

CONCEPTS OF APARTHEID

(Concluded)

By H. J. SIMONS

THE crusade began at Stellenbosch in 1940 with the publication of *Die Oplossing van die Naturelle-vraagstuk in S.A.* by Coertzee, Language and van Eeden, all members of the Bantu Studies Department. It was pursued by P. J. Schoeman, then Professor in Anthropology at Stellenbosch ('Territoriale Segregasie', Wapenskou, 1941) and by G. Cronje, professor in sociology at Pretoria University, in a series of books published between 1945 and 1948. ('n Tuiste vir die Nageslag, 1945; Afrika sonder die Asiaat; 1946; Regverdige Rasse-Apartheid, 1947; Voogdyskap en Apartheid, 1948).

Adherents of this school, and in particular Cronje, were race determinists. He asserted a causal relationship between race and culture; claimed that Africans were inherently inferior, that the offspring of inter-breeding between colour groups were degenerate, physically and mentally, that race divisions were divinely ordained; and excluded Jews from his conception of the white or West European race. The 'Boerenasie' was exceptionally fitted, by reason of its biological and cultural heritage, for survival in Africa and had a special mission to perform on the continent. Like the African, the Boerenasie was the victim of imperialism and capitalism, and it could not carry out its historical mission until it had broken the imperialist connection, incorporated the High Commission Territories into the Union, and formed a united front with English-speaking whites on the basis of economic as well as social equality.

Cronje's 'positive' policies envisaged:

- (1) Total separation for Africans; their 'development along own lines', under White trusteeship;
- (2) The development of a separate Coloured nation under the guidance and protection of the Whites;
- (3) Repatriation of all Indians, whose slogan 'Asia for the Asians' had as its logical corollary, 'Africa without the Asian'.

He did not assert, however, the parallel couplet: Europe for the Europeans, Africa without the European!

In the first half of this fine study, which appeared in the last issue of **LIBERATION**, Dr. Simons wrote that the concept of Separation had originated with the liberal, Alfred Hoernlé. The racist took over the concept of Separation . . . translated it into Afrikaans as Apartheid, and turned it into a slogan of action."

The doctrine of total separation acquired a great urgency from the results of the war. The spread of socialist equality in Europe and Asia, the collapse of imperialist rule, the rise of independent states with inveterate hostility to foreign domination and colour discrimination, the composition and constitution of the United Nations, the proclamation of the Declaration of Human Rights, heralded the end of the epoch of white supremacy. These events, and the effects of industrial growth, intensified the demand of the dispossessed within the Union for equality, and, at the same time, vested the idea of separation with a political significance.

Apartheid, as a party slogan, made its first appearance in the National Party's programme of 1948. This was based on recommendations of committees appointed by the Party's Federal Council in 1947, and presided over by Mr. Paul Sauer, to formulate a policy of apartheid with regard to African, Coloured and Asian population groups, and their relations to the white population, in accordance with the following requirements:

"the application of the apartheid-principle in political, industrial and residential spheres, must be capable of being realised in practice, and must be positive and constructive with regard to the interests of both whites and non-whites, as well as negative and separatist (skeidend) in character." (van Rooyen, *Die Nasionale Party*.)

Information on the discussions in committee that led to the formulation of the apartheid-programme is given by Edwin Minger, an American specialist on Africa, who has close contacts with Stellenbosch. He writes:

"Dr. Malan has privately claimed on several occasions that he really initiated the idea of apartheid as used in the 1948 election. He tells of a small group of N.P. leaders who met to hammer out the party's strategy for the 1948 election. The anti-war and pro-republican platform was discussed and discarded as unsuitable for major emphasis and because it would not attract support from the pro-war and Anglicized Afrikaners outside the N.P. fold. An economic blueprint for S. African development was considered but did not strike the politicians as sufficiently concrete and exciting for the average voter. Then, as

Malan tells the story, he took the floor to argue that the U.P. must be attacked primarily on its 'native policy'. He argued that apartheid was an election-winning slogan that would draw voters away from the U.P.

