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South Africa is possibly the most controversial of countries. Its defenders acclaim its political stability; others ask at what price in civil rights. Its economic boom is the pride of its advocates; its economic inequality is the target of its critics. Separate Development of ethnic groups is presented on one hand as an enlightened solution to racial tensions; on the other hand it is condemned as racist and unworkable.

South Africa's critics not only damn the present situation as unjust, they show even greater concern over the dangers of today's policies projected into tomorrow. Lord Caradon, Britain's Ambassador to the United Nations, has long pointed to southern Africa as a time bomb with a shortening fuse. Former U.N. Ambassador Arthur Goldberg sees South Africa as a racist cancer which could infect the whole planet and lead to World War III.

Such alarming predictions are not my conclusions, however. Contemporary domestic developments and trends in foreign policy point to the possibility of a relatively peaceful transition to a more just South Africa.

Essential to our understanding of the situation is some acquaintance with Prime Minister John Vorster. When he succeeded H. F. Verwoerd two years ago, Vorster was considered a man of iron by his party, and with reason. He had been jailed for alleged subversion for two years during World War II; he had broken up the Communist party, defeated widespread sabotage rings, and instituted preventive detention, bannings, and exit permits. No

doubt he would continue to defend Dr. Verwoerd's "granite stand."

Vorster's ascension to power dismayed all the varying shades of opposition in South Africa and the world outside, which had observed the procession of Nationalist prime ministers, each successively further to the right, since the party came to power in 1948. The logical culmination seemed to be Vorster, who had the toughest image of any cabinet minister. *The New York Times* dismally concluded that "the South African Nationalists in fear have turned over the reins of government to the most extreme, most ruthless, most totalitarian of their party leaders."

Today the hard image of Vorster within South Africa has been tempered by the moderation, pragmatism, and outward-looking flexibility he has displayed in his two years of office. This reversal has rankled the right-wing politicians. In August 1968 the antagonism within the National party between the *verligtes* (enlightened) and the *verkrampes* (cramped or narrow ones) burst into an open struggle in which the Prime Minister resolutely fell in with the "enlightened" and used his power to dismiss *verkrampte* cabinet minister Albert Hertzog.

What are the differences between *verligtes* and *verkrampes*? In general the *verligte* elements favor immigration including Catholics, Greeks, and Portuguese; participating in integrated sports abroad; receiving black diplomats in South Africa; programs to encourage the exchange of people with other countries, friendship with English-speaking South Africans, a feeling of comradeship toward "our brown Afrikaners" (Coloured people); the

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# Are There Silver Linings?

*Temporary domestic developments and trends that point to the likely peaceful transition to a more just South Africa.*

By EDWIN S. MUNGER

policy of Separate Homelands compared with *baasskap* (boss-ship); and more open discussion and debate of issues rather than decisions made by closed groups. The *verkrampes* fear change, including television and ecumenical movements among churches, and, in a good many instances, are inclined toward a conspiracy theory of history. John Vorster defines being *verlig* as "using one's common sense in a modern world" and in solving local problems in an international context.

What is causing change in South Africa is not, as often believed, the rise of *verligtes* in opposition to the Government, but the movement of the National party to a *verligte* position on key issues, leaving those who have long stood for *baasskap* outside the party or a minority within it.

After 1948, when the National party came to power, its opponents and overseas critics kept predicting it would split, and possibly the progressive elements would join with the United party. To view the developments of 1968 as portending a hoped-for split is to misread present political dynamics. The *verligtes* now control most key party positions, and it is they who may be joined by progressive elements in the United party. Meanwhile the conservative whites of both parties criticize Vorster for being too radical.

