

## To the Right of "Neo-Colonialism"

OPPONENTS OF THE government's policy for the Transkei tend to divide into two camps. Both are "integrationist" and object to South Africa being carved up into separate racial states. They differ on most other aspects.

Conservatives argue that the proposals will give too much power to people who are unprepared for it, and will result in the formation of hostile, anti-White states on the Republic's borders. The United Party has taken over the Nationalists' "Black Peril" electioneering cry and predicts that the Transkei will turn to communism, oppress and expel the Whites in the territory, and become a military menace to the rest of the country.

Radicals and liberals hold an opposite opinion. They say that there is "nothing new" in the scheme. It is a trick to divert attention from the African's claim to take part in the government of the whole country. The reality behind the humbug is that the Whites will continue to control the Transkei and that nothing will be done to solve its problems.

Nationalists put forward two versions. When speaking from election platforms, they play it down, and put stress on the government's intention to retain control of defence, justice and external affairs. Statements made to people abroad, on the other hand, present the policy as a major constitutional change, which will institute genuine self-government in the reserves and offer them "autonomy" if not independence in time to come.

There would have been less room for disagreement about the government's intentions if it had been more candid and precise in stating its constitutional proposals. The most that an observer should do at this stage is to analyse the stated reasons and terms of the draft, examine its background, and draw conclusions from known trends.

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It is probable that the government has not tried to look far ahead, but is mainly concerned with finding a way out of its immediate difficulties. When he outlined his proposals, the Prime Minister was emphatic in his claim that they made a substantial concession to world opinion and the external critics of apartheid. If there is any justice left, he said, his policy will counteract the hostile propaganda and rob international agitation against South Africa of its force.

He explained that a process of decolonisation had set in after the war. Afro-Asian and Communist states were pressing for an extension of political rights to everyone. It was now considered morally correct to give indepen-

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dence to national groups. This might not be a sound policy for areas that formed part of the dominant country, but the general movement was in keeping with world tendencies and morality.

Dr. Verwoerd's academic survey did not convey the mood of anxiety and despondency that exists in government circles. The United Nations' decision to intervene in South West Africa before the year ends is expected to result in renewed attempts to apply sanctions against the Republic. The possibility of military action being taken is not ruled out. Underground organizations in South Africa are believed to be plotting with African states, as at the recent conference in Addis Ababa, to strike simultaneously from outside and within.

The government must be aware that something more than a gesture or paper reforms will be needed to silence the international outcry. An extension of the franchise is out of the question, says the Prime Minister; therefore the only alternative is to adopt the decolonising formula of self-government, if not independence.

Like all colonial powers in a similar situation, Dr. Verwoerd's party wants to make certain that if they must hand over authority they will transfer it to men who can be trusted to respect established interests and suppress radical movements. "Neo-colonialism" describes the relationship that the government wishes to form with the "Bantu separate areas"; though the term would be more appropriate at a higher stage of autonomy than the one proposed for the Transkei. The problem is always to find reliable and responsible people who will safeguard the interests of the dominant power. The British and French relied on members of the educated, professional and merchant class; the South African Government pins its faith on the traditional tribal leaders.

The question to ask is whether they will be willing and able to stem the tide of African nationalism or turn it into channels from which it will not break out to beat against the bulwarks of White supremacy. An assessment of the Transkei's draft constitution ought therefore to start with an examination of the role of the chiefs and their relation to African political movements. The reaction of the Transkeians themselves may prove to be the decisive factor.

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The territory is being administered under great strain and with the use of excessive coercive powers. Emergency regulations have operated for more than a year; opponents of the regime have been banished from their homes and sent into exile. Long-sustained demands of Transkeians for effective self-rule must be satisfied before there can be tranquillity. That, too, is an aim of the new constitution.

In the days of the General Council or Bhunga, chiefs, headmen and commoners persistently pressed for an

extension of the franchise to Africans and the right to elect their own people to parliament. The Bhunga also wanted greater power for itself. Councillors did not ask for separation. In 1949 they rejected a motion urging that the Transkei be declared a fifth province of the Union. They wanted self-government and the abandonment of apartheid.

