

# **THE "BANTUSTAN" FRAUD**

"The bluff of giving these people (the Africans) political development and in reality taking it away, is not only deluding the White people of South Africa that there is a solution, but is angering immeasurably the Africans both within the Union and outside."

Mr. W. P. Stanford, in the House of Assembly  
(Reported in "Contact", February 21, 1959).

For many years the Government of the Union of South Africa has been acting and behaving as if the changes which are going ahead so rapidly up North did not exist, or at any rate as if they did not affect this country at all. In fact the Government has been trying feverishly to put back the clock, to reverse here the currents which are flowing so strongly elsewhere, to destroy every vestige of democratic rights and freedom which might have existed in South Africa.

All of a sudden the leaders of the Nationalist Party seem to have realised that we are living in Africa, in 1959, and that they can no longer close their eyes to the tremendous spectacle of a whole continent undergoing a vast birth of freedom.

During their Dingaan's Day speeches at the end of 1958, Nationalist leaders seemed in a state of utter panic. They went about stirring up a "backs to the wall" spirit, warning their followers of terrible dangers, instilling the "Laager Mentality" to the best of their ability. Their theme-song was "White Civilisation is in Danger."

But by the time that they assembled in Parliament in January the Nationalists had thought over the sterility and hopelessness of any such approach, and changed their tune accordingly. Dr. Verwoerd announced himself to a startled world as the liberator of the African peoples in the Union. He and his party were going to lead Africans towards self-government and independence.

When it came to the actual details of what the Government was going to do, however, it was found that Dr. Verwoerd was merely presenting the old well-hated policy of apartheid in a new guise. The "Autonomous Bantu Areas" he is talking about are simply the old Reserves — overcrowded, eroded, starving, occupying just over ten per cent. of the Union (for eighty per cent. of the population).

And what does this "autonomy" amount to anyway? It simply means that the Chiefs are allowed to administer, under the supervision of the BAD, the laws of the Union of South Africa, passed by our All-White Parliament. The Chiefs are not elected by or responsible to their people. They are

responsible to the Bantu Administration Department. If they do not behave as the BAD wants them to then they get the sack, like any other Government employee.

Dr. Verwoerd is supposed to be an intelligent man. Surely he is capable of realising that no one in Africa or anywhere else in the world is going to be deceived by this stale, watered-down version of the Tomlinson Report, which was itself utterly condemned and rejected by every African leader of any consequence at the IDAMF-convened conference in Bloemfontein two years ago. It is an insult to the intelligence of the public to expect that any but the greatest simpletons and political infants will accept this wretched scheme as a contribution to African self-development. We do not know what to be the more amazed at — Dr. Verwoerd's audacity in presenting the scheme as being in line with developments in the rest of the Continent; the miserly contribution of £500,000 to the "Bantu Development Corporation" with which Verwoerd seems to imagine he can bribe the whole African nation; or the incredible depths to which certain jackal-like members of the United Party were prepared to sink in accusing the Nationalists of having become kafferboeties.

The Nationalist Party will have to do a great deal better than that if it seriously seeks to come to terms with the African people. Certain Nationalist professors have recently been throwing out feelers towards "negotiations" with African leaders. We welcome this glimmering of sanity, and no one could object to talks between people of different viewpoints if that will help them better to understand one another's views.

## THE STARTING POINT

At the same time, certain fundamental facts ought to be clearly understood by the Nationalists, whether of the Verwoerd wing or the allegedly "liberal" group of SABRA, by the United Party, and indeed by everyone else who is seriously concerned with the peaceful solution of the problems of our country.

Firstly, and most importantly, White South Africa must get it firmly and clearly fixed in its head that no plan or scheme whatsoever decided and dictated by the present exclusive electorate alone will ever be voluntarily accepted by the African people, or by any self-respecting and representative spokesmen of theirs. This basic and elementary concept, without which there can be no serious thought or discussion about "negotiations" or "peaceful solutions", seems to be the most difficult to get any sizeable group of White South Africans to understand and accept. The Nationalists, even while Dr. Verwoerd announces the awakening of the African giant, go on talking nonsense about "White baasskap"; the United Party seems to have got itself into a state of drivelling impotence where it is unable to do any serious thinking at all, but keeps mumbling "White leader-

ship" in its sleep; even the Liberal Party — though it has come a long way in the last few years — still argues in its sillier moments as to whether "we" should or should not "give" an unqualified franchise to the non-Whites.

Yet, this is not a very difficult proposition to explain and to grasp. No people on earth could agree to have their future decided for them by others; it runs counter to the principles of self-determination and natural justice. One-sided solutions cannot be negotiated, they can only be imposed by force, and maintained by force. Such solutions can never be "peaceful" or stable: they will be met by those upon whom they are imposed either by sullen submission, for the time being, to superior force, or if they get the chance, by active revolt. These are the simple truths which, if they would only open their eyes and use their intelligence, our rulers would see have faced every ruling Power in Asia and Africa over the past ten years; we can think of no reason why they should imagine they should not apply in this country as well.

Moreover, in stipulating that the White minority alone should be the sole deciding factor in determining the future of our country, the exponents of "White leadership" are overlooking the fact that this minority is vitally interested in preserving and even extending the privileges and vested interests which it has hitherto usurped. It is a well-known principle that you cannot make a man a judge in his own case. If you do so, you cannot expect a fair judgment, unless you presuppose in the judge superhuman qualities of generosity, nobility and self-denial. Such qualities can hardly be ascribed to the electorate of the Union of South Africa. We of LIBERATION are no racialists. We do not believe that any national group is inherently evil or inferior. We can understand the historical factors — complex, but not unique by any means — which have led this electorate to think and behave in the way it does. And we pay unstinting tribute to that minority of South Africans of European descent which has always existed and which has the courage to stand up, whether from humanitarian, Christian or Socialist principle, for right and justice for all, irrespective of colour.