"A N.P. committee under the leadership of Paul Sauer found that the theoreticians who later formed SABRA had ideas which could be quickly tailored to a platform that would appeal to the electorate as an honourable and Christian way out of moral dilemmas, while at the same time it would keep them mindful of European fear of Africans." (Africa Special Report, 1957.)

At this point a divergence developed between the party's and the intellectual's conception of apartheid, which has persisted to the present time, with undoubted advantages to both. Let me first deal with the party interpretation.

It was defined by Dr. Malan in an election speech at Stellenbosch on March 4, 1953. He followed a familiar line of argument: the 'colour question' was the big issue; the choice lay between equality and apartheid; no middle course existed; the forces against us had multiplied; the communist was active underground; and lastly;

"The fact is that there is absolutely no difference in meaning between 'segregation' and 'apartheid'. Segregation was originally the term generally in use, and Genl. Hertzog was its chief advocate. Genl. Smuts, though not an enthusiast, did not oppose it, but later changed his attitude and finally declared openly that it was impracticable. When the N.P. pressed for a stricter application of the policy of segregation, Genl. Smuts objected that segregation would mean 'af-hokking' (fencing off). It was then that, to prevent misunderstanding, the Nationalists began to feel the need of a term that would not have this implication. Without looking for one, the word apartheid, which could even mean equality, but for each in his own sphere, came into use as the obvious expression." (Van Rooyen, op. cit., 275).

Dr. Malan has, on more than one occasion, distinguished the Nationalist Party's conception of apartheid from the idea of total separation. In a letter written in 1954 to an American, he said that 'though theoretically the objects of the policy of apartheid could be fully achieved by dividing the country into two States, with all the Whites in one and all the Blacks in the other, this was simply not practicable politics for the foreseeable future.' We must leave it to the future to decide if some such division, say on a federal basis, will be possible. (Cape Times, April 1, 1954).

This is still the government's policy. It does not claim to work for total separation, and has made no effort to check the absorption of Africans in the Union's economy outside the reserves.

The doctrine of total separation has, on the other hand, received a formal, institutionalized shape since 1948, largely through the activities of SABRA. Its formation, mooted in 1947, was given impetus by a controversy over the

findings of the Native Laws (Fagan) Commission of 1946-8, which, making the usual review of 'alternatives', reached the old conclusion that equality and separation were impracticable, and that the only course open was differentiation within a common society. The Stellenbosch critics rejected the possibility of a 'middle course', but this time for a reason not previously put forward by the advocates of white supremacy.

Mr. Justice Fagan, like Hoernle, had suggested that in spite of their numerical inferiority, the Europeans would continue to govern the country. This, said his critics, was an assertion from the Herrenvolk standpoint, which they repudiated. Secondly, it was false:

"We for our part simply do not believe that white civilization can maintain itself in S.A. for long on the basis of the complete economic integration of the Native, coupled with an attempt to discount his legitimate desire for political responsibility 'by not counting heads'."

It was contrary to the experience of industrialised countries to suppose that the Whites could morally and physically withhold from the African for any length of time, measured in terms of two or three generations,

"the full fruits of that civilization as enjoyed by us — a civilization which flowers in freedom of speech, freedom of occupation, freedom of association, and the civic equality of all adult men and women." (Cape Times, June 17, 1948).

At this point we find ourselves facing the old 'moral dilemma' that worried the liberal advocates of separation 30 years ago. Let me try to put the position simply. The country is ruled by a government that has been returned to office at three elections on the strength of its apartheid programme. This government rejects, just as did Hoernle, Brookes, and Fagan, the concept of total separation for the foreseeable future, and as an actual objective of policy. We therefore have a common society that will continue for, I repeat, the foreseeable future, that is, indefinitely. In this society the White group is determined to remain supreme. We describe the power relations between it and other groups as white domination, baasskap, or herrenvolkism. Both those who desire equality and those who want total separation condemn this social order as immoral, unjust, and untenable.

