

culture and "received" speech will become less thorough, less convinced. It is not unknown in Africa for men and women through altered circumstances to lose the power of expression in a language they once used for all their thinking. The point of greatest coolness seems to be in the twenty to fifty years after independence has been won—as it was in the United States at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

English is going to become, as in India, though with still flimsier resources, the third language in East Africa. If this prospect can be perceived clearly, and acknowledged generally, much soul-searching and needless theorising may be saved. In the villages for many years to come, it may be the vernacular for daily matters; in the shop, the co-operative shed, the law court, dispensary and railway station it will be Swahili; Swahili ever creeping upwards as it finds new terms and grammatical structures. Finally English, which has been introduced and taught vigorously in the secondary school, may be accepted for what it rightly must continue to be, the technical and international language. It will be needed in communicating with West African countries as much as with America and India. One grows afraid that if English is not thought of in an unpretentious way as the useful solvent, it may be rejected. We are covering the future with mist if we English-speakers for our own sakes long for English in these parts of Africa.

It seems as if the want of a common African language in the Rhodesias may make English more acceptable there; but much must depend on whether the mood of co-operation can be kept between black and white. If the African grows exasperated he may seek Swahili, even in Rhodesia—and this might not be an unhappy solution. He may even return to the vernacular, which would be the end of his political development.

Only in South Africa, up till now, has the vernacular been officially offered as the peaceable way. Before the Nationalist Government came to power well-intentioned scientists and educators, even from outside the continent, were encouraging Africans to return to their tribal languages. Afrikaner nationalists saw in this an opportunity to weaken the hold of the English missionary and of the overseas press. The policy has the great attraction to many Africans of conserving tribal ways; but this is done at the expense of the kind of broader loyalty which Swahili may hope to encourage further north. It is true that any one of the four main African languages of South Africa has been longer in writing and used for a greater variety of purposes than most East African vernaculars. But who will dare to promote any one of them as the lingua franca? It is unlikely that either the African himself or the Afrikaner has a strong wish to see Afrikaans universally used. Is English, possessing in South Africa the same advantages as a third, and international, language as it possesses elsewhere, welcome enough to the African peoples to serve them as a second language as well? This will be worked out by those who live in South Africa during the coming decades. Africans will certainly turn more and more to the north while they are searching for their solution. ●

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## Bechuanaland and South Africa

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E. R. WATTS

RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE Bechuanaland Protectorate has recently been assumed by the British Colonial Office and in the future the territory is to be developed as a self-contained political and economic unit. It is therefore timely to consider how this decision will affect relations between Bechuanaland and South Africa. Bechuanaland has, since its establishment as a British Protectorate in 1895, been closely linked with South Africa. Indeed until quite recently the territory has been subjected to threats of incorporation and only since the departure of South Africa from the Commonwealth has this ceased to be a real possibility. The capital, Mafeking, is still inside the Republic but the administration is being moved in stages to Gaborone. Another important link is the Mafeking to Bulawayo railway which was built around the boundaries of the Transvaal shortly before the Boer War. This railway is still the only direct rail connection between South Africa and the north and it is of great economic importance to both the Republic and the Federation.

Unlike the other High Commission Territories of Swaziland and Basutoland, Bechuanaland has strong links with other countries. To the north it is bordered by the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Federal currency is accepted in the territory and there are important trading links particularly with the Francistown and Chobe areas. To the west Bechuanaland is bordered by South West Africa and the Ghanzi District obtains all its supplies through Windhoek and Gobabis. Assuming that South West Africa is freed before the inevitable collapse of the Republic then an association between the two territories is likely. Such an association would make Bechuanaland into a viable economic unit which she is certainly not at present. She would then have direct access to the sea and would no longer be dependent on South African goodwill. The South West African Peoples Party are known to be in favour of such a link.