After ten years of steady pressure, the Bhunga's constitution was revised in 1953. The change provided for the gradual replacement of magistrates by Africans as chairmen of the district councils and, when all the 26 districts had African chairmen, the possible appointment of an African as chairman of the general council. Africans would also gradually take the place of magistrates on the executive council.

These arrangements fell short of what the progressive element had hoped for, and they urged that the substitution should be speeded up. Further developments of the council system were cut short by the change over to Bantu Authorities, which the Bhunga had rejected in 1953. Two years later it "committed suicide", as the chief magistrate described the decision to accept the principle of the Bantu Authorities Act.

The administration carried out a vigorous campaign in support of the Act. Magistrates, who a few years earlier had praised the council system in extravagant terms, now denounced it as an alien institution, built up on a European parliamentary model, and managed to a very great extent by White officials. Councillors believed that they would rid themselves of "government by proclamation" if they made the change, and obtain exclusive control of their affairs. More jobs would be opened up to Africans, more revenue would come to the council.

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The argument that carried most weight was addressed to the chiefs and headmen who, though elected for the most part, made up the majority of the council. Bantu Authorities, they were told, would restore their former power and glory, bring back the tribal system of government which centred round the Great Kraal, and

## THE NEW AFRICAN in the April issue

TODD MATSHIKIZA  
reviews Myrna Blumberg's *White Madam*

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*Contrast* by C. J. DRIVER

A new tradition in African art and  
architecture by JULIAN BEINART

subscription form on page 15

make a reality of self-rule—after White officials had carefully nurtured the new order and guided it through childhood.

Self-rule was a lure that enticed even progressive commoners into accepting chiefly rule. For, if the government would not give real power to a popular assembly, there was no other way of escape from "government by proclamation". So the Bhunga took the plunge, accepted Bantu Authorities, and proceeded to ask for the immediate transfer of offices to Africans, including the post of chairman of the council. "You want to sack me?", asked the chief magistrate; and Chief Kaizer Matanzima replied: "Yes, Sir!"

Now Chief Matanzima is the Presiding Chief of the Transkeian Territorial Authority and is tipped off as the future Prime Minister of the Transkeian Territories. He presides over a council which 57 chiefs, 43 headmen and 17 other members attended in 1960. They are either *ex-officio* members, by reason of being appointed chiefs or headmen, or are appointed by native commissioners or by the head of a district authority or by the head of a regional authority. A member may have been elected originally by taxpayers to a tribal authority at the bottom of the pyramid, but his progress through the tiers of district and regional authority to territorial authority will depend on the goodwill of chiefs, headmen and native commissioners.

"Some chiefs are good, others are probably not so good, and others probably even bad. They may be uneducated. They may be addicted to drink." Mr. Young, the secretary of the Bantu Administration Department, said this in April 1955. Seven months later he told the chiefs that: "It is common knowledge that the majority of the people are backward and uneducated. Under the Bantu authorities which you constitute you will be able to lead the people in a true sense. You will be able to tell them, not ask them what to do. That is an important point."

Mr. Young's address to the Transkeian Territorial Authority in 1960 explains why the government appoints the blind to lead the blind. "There are people", he said, "who say we should consult the leaders of the Bantu people. They say we should consult, for example, Sobukwe, or Tambo, or Kgosana. But who are they? They are so-called leaders of illegal and banned organisations. They are not the traditional leaders of the people."

Leaders they are, however, even if they do not inherit their position. Some, like Chief Luthuli, are also traditional leaders. It is their opposition to separatism and racial discrimination, not their lack of hereditary status, that disqualifies them for office in the government's scheme. A chief who opposes official policies runs the risk of being deposed. Bantu Authorities eliminates opponents by obviating elections and delegating responsibility to chiefs who are appointed by the government and hold office at its pleasure.

