
Down at Bush

I THE STUDENTS

An inside view by a student
of the Cape's "Coloured"
University College

IN TERMS OF THE Extension of University Education Act, 1959 (Act No. 45 of 1959), a university college for the so-called Coloured people was established in 1960. In the lingo of the powers-that-be, its specific purpose is to provide university training for Coloured students and to enable them to share in the advantages of a full academic life.

The University College of the Western Cape, better known as "The Bush College", was for the first two and a half years of its existence housed temporarily in an old school building in Fourie Street in Bellville South, about 15 miles from the centre of Cape Town. In the course of 1962 it became possible to move into the attractive and efficiently planned new buildings for Science and Arts. These buildings form the nucleus of the whole building complex on the college campus, which is situated between Bellville and D. F. Malan Airport. Last year the administrative buildings and the cafeteria were completed. The following buildings are in the course of construction: the Library (a fashionably designed three-storey building with spacious foyers, which is the quintessence of the masterly architecture characterising the entire building complex on the campus); the building for Education, Psychology and Social Science; a Gymnasium for Physical Education; a hostel and hall which will serve *inter alia* as a cultural centre. There is talk that a swimming bath and a sports pavilion will be included in the project.

The "conspirators" of this building project usually stare at it with admiration and comment with glee that when the facilities provided by these buildings are available, the college is bound to become the centre of cultural and sporting activities for the "Coloured" community of the Western Cape. In reply to this, one progressively neurotic "bushnik" was heard to say that, despite the finery of the architecture and the beautifully laid-out flower beds with palatial fish ponds, the atmosphere of the whole project was a bitterly sad insult to the concept of education. The atmosphere on the campus falls far short of providing an incentive to any academic work.

The set-up is something in the nature of an old-age

home, if not a hospital, where the victims, rather the products, of apartheid should be sent to recuperate.

SUCH THINKING PROVED to be horrifying and ungrateful to some "yes-boy" from a quisling middle-class family (by the way, the Bush College teems with juvenile quislings) who happened to overhear the progressive "bushnik's" commentary. The young quisling stood there fuming and fretting and awe-inspired by such lack of appreciation on the part of "die ander bruinmense" for what "die witmense" are doing for the Coloured. What an anachronism in the 20th century! Are there still people who drill their children to accept the lot of being underdogs in their own fatherland? Has any man any right to mislead the youngsters into believing that any gesture by the White man, which gesture tells the same abominable tale of domination of the Non-Whites by the Whites, is an expression of the White man's humanity?

While the two students were still involved in their different thoughts, the serenity of the surroundings was punctuated by the screeching tyres of a police van. The emergence of Constable Visagie with his impeccable bluish-grey suit and revolting holster set off different emotions in the two students. To the progressive student the presence of a police van on the campus was viewed with indifference, if not with disgust. You see, in any country where the government is out to rudely disturb the privacy of the individual, it becomes necessary to step up the police force; not to protect the individual but to harass and molest him at the slightest pretext. In our country this is the exclusive lot of the Non-White—to be molested and harassed by full-grown and well-fed constables.

The presence of the police van on the campus left the quisling student dumbfounded and spellbound, if not scared. "What have the ungrateful Coloured students done that the 'oubaas' should send his dogs on the campus?" thought the quisling student. By the way, the two students are freshers, but the difference between them is that the one knows that South Africa is a police state, and the other has been conditioned by his immediate surroundings—his home and fellows—not to accept this fact. Thus the stay of the one student at Bush College makes him the more resentful of the abominable laws of a police state. While the stay of the other in this seemingly indifferent-from-progressive-ideas institution makes him clay to be shaped in any form by the conspirators of his fatherland. Hence he later becomes a half-baked helmsman to the "slegs-vir-Kleurlinge" dinghy. His short-sightedness and blindness make him an enthusiastic captain of a boat that is moving at breakneck speed towards an iceberg.

IT MUST BE NOTED that the progressive students are in the minority, and the great majority fall in the "yes-boy" category. In this group we find the students who accept things as they are and are not prepared to do anything by way of seeking a change. This type of fellow is usually heard to say, "What can we do?" Perhaps the reason for this negative attitude is to be found in the ruthlessness with which the government deals with those who dare utter unfavourable words against it.

There is yet another group in the "yes-boy" category

which is not satisfied with tacit collaboration. This group is prepared to see to it that any progressive element on the campus must be stifled. These are the government spies. Some of these spies are so enthusiastic that even the world beyond the precincts of the campus knows them. However, others are quite inactive from fear of exposure. Indeed, about 20 per cent of the students "down at Bush" are spies.

The progressive students are all opposed to the idea of apartheid with all its monstrous accompaniments. Among the progressive students we find those who are obviously oriented by some outside political group. The influence of one particular political group which has since died a natural death is evident in these students. This political group was doggedly sold to the policy of non-collaboration, which bordered on indoctrination, irrespective of the facts pertaining to the matter on hand.

Their stand is perhaps justifiable in that in this country we are faced with a government committed to principle; and like all fascist rulers, our rulers are not prepared to compromise, because compromise on any issue would either mean creating an undesirable precedent or abandonment of their cherished principles.

At this point we can mention, by way of dispelling certain misgivings as regards the degrees and diplomas obtained down at Bush, the fact that this college is a constituent college of the University of South Africa. This means that it only prepares the student to sit for the University of South Africa examinations; and therefore its degrees are, as a matter of fact, the degrees of the University of South Africa.

Part II will deal with staff and student organizations.

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The Suspects

A Story

JACOB MOKGOLO

SEVEN O'CLOCK. The last truck wound its way round the corner of the main street. A hotch-potch of pale pink faces stacked the lorry, presenting an unusual sight on the traffic line. Behind this trailed the story of that morning's early hours, of which story a few residents of the township were lucky not to have been forced into the scene. Snatches of the night's happenings were evidenced in the rifles poised at chest level by the young men in the lorry, in the tunics, in the front-tilt police caps that struggled in vain to muffle the pinkish uniformity of facial line.

The village had been stirring in the night, and you receive a sudden shock at this realisation. That is the time you begin to wonder that someone could have spent a nightmareless night while the heart of the village had throbbed with the tread of angry feet, had trembled with the ravaged beat of frightened bosoms.

And all this stir because the village women had dared to question a law they deemed unjust; because they had organised a protest meeting against passes for women in the Community Hall two days back; because they had refused to disperse when Special Branch Chief Pieterse ordered them to call off the meeting instead of meeting their wishes; because a hot encounter had ensued between the people and the law, the law being forced to run away.

The Chief had given a lengthy, heated report at headquarters. Agitators; communist influences, it was solemnly declared. The report had elicited this response. A raid in the small hours of the Sunday morning while they lingered over thoughts of a day's rest, while ruminating over the last whiffs of week-end alcoholic taint on the breath. Twelve patrol vans, four trooper lorries were called forth and threw a strong cordon around Lady Selborne. Then the raid began.

IT MIGHT BE EXPECTED to raise a sudden, wild alarm, but the African township, accustomed to more embarrassing situations at odd hours, is not easily taken by surprise.

The African boy dashed through a paneless window, sneaked through a backdoor, cunning and intrigue were

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