The most dramatic changes of the last two decades were made within the National party during 1968, and the effects are seen in Afrikaans universities, literature, and press. Students at Stellenbosch University are actively seeking contacts with English-speaking universities for the first time. Within the "Akademie," fountainhead of Afrikaans cultural

efforts, a struggle between its *verligte* board of distinguished Afrikaner scientists, lawyers, and businessmen, and a *verkrampste* staff has ended with the resignation of the latter. A similar struggle had a similar outcome at the new Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit in Johannesburg. Despite the key role of right-wingers in founding the university, the faculty is 10 to 1 *verlig*. The enlightened spirit finds expression in the whole *sestiger* (men of the sixties) literary movement and the emergence of the Afrikaners novel from rural sentimentality to involvement in the dynamism of urban life at home and abroad.

Changes in news media have both fostered and reflected the strength of the *verligtes*. The Cape-

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based *Nasionale Pers* has been successful with its Transvaal Sunday paper, *Die Beeld*, whose moderate approach on many issues would have been very unpopular three years ago. Even the English-language press has shifted from steady condemnation to occasional support of the Prime Minister. These developments are conspicuous to South Africans but not to the outside world, which is unaware of any reason to make a reassessment.

#### NO CHANGE IN TWENTY YEARS

But however striking have been the recent political changes within the National party and Afrikanerdom, they have not been transmitted to levels affecting the average African. Political opportunities legally available to the Bantu-speaking peoples within the so-called white areas have not increased in the last 20 years, and they have further declined in the last few years. Arrests and convictions of members of the illegal African National Congress and the Pan African Congress continue. Robert Sobukwe, the one African political leader who has served his sentence under the law, remains in detention. The Communist party and nearly all of its front organizations are banned and their underground activities crushed. A new proclamation in the *Government Gazette* bans meetings of more than ten people in African areas without special permission, except sports and religious gatherings.

Most members of the Government, including the Prime Minister, resist any relaxation of such draconic control on the grounds that it would invite another freedom struggle (as from 1948 to 1966) in which the Communist party would again manipulate and agitate black nationalists and labor movements to violent action. Most white National party members believe that Africans seeking political rights are communists. Banning of white activists has been no less severe, since it was predominantly white groups that were responsible for the sabotage of property and killings. Restrictions have even been extended to the legally acceptable Progressive party, barring it from operating across color lines.

If you ask a cabinet minister bluntly what legislation has been passed in recent years that offers the Bantu more and not less opportunity, he is hard pressed to give examples. He mentions the new town councils for Soweto, a huge complex of black suburbs southwest of Johannesburg, and elsewhere, and provisions whereby white capital can be invested in the Bantustans. Finally he resorts to de-

scribing a "new spirit of administration."

It is true that there are more African police in sole charge of African areas, a new politeness toward Africans by government officials, and the concession allowing Africans to buy liquor. But the hard, legal facts of African life in the urban areas of South Africa and on the white-owned farms do not present either a new or a creditable picture.

The administration is concentrating its efforts on promoting separate development of "nations" (as ethnic groups are often referred to in southern Africa). In the Prime Minister's initial speech, he specifically mentioned the Coloured, Indian, and Bantu peoples in a way "not to indicate political equality but equality as human beings," to quote an Afrikaner foreign editor.

The showcase of Separate Development is the Transkei. Its present autonomy was hastened by two years in advance of the planned date through the influence of Dag Hammarskjold upon Prime Minister Verwoerd. An application for its admission to the United Nations may be made surprisingly soon. The African Minister of Agriculture complains privately that his white officials are being replaced by Transkei Africans too rapidly to maintain efficiency. Transkeian Chief Minister Matanzima who, before he took office, described his people to the author as "the victims of the white man for 300 years," often presses fresh demands on the Government for more territory and autonomy.

Overall, however, the program of Separate Homelands has not made much headway and will require massive exertion if it is to provide separate freedoms for those Africans—perhaps half of the total population—who might eventually live within enlarged Bantustans.

