



The New African

Verwoerd's Fatal Mistake?

ALTHOUGH IT IS NOW clear that the constitution imposed on the Transkei bears no resemblance to independence or self-government, as these terms have come to be understood, it is still important to consider the full implication of the new status which has been forced on the territory—as Transkeian leaders are doing now.

Political leaders in the Transkei, who can make or break Transkeian independence, are in two groups. The arguments each uses echo many of the lines of reasoning followed by the extra-parliamentary opposition in South Africa, and are difficult to reconcile. One group says:

“Dr. Verwoerd will not give freedom because the Afrikaners will never accord equality between black and white: they have to dominate. He will not risk a successfully non-racial Transkei, nor a bridgehead, or even coast-line, for an offensive of any kind on the Republic. He is in fact offering Bantu Authorities under another name, and this is totally unacceptable. Even if the new Transkeian government were to get the better of him and establish a fully independent, non-racial, democratic state, backed by foreign capital, this would be an acceptance of a form of separation, and we are pledged to fight for full freedom for a united South Africa.”

The other replies: “The Afrikaners prefer isolation to domination of the Africans. Once again they have sought isolation, by trying to push the Xhosa-speaking people back over the Kei River. But they have left a fifth column behind in the Republic, which is many times their own size. They are gambling that they can keep control of a self-governing or even an independent Transkei through puppet chiefs tied to their purse strings. They have been forced to take this gamble because the African people and their allies at home and abroad have forced them to seek isolation again, by giving the Transkei self-government. We should therefore seize this chance of using Verwoerd's great mistake against him, to gain full independence and to use a free Transkei as a weapon against White supremacy in the Republic. If all else fails, by demanding full independence we will at least call Verwoerd's bluff should he block it.”

The underlying difference in premise is that one side believes that Verwoerd wants to keep the Transkei while pretending to free it, the other that he wants to free it but not so that it will endanger him.

Both sides should realize that Dr. Verwoerd probably reckons with either possibility. The important fact is that he has been forced by local and world-wide opposition to act with a hastiness

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that he would not have envisaged before Sharpeville removed his last hopes of retaining the status quo and calling it apartheid.

There is also an underlying difference in principle. One side believes it is right and courageous to seize Transkeian independence as a weapon against apartheid as a whole. The other considers that to touch anything Dr. Verwoerd offers defiles, and will paralyse those who would otherwise be fighting against apartheid.

This must not be seen just as the old argument between infiltration and subverting on the one hand, and non-collaboration on the other. Transkeian independence could be forged into a weapon against White supremacy without compromise on the part of those who used it. It would be a weapon heartily approved by the outside world to whom the argument between subversion and non-collaboration is largely academic.

Transkeian independence could indeed be Verwoerd's

fatal mistake, caused by his contempt for the intelligence of African people. It would be a pity were the Transkeian situation not tested to the full. So few ways are now open to the believer in non-violence who wishes to end oppression in South Africa. ●

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on Transkeian Independence

PATRICK DUNCAN
on Non-violence

COLIN LEGUM
on the Lagos Conference of African states
and other articles, reviews and features

The Roots of Pan-Africanism

COLIN LEGUM

The following article is an abbreviated version from Africa—A Complete Handbook on the Continent. Published by Anthony Blond, London. 4 gns. (R8.40).

PAN-AFRICANISM DOES not lend itself to simple or precise definition; it is a pantechnicon for the convenient assembly of related ideas. They jostle, sometimes even contradict, each other; but they constitute a movement of ideas no less coherent than, say, Capitalism, Socialism, World Federalism, or Zionism. If Capitalism is a belief in private enterprise; if Socialism is a belief in a planned economy to achieve social equality; if World Federalism is a belief in a form of world government limiting the sovereignty of nations; if Zionism is a belief in a Jewish National State in Palestine—then Pan-Africanism can be similarly simplified into a belief in the *uniqueness* and spiritual unity of black people; an acknowledgment of their right to self-determination in Africa, and to be treated with dignity as equals in all parts of the world.

Pan-Africanism was born at the turn of the century as a protest against the "otherliness" of black men: the universal inferiority of his status. In 1900 it proclaimed that 'the problem of the twentieth century is the colour line(1)—the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea'. For eighteen years longer than Moses' sojourn in the wilderness, its apostles developed their ideas in exile; then in 1958 Pan-Africanism was planted on the soil of Africa, where we can now see the beginnings of its struggles to find effective fulfilment.

Ten years or so after the holding of the first Zionist Conference, Dr. William E. Burghardt DuBois—the most important Pan-Africanist until the Second World War—wrote: '... The African movement means to us what the Zionist movement must mean to the Jews, the

centralization of race effort and the recognition of a racial fount. To help bear the burden of Africa does not mean any lessening of effort in our own problem at home. Rather it means increased interest'(2).

The nascent ideas of Pan-Africanism bubbled up simultaneously in the West Indies and in the United States; there was considerable cross-fertilization of ideas and competition of movement. Africans from South Africa and West Africa studying in the United States carried these ideas back home with them.

DuBois' insistence on the need to relate Negro activity in the United States to support for African liberation met with the accusation of 'dangerous diversification of energies which were needed in the fight for emancipation and civil rights at home'(3).

Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican, and his precursor, Dr. Albert Thorne, disagreed. Garvey's 'Back-to-Africa' movement (1897 to 1925) sought to lead all blacks back to 'where they belonged'; a sentiment he shared with the Ku Klux Klan with whom he did not scruple to co-operate (4).

After the First World War the two great Negro rivals of Pan-Africanism feuded bitterly—DuBois rejecting the displacement of American Negroes and championing self-determination for Africans; Garvey rabble-rousing his way to leadership of an enormous mass-following by his appeal to 'return to Africa'. Nevertheless, the rivals were united on two points. They linked the regeneration of the fortunes of the Negroes in the diaspora to the redemption of Africa as an *independent and united* continent. (Garvey proclaimed himself as the Provisional President of a 'Racial Empire'(5) of Africa; he died in 1940 in London without ever setting foot on the soil of Black Zion).

The reactions of DuBois and Garvey to their colour crystallize two themes in Pan-Africanism. Both are completely absorbed by this colour; but DuBois' attitude is defensively racist; Garvey's confidently, aggressively assertive.

Many of the ideas of Pan-Africanism flowed from

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