

The "Black Spots"

IN DANGER of being hypnotised by the welter of apartheid propaganda which is pumped out at home and overseas, it does no harm occasionally to remind ourselves of just what the policy means at the receiving end, to those who feel the full weight of its practical effects.

Recently the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development announced that he was about to set out on a programme which would finally get rid of all "black spots" in white areas.

There are several hundred "black spots" in South Africa, but what precisely are they and why do they offend the Minister?

A black spot is an area in which Africans own land in freehold. Their title is on paper no different from that of the white people who are their neighbours. In most cases the freehold rights have been held and highly cherished by the African people concerned for several generations.

Black spots are of several kinds. In some cases they are farms owned by individuals. Some are farms bought by tribal communities at the beginning of the century. Some are areas bought by a group of individuals who combined their limited resources to buy land which they later sub-divided into residential plots. Some are suburbs of rural townships. Often these last have been encroached upon by later expansion of the "white" part of the town.

Affront to apartheid

But whatever its origins, the land in every black spot was *legally* bought by African people. In many cases white farmers in financial difficulties, and in some cases white municipalities desperately wanting more ratepayers, went out of their way to persuade Africans to buy their land. Over the years completely "westernised" communities have grown up in these areas. The old tribal society has been rejected. New democratic institutions have been developed and it is through these that the life of the community is managed. In all cases individuals or groups bought land under the complete assurance that the title deed

which was handed to them was the mark of absolute and perpetual security of tenure. How wrong they were the Minister is about to show them.

Black spots offend the Minister for two main reasons. The first is that they are situated in predominantly "white" areas and therefore don't fit in with the rigid separation of people that apartheid insists upon. The second is that these are communities of independent men who live a life quite different from that in the played-out tribal society the Nationalists try to revive. They don't conform. They are an affront to apartheid theory. So they must go.

What happens to them?

By the stroke of a pen

A man moved from a black spot sees destroyed, at the stroke of a ministerial pen, the absolute security of which he had been given absolute assurance. The same stroke destroys his faith in Government promises and white integrity generally. After all, who sold him the land and made all those promises? Were they not white men?

A man moved from a black spot will be given a different title elsewhere. "Elsewhere" may be fifty miles away. The "title", if it can be called that, will be hedged about by all sorts of rules and regulations devised by the Bantu Affairs Department. An examination of the kind of title offered in a rural African township shows that the title-holder's rights are hardly better than those enjoyed by an African tenant in a municipal location. If his title is to endure he had better behave himself.

A black spot dweller may be removed from an urban to a rural environment. His business, which may have been with his white neighbours, will be destroyed. His wife, who may have worked for them, will be unemployed.

The effect of black spot removals is to destroy completely a community life built up over generations. Its aim is to push people back into a tribal environment they have long discarded. These are the people whose grandfathers had the initiative to take the plunge into the new

way of life the white man brought, when they first saw it. But the most important effect of the black spot removal will be to build up a fund of fierce resentment against falseness of a white regime which has no respect for the rights of people who are voteless and black.

The Liberal Party has been involved in a campaign of opposition to black spot removals in Northern Natal—where most of them are found—since soon after the Party was formed. Many of its staunchest members are threatened. In the face of the Minister's new threat more of its resources will be thrown into this campaign.

Even if it proves impossible to stop the removals the world and South Africa must know what really lies beneath the gloss of the State Information Office's blurb. Only real resistance to such iniquitous proposals as this will draw attention to what they mean in personal suffering. And only resistance supported by people of all races can blunt the sharp edge of bitterness and store up some goodwill for a nonracial future.

Alan Paton on 'FREEDOM TO ASSAULT'

ANNOUNCING the cancellation of a meeting at the Johannesburg City Hall Steps which, it was felt, would lead to violence if held, after a week of attacks by white thugs on Black Sash women demonstrators, of which the police took little notice, Mr. Alan Paton, National President of the Liberal Party, said:

"Freedom of speech has lost a critical battle. It has lost a battle to the freedom to insult, spit upon, address obscenely and assault citizens of the Republic who are seeking to express and make known their views in a lawful and constitutional manner. Decent citizens may not freely assemble but hooligans may freely assemble. The right to make lawful protests has had to give way to those who menace that right by unlawful methods."

Our Traditional

Martyr for "white" civilisation

● *An Oudtshoorn citizen, hearing of threats of invasion from outside South Africa's borders and the call for white patriotism from Defence Minister Fouché, immediately set about cleaning his gun and accidentally shot his wife in the leg.*

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State in a state in a state

● *Dr. Verwoerd said in the Assembly that if there were any doubt about certain white areas within the Transkei, like in the case of Port St. Johns, there was no basis for these doubts. Port St. Johns could not be regarded as a white spot in the Bantu state because it had the sea on one side, and was therefore not surrounded by Bantu areas.*

If the Opposition did not like this definition, he could not help it. It was the Government's definition and Government policy would be implemented on the basis of Government definitions.

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Schoolboy-saboteurs to hang

● *Under Mr. B. J. Vorster's new General Law Amendment Bill, a 14-year-old may hang for trespass if the Attorney-General thinks he has some political intention (in trespassing) which might embarrass the State. The onus is also on the accused to prove he is innocent.*

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Expensive honeymoon

● *An African girl, who wanted to leave the country with her Danish boyfriend so that they could get married, but whose application for a passport had not even been considered by the authorities, was deported back to South Africa by the Rhodesian authorities after she and her friend had managed to get out of South Africa. On the way back they jumped off the train and a charter plane picked them up and took them to Tanganyika.*