#### PAYOFFS FROM THE BOOMING ECONOMY

The South African economy as a whole is in dire need of skilled labor and supervisory talent and cannot grow if it is saddled with an uneducated and untrained black proletariat. Everywhere employers complain about the lack of skilled labor, regardless of pigmentation, and everywhere regulations are circumvented. But much economic progress can be made legally. An example is the recent gains by Africans through the extension of the principle of equal pay for equal work. The increase in wages paid by industry and the movement of Africans into skilled jobs—on the Durban docks, in textile factories, in defense plants—are measurable facts.

In Soweto, living standards have improved visibly. The terrible shanties and burlap-sack shelters of the 1940's and 1950's have been replaced with modest but substantial housing. A recent private survey indicates that in the last five years the average length of residence in Soweto has increased from 5.8 to 8.2 years, and income from \$81 to \$100 a month. (House rent is \$10 a month.)

The booming economy has produced material and social payoffs, as seen in the larger number of well-dressed Africans and a new economic mobility. The change from white to Coloured postmen is an undeniable fact to housewives in affected white areas. To make up for the growing shortage of white drivers, the Johannesburg bus line may or may not decide to hire "non-whites," but the economic pressure to do so is offsetting the fear of white bus drivers that they will lose social status if "non-whites" perform the same tasks.

#### A CRUCIAL QUESTION

A crucial question is how the present political structure will adapt itself to these changes. Will it facilitate the liberalizing social trends that are resulting from a booming economy? At first the South African Government may implement only measures to improve facilities in African areas and broaden social privileges, but without showing any inclination to make radical political and social changes. The new African town councils, for example, will continue as long as they do not lead to political confrontations.

The prospect for African representation in a central legislature is dim. The United party proposes eight African representatives, but this would clearly be an inequitable stopgap. What is essential is to find a mechanism whereby decisions affecting a man's home, his child's school, and his conditions of work are brought within his political competence. What is most likely under present National party rule is that the Bantu will participate in decisions affecting all of present-day South Africa through a multinational body in which ethnic groups might participate as separate "nations." Such a suggestion is not unimaginable to the Afrikaner, whose struggle under British colonialism has left him with a regard for self-determination which he can violate only with a sense of guilt.

There are also more immediate concerns. The separation of African families arising from the myriad of regulations has its accompanying evils: di-

voice, adultery, illegitimacy, juvenile delinquency, and the general breakdown of stable family life. A commission of the main Dutch Reformed Church once again in 1968 criticized these results of controls over the movement of Africans.

#### APARTHEID HAS NO IDEOLOGICAL BASIS

The doctrine of apartheid has no ideological basis. (The race-hate literature found in a few South African bookshops issues mainly from the United States and Great Britain.) Indeed, the key expression has evolved from apartheid to Separate Development and is now Separate Homelands. None of these is a defined principle or historic pronouncement derived from religious contexts.

In its relations with other African countries South Africa has demonstrated more flexibility than formerly. Most observers predicted that the South African "victory" in the South West Africa case before the World Court would lead to isolationism and an inward-looking *laager* mentality, meaning the way the whites lived behind their circle of covered wagons. Now it is clear that there was a sense of relief from the possibility of concerted world action against South Africa, and this created the psychological climate for freer discussion and has permitted the National party's new foreign policy.

The new openness is reflected in the civilities displayed toward African leaders by the administration despite murmurings among the South African electorate. One such incident was the admission of the Botswana President, Sir Seretse Khama, to the Johannesburg General Hospital, normally reserved for white patients. The hospital not only extended its medical facilities but accorded special VIP hospitality to Seretse's English wife. Protests at the National Party Congress were met resolutely by Prime Minister Vorster, who claimed he acted on his own personal responsibility and forbade anyone to make a party issue of it. The action was in marked contrast to Prime Minister Malan's reaction 20 years ago when he took umbrage at the British Government for allowing Sir Seretse's marriage.

South African diplomacy in dealing with the smaller nations on its boundaries is also liberal. Like all strong powers with militarily weak neighbors, South Africa faces the temptation to be demanding, protectionist, or exploitative. It has not succumbed to that temptation. While the important mineral developments in Botswana are under the leadership of American, British, and South African companies,

Botswana is almost completely dependent for its trade routes on South African cooperation, which has been generous.

