development of his adopted country. He remarked on one occasion that what is good for South Africa is good for Anglo American.

He was indeed one of the pioneers of economic nationalism in South Africa. I have compared him to N. C. Havenga. While in politics he opposed the Nationalism of the former, in economic objectives the two stood close together.

As early as 1920, five years before Havenga as Minister of Finance in the Nationalist-Labour government introduced legislation providing for protection of industrial development, Ernest Oppenheimer told his shareholders that he desired "to reiterate my firm belief in a great industrial and agricultural future for this country, and, in consequence, I am satisfied that the right policy for this corporation to pursue is to investigate any attractive industrial proposition that presents itself and not merely to confine its activities to mining enterprises. The Anglo American Corporation should be, and is, ready and anxious to play its part in the industrial development of South Africa".

He must at an early stage have realized that mining enterprises left the natural endowment of the country millions of ounces of gold and tons of coal and carats of diamonds poorer every year, and that unless the wealth thus extracted was reinvested in income-producing assets on the surface, the final result could only be that of leaving the country a hollow shell.

He could possibly be regarded as the last of the Randlords, men who starting from small beginnings amassed immense wealth by developing the country's rich mineral resources. But unlike the Randlords who preceded him he was inward-looking, and not attracted by the glitter of London and by the desire to play a role in British society. He never possessed a great mansion in England and although for business reasons he had frequently to visit London, he returned to the horizons of his dreams as soon as possible.

Unlike many of his predecessors on the Rand, who ruled their domains by remote control from London, he considered that the great mining houses should be controlled and managed in South Africa, a policy which is now generally accepted. This decision had a significant effect in changing the climate of the relationship between the two White language groups in South Africa. In retrospect we can now see it as the beginning of the end of absentee Uitlander Randlordism.

By itself the change in the point of control would have mattered little if the policy had remained unchanged. But the whole course of the development of the policy of Anglo American under his guidance showed that the objective had changed. Whereas the Randlords, with a few exceptions, had looked upon South African mining as a ready means of gaining wealth which they could afterwards dispose of to their own satisfaction, Ernest Oppenheimer showed by his actions and his policy that he considered that the source of this wealth imposed an obligation on its beneficiaries—the obligation to develop the resources of the country. This issue of *Optima* supplies abundant evidence of that.

The Afrikaner has never been able to forgive the Randlords for the role they played in the events which led up to the Boer war. The action of the new type of mining magnate in so clearly associating himself with the country had the effect of gradually allaying the Afrikaner's suspicion of mining magnates and all their works.

It remained for his son Harry Oppenheimer to extend this policy into the delicate field of co-operation between the two White groups in our country.

The incursion of the Afrikaner into the realms of big business and industry dates from after the first world war. Starting from small beginnings it has now become a significant force. The Afrikaner has, however, remained the junior partner in industry and commerce.

Sir Ernest Oppenheimer must early on have been in agreement with the view of General Hertzog, now generally accepted, that the welfare of South Africa demands the close co-operation of the two language groups. He was sympathetic from the outset to the purposes of Federale Mynbou. He gave tangible evidence of this when he agreed to take a minority shareholding in Blinkpan Collieries.

He therefore personally initiated the co-operation which, under his son, has taken on wider dimensions.

The very success of Anglo American in extending itself into such a wide range of mining, industrial and financial activities has created the understandable fear that it might become an octopus seeking to enmesh smaller interests into the stranglehold of its tentacles.

The co-operation of Anglo American with Afrikaner interests in the creation of Mainstraat-Beleggings, Hollardstraat-ses-Beleggings, and in the reconstruction of the General Mining Group, in which the Afrikaner interests now have the majority shareholding, is still viewed in some Afrikaner circles with a measure of suspicion. In others, including leaders with a close knowledge of the problems involved in being "indus-



Mr. N. C. Havenga, Minister of Finance, and Sir Ernest touching gold bars for luck at President Brand gold mine in 1954. The occasion was the visit of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association delegates

trial Voortrekkers," the co-operation is accepted as an indication of real and sincere *toenadering* ("desire to get together").

It is inevitable, in the light of the troubled political history of South African mining that there is still a lurking suspicion that this might well be a leonine partnership. It is clearly in the interests of Anglo American to live down this suspicion, the roots of which go down to the period of the Randlords.

Many years ago a story, possibly apocryphal, was told that Sir Abe Bailey had claimed that the mantle of Rhodes had fallen on his shoulders. The witty Sammy Marks is stated to have remarked: "Abe, we have both been in the old clothes business, and we know that it does not pay".

It would perhaps be apposite to quip that the mantle of Rhodes was torn in two, and that the economic, as distinguished from the political part fell on the shoulders of Ernest Oppenheimer. Be that as it may. Ernest Oppenheimer, as I have tried to show, adopted his own independent line, in pursuance of "hearkening to his own privatest oracle". The future development of the policy of Anglo American will be closely watched by Afrikaners to ascertain whether such fragments of the political portion of the mantle of Rhodes as many still attach to it, be it only as a result of understandable suspicion, will be shown to have been finally pared off.

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