Basutoland is bound by its geographical position to stay within the orbit of the Republic while Swaziland is sandwiched between the Republic and Portuguese East Africa and is bound to stay on good terms with both. Of the three territories Bechuanaland has the greatest chance of pursuing a relatively independent future. Economic independence cannot be achieved until the Customs Agreement of 1910 has been revoked. By this agreement Bechuanaland has been annually receiving .027622 per cent of the customs collected by the South African Government. Since the Nationalist Government has been pursuing a policy of drastically

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reducing imports this income has not been increasing as it should have done. Furthermore Bechuanaland has, in effect, been compelled to buy inferior South African made goods often at well above world prices. If the agreement was revoked customs could be charged on South African made goods which make up at least 80% of total imports. The tourist trade, at present small, would also be encouraged if Bechuanaland had freer import restrictions than neighbouring South Africa.

UNLIKE Basutoland Bechuanaland has a substantial settler population occupying an area of about 4,500 sq. miles. Part of this area consists of a 10-mile wide strip along the border with the Transvaal. Many of the farmers in this strip also have farms in the Republic and their sympathies with the Nationalist Government are evident from the fact that they elected a Nationalist, Mr. Van Gass, to the Legislative Council. Mr. Van Gass, has been in the forefront of agitation to have the strip transferred to the Republic. An outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease in the neighbouring African Reserve increased local feeling recently and a petition to transfer the strip was sent to the Resident Commissioner. Now that Bechuanaland's future course is becoming clearer there is likely to be an exodus of the diehard Nationalists and already some are trying to find buyers. Some farms have been bought by liberal White South Africans who have despaired of the way their country is going. If land prices fall sufficiently in

the future there should be a demand for farms from non-white South Africans with capital to invest.

The Transvaal border has become the main escape route for political refugees and this is already straining relations between the two countries. Although after Sharpeville most of the refugees fled to Basutoland and Swaziland, Bechuanaland is now the accepted rendezvous. There has developed a small but steady flow of students, politicians and others passing "underground" through the Federation after a brief respite in Bechuanaland. The long border and numerous illegal roads makes it impossible for the South African Government to stop this movement.

Bechuanaland, with an area more than three-fifths of the Republic of South Africa in size, has a population about the same as the single city of Pretoria. Despite this about 25% of the adult male population annually leave the territory to work in South Africa. At Francistown there is a transit camp to which about 100,000 miners a year are flown from various parts of Bechuanaland, Rhodesia and Nyasaland. From Francistown they proceed by train to South Africa and are joined en route by local Bechuana recruits. The enormous expense of annually transporting these men up to 4,000 miles is apparently less than the payment of an economic wage within South Africa where, incidentally, there is widespread unemployment.

By continuing to allow and even encourage the system of migratory labour the Bechuanaland Administration is conniving at the exploitation of South African labour. While the system continues there will be no incentive to find a solution to Bechuanaland's own problem of underemployment. Coupled with the missionary inspired abolition of old customs the migratory system has completely undermined the social life of the Bechuana tribes. Men are free to run away from their responsibilities to wives, girl friends and grandparents. Illegitimacy is now becoming accepted as normal and there are increasing numbers of second generation illegitimate children. The returning migrants are responsible for the fact that a high proportion of women are infected with venereal disease and for the spread of tuberculosis.

The Johannesburg correspondent of *The Times*, London, reported early in 1962 that Bechuanaland would be developed towards complete independence, "probably within five years." A considerable increase in the present speed of development will be needed if this target is to be achieved. At present virtually all senior government posts are held by whites and there are pitifully few African graduates coming forward. In fact in recent years only a handful of Bechuana children have passed their matriculation and there is no provision within the territory for obtaining university entrance. The newly introduced Constitution provides little scope for the development of parties on a non-racial and non-tribal basis and would need very thorough revision before independence could be contemplated. Thus although independence from South Africa is a foreseeable possibility independence from Britain is a long way off. To achieve the latter within five years will mean a drastic change in the pace of development coupled with a substantial increase in the annual grant-in-aid to the territory. ●

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