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Fairly detailed and probably accurate accounts of the new constitution proposed for the Transkei have appeared in the press. The draft provides for a legislative assembly of 131 members, consisting of 68 chiefs, 27 nominees of the paramount chiefs, 27 representatives

elected by Transkeian taxpayers, and 9 elected by Transkeians living in towns outside the Transkei. There is to be an executive council of 16 members appointed by a prime minister. The assembly will legislate on all matters except those specified as falling within the competency of the South African Government. These reserved functions include defence, internal security, external affairs, communications and transport, immigration, currency, public loans, customs and excise. Laws passed by the Transkeian Government will be submitted to the President of the Republic for his assent.

It is a hybrid kind of constitution and does not fit into any of the recognised categories. It provides more powers than those usually given to local government bodies, falls far short of responsible or even semi-responsible government, and cannot be described as representative government as long as the position of the prime minister and the chiefs remains obscure. If the chiefs continue to hold office at the will of the South African Government, they cannot be truly representative of the people. If the prime minister is appointed by the State President on the advice of the South African Government, he and his executive will be responsible to it and not to the legislative assembly.

One is tempted to describe the constitution as a continuation of Bantu Authorities under another name. There is certainly little in the proposals that goes further than the original conception of Bantu Authorities as providing for a wide measure of local autonomy. The chiefs will remain the dominant section of the assembly, though the inclusion of directly elected members must make it rather more radical than the existing Territorial Authority.

Experience in Africa does not bear out the government's contention that chiefs are the most suitable instruments of social change. When required by a colonial administration to carry out policies that clash with traditional usage, they either resist the policy and fall foul of the administration, or arouse the resentment of their peoples. Their usual practice is to vacillate between the two pressures, play one side off against the other, and degenerate into futile, fumbling officials. If they identify themselves closely with the alien rulers, they bring their office into disrepute. It is likely that the unrest experienced in the Transkei since the introduction of Bantu Authorities arose out of opposition to soil conservation, Bantu Education, and other unpopular measures; but opposition to policies inevitably turns into a rejection of the chiefs who execute them.

The success of the new constitution will turn on the ability of the chiefs to retain the loyalty of the people. To do this the chiefs will have to come to terms with the leaders of African nationalism, who cannot be expected to welcome a constitution that is designed to keep them out of office. Alternatively, the cleavage between nationalist leaders and traditional leaders will widen. The probability is that the progressive chiefs will link up with a popular movement led by radicals and based on a demand for fully representative government, the repeal of discriminatory laws, and African participation in the central government of the Republic.

# A Policeman with a Bunch of Keys

PETER MOTSOANE

*The story of high rents  
in a Pretoria location*

TO UNDERSTAND THE STORY of high rents here, it is better to know the big location called Atteridgeville itself. It was established in 1940 as a reserve for African occupation by the apartheid policy of the United Party government of the time. At that time the biggest African "black spot" in the Pretoria area was Marabastad. When it was demolished, residents who did not want to go to Atteridgeville, either went to freehold Lady Selborne or to Riverside and Eersterus where they were allowed to own property. Those who had no property went to Atteridgeville, which was then the pride of the ruling powers.

The rents charged on the houses then were very very low and the houses themselves are very strong, having been built with flat-lying bricks. Electric current was provided and water was not charged for them. The monthly rents in those days were between R1.80 for a two-roomed house and R4.60 for a five-roomed. People living in these houses used to be admired and were called "bo-my-house", a slangy way of saying "housewives".

But new, high rents came into force in 1954. The rents have gone up by over 250% on the average. They now range between R6.60 for two rooms to R10.77 for five.

In addition to these rents water has to be paid for at the rate of 25c per 1,000 gallons. Where the occupants do washing for whites and have gardens and a bathroom, they sometimes get accounts reaching up to R3.25. Electricity charges are up to R1.25 if the occupants have an electric iron, radiogram, electric kettle and perhaps a heater.

Today these houses in the "old location" (*mzi mdala*) are dreaded.

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In 1955, the Group Areas Board decided to enforce its removal of African locations from the city, and the remaining residents of Marabastad were the first to fall under attack. Their belongings were truck-loaded to Atteridgeville and, for those who so desired, to Vlakfontein municipal location, which had just been founded. For the services of the municipal trucks the residents had to pay an extra pound with their first rent.

These people were dumped into incomplete houses, the council having erected only the four walls of the

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