## LOOK AT THE RECORD

All the same, when European spokesmen, be they salesmen of the B.A.D., SABRA Professors, or well-meaning liberals try to convince African leaders that they should place their trust in the verdict of the White electorate, in its justice, fairness and generosity, then we must look to the record of this electorate. Look at the Native Land Acts which have robbed the Africans of all but a fraction of their land. Look at the Group Areas laws and regulations, which seek to deprive Africans, Indians and Coloured people of the little they have managed to possess. Look at the innumerable colour bars, of laws and customs, culminating in the incredible "job reservation", designed to preserve for Whites only every educational or occupa-

tional opportunity above the level of "unskilled" drudgery. Look at the one and a half million pass arrests each year. Look at the disgracefully low wages paid by European employers to non-European workers, and at the vicious laws to prevent Africans organising or striking. All these things have been done by successive governments elected by this same electorate, each one worse than its predecessor, each more callously disrespectful of the rights, needs and interests of the non-White majority, more blatantly greedy, selfish and unscrupulous. The SABRA Professors may tell the Congress leaders that they, personally, have undergone a change of heart, and Mr. Justice Claasen may publicly apologise to the Basuto nation for the past wrongs he has done them. But who speaks for the White electorate: they — or Dr. Verwoerd and Sir de Villiers Graaff?

We raise these questions now, not because we doubt the bona fides of those who talk of negotiations, or because we reject the possibility of peaceful solutions in South Africa. On the contrary. We accept that the Professors are sincere, and think that are a good deal more far-sighted than most of their colleagues. And we would infinitely prefer to see the inevitable transition to a free South Africa come about by peaceful agreement, than through bloodshed, bitterness and hatred. But — and we cannot emphasise this too strongly — the first, most essential step towards a peaceful transition is an understanding and acceptance by the White minority that it cannot hope to decide the future of our country by itself, and that any attempt to do so must inevitably lead to a clash which must be disastrous and may be suicidal for itself.

Let us, by way of illustration, take the question of "apartheid," the whole concept of which is the subject of Dr. Simons' devastating and scholarly analysis beginning in this issue. Now, as he points out, if it means anything beyond a mere election catchword, apartheid must in the last analysis be a scheme or plan for the partition of the country into separate independent States, each inhabited by a national group. We are by no means in favour of any such plan, we should add, and doubt very much whether anyone outside SABRA really takes it seriously. But — and this is the point — no such plan could possibly succeed unless it was agreed to and endorsed by all sections of the South African population, or by their mandated and elected representatives meeting on a basis of full equality in a National Convention or Constituent Assembly. Otherwise — who is to draw the boundaries? Who is to say that the great industries and sea-ports and cities of this land, built up, let us remember, by the skill and the hard, tireless labour of all our people, should henceforth become the exclusive preserve of this or that national group?

Let us suppose that, on behalf of the present electorate, Dr. Verwoerd undertakes the task, and that with characteristic magnanimity he assigns to "the Bantu" the various barren, eroded Reserves scattered about the country as their "national homes." In the "White State", the Africans from these areas will be treated as foreigners. But each "Bantu State"

will be like a little Ghana, enjoying full independence, including its own Government, army and air force. Now, how secure do you think Dr. Verwoerd will feel, sitting with his followers in the nine-tenths of the country they have allocated to themselves, while across the boundaries, in the outer darkness to which, without their consent, they have been consigned, millions of Africans look across to see the wealth they have created and the green pastures of their forefathers? The whole idea merely needs to be expounded to appear as what it is: a grotesque, fantastic nightmare, the product of a sick brain.

## **TIME TO AWAKE**

We do not think Dr. Verwoerd himself believes this nonsense. He cannot, either, seriously believe that this "Bantustan" fraud will deceive public opinion north of the Limpopo or anywhere else abroad. Nor, unless he is madder than we think, and mistakes the plaudits of his paid clique in the Bantu Administration Department for genuine expressions of African opinion, can he imagine that any non-Whites take his talk of independence seriously. Why, then, does he bother with this talk at all? Whom does he hope to impress?

The answer was given, in a phrase of fine penetration, by Mr. Stanford, the Liberal Party M.P., in Parliament. "The bluff is . . . deluding the White people of South Africa." And there is the true wickedness, the real treachery of men like Verwoerd and Graaff. The whole future of the White minority, for whom they claim to speak, depends on its facing the truth; on its abandoning the absurd illusion (which manifestly flies in the face of every present reality) that it can continue alone to dominate and dictate the future of this country. Instead of summoning the courage and the responsibility to express this truth, these men are wilfully and recklessly encouraging their people in their suicidal delusions.

What they are failing, so lamentably, to do must be undertaken by others. Let the SABRA Professors, if they are in earnest, go out among the Afrikaans-speaking people and jolt them into reality. Let the progressive newspaper editors, the public-spirited Churchmen, the courageous women of the Black Sash, the leaders of the Congress of Democrats, the Liberal Party and the Labour Party sink their differences and go out on a powerful and united crusade for democracy, freedom and a halt to apartheid. Let the African National Congress and the Congress of Trade Unions and their partners in struggle launch out in a great new campaign of massive political action, a campaign that will make it clear beyond doubt that the people are determined upon change.

Thus, and only thus, can the democratic forces of our country hold open the road to a peaceful transition to freedom, and wrest the initiative from those who are steering straight towards disaster.