It is, of course, open to the advocates of total separation to preach their cause, and win over the population to their point of view. But what have they to say about the practice of white supremacy in the present society if it is regarded — and the government does so regard it — as a permanent order?

On this the advocates of total separation tend to be silent or evasive. Let us turn again to the definition of apartheid in the Woordeboek. It has this to say:

„In sy praktiese toepassing sluit die beleid reelings en pogings in wat o.a. omvat maatreels om 'n mate van bloot plaaslike skeiding te bewerkstellig, bv. ten opsigte vermaaklikheid, ens.: maatreels i.v.m. politieke regte, bv. aparte kieserlyste, aparte verteenwoordiging in die Parlement en Provinsiale Rade; verder territoriale segregasie, bv. die opsetting van betreklike groot gebiede in die uitsluitende gebruik van een bevolkingsgroep, bv. die naturellegebiede.”

The measures referred to may be called 'differentiation' or 'discrimination' according to the standpoint of the observer, but they cannot be said, in terms of content, effects, or the basic postulates regarding the relations between colour groups in the common society, to provide equal opportunities for the different groups.

On what ground can they be defended? Professor Olivier can be quoted to advantage here. Addressing the first conference of SABRA in 1950 he said:

“It has become the practice in certain circles to label as 'negative' any white measure that differentiates between native and white. Any measure that the whites may adopt to secure their position and prevent unpleasant complications, is condemned at the outset as 'unchristianlike' and 'oppressive'.

“Every privilege or service conferred on the whites which in any way is more favourable to them than to the native is regarded as another example of the policy of race-domination or of a herrenvolk mentality, but the differences in background, standards of living, and needs between white and native are conveniently overlooked.” (SABRA, *Die Naturellevraagstuk*, 1950.)

It seems to me incontestable that measures to strengthen the White group's position, or increase the range of its privileges, must widen the gap between it and the African population, and therefore support white supremacy. Does Professor Olivier justify this state as a permanent condition? How does he reconcile it with the principle of self-determination which, he asserts, is as valid for Africans as for the Whites?

It is not my purpose to discuss here the content of the differentiating or discriminating laws and administrative acts that have proceeded from the government in ten years of apartheid rule. There are, however, two aspects of the system which I think call for comment.

One is the use of migratory labour. The most fervent adherent of total apartheid does not contemplate its elimination at any price. The Tomlinson Commission, which was remarkably reticent on this matter, estimated that if the reserves were developed to their full capacity, they would accommodate 10 million Africans by 1987, of whom two million would be dependent on wages earned in the European territory by 500,000 migrant workers. But, according to a press interview given by Dr. Tomlinson, six

million Africans would still be living in the White area by 1987, and of them at most three million would be on the farms. He did not say whether he expected the remaining three million in urban areas to be migrant workers. (Cape Times, March 29, 1956)

This date, 1987, has apparently a mystical significance in the prophecies of Nationalist soothsayers. The Prime Minister told the country on September 18th that "1987" would be the "turning point" and that the migration of Africans to the towns would diminish from then on. He did not predict whether he would be in office to press the button for the change over.

Professor Olivier in a recent article predicted that

"the migratory labour system will no doubt — in the interests of both groups — remain an integral part of the economic set-up in the White State; no one could object to this, as long as compulsion is absent." (Cape Times, June 9, 1958).

Two objections do arise. One concerns the status of these workers, and their aspirations. Would they not form a part of the 'labouring classes' which, said the critics of the Fagan Report, had risen to power in nearly all industrialised countries? (Cape Times, June 17, 1948).

The other objection was stated by Hoernlé.