Lesotho, wholly surrounded by South Africa, is making headway with the vital Oxbow scheme, which will dam the headwaters of the Orange River and sell power to South Africa. Recently, a hundred Afrikaner farmers voluntarily took their tractors to Lesotho to provide free deep-plowing for part of the Lesotho lowland. Malawi is receiving technical aid from South Africa plus a loan to help build the new capital. The newest non-racial country within South Africa's orbit, Swaziland, achieved independence in September 1968, ending almost three centuries of British sovereignty over some part of Africa. At the time of independence, the Prime Minister of Swaziland made clear that the kingdom values its economic ties and friendship with South Africa next to its own political freedom and non-racist policy. Anton Rupert, an outstanding businessman from the Cape Province, has sent white medical students to work in Swaziland and white surgeons to operate in Lesotho. And recently government officials invited Robert Gardner, the distinguished Ghanaian who is Secretary of the UN's Economic Commission for Africa, to meet with them in Pretoria; at the same time private South African white groups sought his advice about bettering relations with black Africa.

#### THORNY RELATIONS WITH RHODESIA

South Africa's association with Rhodesia continues to be thorny. Observers at a rugby match last July could not help noticing Vorster and Ian Smith engaged in animated conversation. When the next morning's newspapers conjectured that they had exchanged ideas about an Israeli-like retaliation raid against guerrilla bases in Zambia, Vorster personally telephoned leading Afrikaans editors to deny any such plan. The editors are almost unanimous in opposing the right-wing faction of Ian Smith's party. One commented, "We would be better off with a friendly black Rhodesia than with it as a white tinderbox."

This analysis of South African policies has concentrated upon the white oligarchy and particularly upon the dominant National party as a force capable of humanizing present institutions or building new ones. If it pursues that road, there are thousands of Africans, Indians, and Coloureds eager to reaffirm the belief that men divided by ethnic difference can

live in harmony.

Such hopes are echoed by Afrikaner Nationalist writers such as Professor Van Wyk Louw who proclaim that "mere survival as a goal is death," but that the Afrikaner's survival is a moral question based on the need to live in justice with fellow peoples. The columnist of the Johannesburg *Zionist Record*, Henry Katzew, expressed the conviction that "the Afrikaner's struggle for survival and the Black man's demand for free opportunity are not irreconcilable." Recently N.J. Olivier, a popular professor at Stellenbosch University, told an audience of all races, "We are not monsters, and I believe it will be realized that discrimination based on colour is untenable. It will take time, but we have seen many changes in South Africa, and I believe this one will come."

#### THE DOGMATIC AFRIKANER

If a community of nations in southern Africa is to come about, through some amelioration of the political position of the Bantu in white cities and peaceful coexistence of the peoples of southern Africa, why is not the South African Government inspired to proclaim these goals? Because the unique historical struggle of the Afrikaner has given him an approach to the future that is dogmatic and simple. His tolerance for ambiguity is exceptionally low. The Afrikaner voter demands that his leader be firm, positive, and know the answers both for now and for the distant future. A Nationalist politician who would admit publicly that his country's racial problems are far more complex than those of the United States and Great Britain, and who would state publicly that, while believing his party to be on the right road, he would welcome helpful suggestions, would risk his political survival. It has been my experience to hear Afrikaner leaders tell a group of foreigners that policy must be precisely so and so and that foreign doubts as to its success have no basis, and then in a moment turn around and express the selfsame doubts and begin discussing alternate solutions.

One would be wrong to conclude on too optimistic a note. No panaceas are in sight. The possibility is ever present that clouds of reaction will block out the new rays. Nevertheless, one can have reasonable hopes that the next decade will see an increase in social and political opportunities for Africans, Coloureds, and Asians in South Africa to match their domestic economic advances and the new flexibility shown by the Government in foreign affairs.