

Separate Development: The Receiving End

"What are they hiding
behind their backs?"

S. L. SIDZUMO

THIS NATIONALIST PHILOSOPHY of "separateness", alias apartheid, is clearly one of the strongest corner-stones of Nationalist rule in South Africa since the National Party came into power in 1948. It is also one of the strongest beliefs of the Nationalists that White supremacist interests in the land can never be safeguarded until and unless the various non-White groups in the country are compartmentalised in their own different camps or "homelands". Indian, Coloured and African groups must not live together. Each group has to have its own camp or "homeland" if the interests of the White minority in the land are to be securely safeguarded.

Because they had maintained their interests in life were not only inseparable but also interdependent, Africans, Coloureds and Indians in South Africa had to witness the steamrolling of a piece of legislation through the parliamentary machinery which was destined not only to disrupt family life, but also place misery and humiliation on the doorsteps of many a non-White in the land—the Group Areas Act of 1952. This Act symbolised in no uncertain manner the determination of the Nationalists to uproot African families from their hard-earned homes in the cities and have them resettled in areas specifically earmarked for their habitation—some 14 to 25 miles away from a city like Johannesburg.

The people of Sophiatown were moved to the Government-controlled townships of Meadowlands and Diepkloof where, unlike in Sophiatown, New Clare, Western Township and Alexandra, they were to witness ethnic grouping of families at its optimum. Unless the Tswana-Sotho, Shangaan-Pedi, and Zulu-Xhosa were herded into their respective camps so as to make remote the prospect of national solidarity amongst them, the interests of White supremacy and *baasskap* would certainly be threatened.

But is separate development, as such, likely to succeed and capture the imagination of the man of colour in South Africa? Or is it likely to militate successfully against the forces of evolution the direction of which seems to be towards an inescapable interdependent co-existence for the various racial groups in the country? The answer to both these questions is a big NO.

The South African Nationalist Government is at the moment feverishly preoccupied with its much-publicised, grandiose Bantustan programme. This, in practice, is a process of putting certain arid areas in the country for African habitation under the cloak of "self-rule" or Black State within a State.

THE TRANSKEI WAS THE FIRST to be given self-government, under the tutelage of the Republican Government. And what was the reaction of the people of Transkei at the polls on the eve of the "parliamentary" elections in the territory less than two years ago? The ruling Transkei National Independence Party, led by the Chief Minister, Chief Kaizer Matanzima, made no secret of its firm stand for the policy of separate development which is strongly favoured by the Republic Government. The T.N.I.P. defeated Chief Victor Poto's opposition Democratic Party by a

very narrow margin indeed when the Transkei Legislative Assembly met to elect its Chief Minister, largely because of the massive support it received from most tribal chiefs appointed to that body.

It was, of course, quite understandable why a large number of chiefs had supported the Transkei National Independence Party. As Government servants, they had no alternative but to gravitate in this direction for fear of losing their positions—as chiefs—if they cast their votes in favour of the dynamic Democratic Party, under the able leadership of Chief Victor Poto. While the T.N.I.P. is openly against the presence of Whites in the territory and anything that smacks of the White man, Chief Victor Poto's Democratic Party strongly believes in multi-racialism or interdependence. It cannot reconcile itself to the theory that the Transkei can be economically viable without the presence of Whites and also without the territory encouraging an external flow of capital into the Transkei—a conviction much scorned by the ruling T.N.I.P. On the other hand, Transkei Whites feel they are now expendable and want their interests safeguarded as much as possible.

It is perhaps remarkable that a steady but highly noticeable swing among the tribal chiefs—many of whom are illiterate—who had identified themselves with the T.N.I.P. is at the moment towards favouring interdependence between White and Black interests in the territory. They have now been disillusioned and are, as a result, aligning themselves with the Democratic Party. They have discovered, no doubt, that they were intimidated to join the T.N.I.P., not through their own volition. The Democratic Party, which is intellectually more suited than its T.N.I.P. counterpart, has succeeded in capturing the imagination of the electorate in the Transkei. From all sides in and outside the Transkei, it has been hailed as the party most likely to be in power in the not distant future, largely because of its unwavering stand for democratic principles.

ONE OF THE MOST NOTICEABLE EFFECTS of the Nationalist Government's policy of separate development is that it has tended to alienate Blacks against the Whites throughout the length and breadth of the Republic of South Africa. It has engendered in the minds of the people of African descent a profound feeling of hatred for the White man as well as an implicit sense of disrespect for law and order. It has made the Black man feel that, because of the pigmentation in his skin, and his rapid adjustment to Western ways of life, Nationalist South Africa no longer needs his presence in the so-called White areas. He must now be sent back to the remote kraals where he should live and conform to the pattern of ancestral modes of life, despite the strides he has made in various spheres of the modern world.

Why at so late an hour must Nationalist South Africa think of such abstractions as "separate development", "separate freedoms" and "separate associations"? What are the Nationalists hiding behind their backs about which the Black man should be kept in ignorance throughout the ages? These are among some of the vital questions at present agitating the minds of thinking Africans in the land.