"To assume that Native workers will continue to come out in the large numbers required, is to concede implicitly that even the enlarged Reserves will be insufficient to make possible an economically self-contained life for their Native inhabitants. Hence, secondly, the fatal divorce between the place of residence and the place of work will continue to undermine Native family life and the cohesion of the tribes, and destroy the dream of Native communities as healthy 'areas of liberty'. And, in third place, the temporary workers will, both as aliens and as Natives, be treated in the White areas as subject to discriminatory legislation and measures of control, thus continuing the essential features of a caste-society." (S.A. Native Policy and the Liberal Spirit.)

My other observation concerns that eloquently worded plea of the Stellenbosch dons for the right of all colour groups — albeit in separate communities — to the full fruits of civilization: freedom of speech, freedom of occupation, freedom of association.

Whatever differences of opinion there may be over such measures as Bantu Authorities Act, Bantu Education Act, Group Areas Act, Population Registration Act, Separate Amenities Act — all of which I, for one, regard as serving to secure white supremacy —, no one can deny that there has been a disastrous invasion and curtailment of those rights and

freedoms in the past ten years. The documentary evidence is listed in Donald Molteno's recent survey, *The Assault on our Liberties* (S.A. Institute of Race Relations, 1958). He points out that 'the progressive invasion of the fundamental freedoms of the Non-European communities is, though in less degree, menacing those of Europeans also'; and he foreshadows a nemesis that will overtake us as a result of 'the general and increasing denial of fundamental liberties to our people'.

It is my opinion that the idealists who embrace total separation as their creed, bear a large measure of responsibility for this decline in the standards of our public life. Firstly, by concentrating attention on the unattainable, they have diverted attention away from real and considerable grievances. Secondly, and more significantly, they have provided a semblance of justification for what, by their own showing, is morally unjustifiable. They have justified present injustices by reference to an hypothetical moral, but illusionary, order.

They will plead, in their defence, that such restrictions are a painful but necessary means to the end of apartheid. That, indeed, is what Professor Cronje urged in 1945, and his words acquire added meaning in the light of the recommendations of the commission over which he presided on the censorship of literature.

„Alle agitators wat nie-blankes teen die deurvoering van die apartheid-beleid aanhits of opstook, moet die swye opgelê word.

„Die deurvoering van die apartheid-beleid sal so 'n geweldige onderneming wees en vir die witman is daar soveel op die spel, dat kwaadwillige ondermyning nie toegelaat kan word nie. Die algemene volksen-rasse-belang sal die deurslag moet gee." ('n Tuiste vir die Nageslag.)

The 'agitators' and 'malignant disrupters' would include, under existing conditions, those people who have protested the loss of traditional political, property, occupational, and educational rights, who have objected to loss of status and privilege, who have defended the relatively meagre but important liberties which they possessed ten years ago, and who have replied to these attacks with the cry of equality. Is that protest and this cry to be denounced and punished as acts of treason?

The adherents of total separation have been placed in a false position. They can extricate themselves, and regain a reputation for clear, honest thinking only by doing two things. One is openly and systematically to expound and criticise the National Party government's failure both to accept their ideal as a working basis of policy, and to implement immediately the programme for developing the African areas. Secondly, they can join in the protest against the invasion of civil liberties and vested rights, openly dissociate themselves from the pursuit of white supremacy as an end in itself, and defend the right of those who wish to advocate equality.

The latter include, I believe, the overwhelming majority of Africans, Coloured and Indians. Their reaction to total separation was stated 25 years ago by Dr. Seme, in his closing address to the annual conference of the A.N.C.:

"If the advocates of segregation are sincere, let them come out and give the Natives enough land for all their reasonable requirements. Let them draw up a dividing line from North to South or from East to West. Then let the Government order every White man to cross the line and go to his own corner and the Native to go to his own likewise. 'I beg to ask', Dr. Seme concluded, 'Is there any Government in this country which would dare to put such a policy into practice.'" (Umteteli, April 29, 1933).