

LIBERAL OPINION



LIBERAL OPINION subscription is
75 cents (7/6) for six issues.

EDITOR:

Room 1, 268 Longmarket Street,
Pietermaritzburg.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- 1 **The Price of Segregation**
— by Alan Paton
 - 2 **Nationalists, Liberals and Apartheid**
— by Leo Marquard
 - 3 **Will Bobby bob too?** — by Vortex
-

THE PRICE OF SEGREGATION

By ALAN PATON

THE policy of apartheid, or separate development, as it is now more grandly called, has as one of its main aims the preservation of the cultures of each of the racial groups in South Africa, the safeguarding of each culture from contamination by the others, and presumably the development of each of these cultures "along its own lines". Apartheid has no vision whatsoever of a South African culture, enriched by contributions from its Afrikaners, its Africans, its Coloured people (that is, those of mixed blood, Malay, Hottentot and European strains amongst others), its white English-speaking people, its Hindus and Muslims and Jews. These streams must not flow into a river, they must not even flow into the sea, they must flow parallel to one another for ever and ever.

Nor does apartheid envisage a group of distinct racial cultures continually enriching themselves and others by fruitful exchanges. In fact, the purpose of legislation is to prevent this from happening. It is now against the law for a mixed audience of whites and non-whites, even with segregated seating, to attend the ballet, the concert, the opera, the theatre, without a special permit from the governmental authorities.

Hardly a day passes without news that a permit for this or that event has been refused. The most recent example of this is the refusal to allow Africans to attend the quinquennial showing of the Oberammergau Passion Play in the city of Durban. The Government is prepared, however, to let the all-white cast present a

separate performance for Africans, but it would almost certainly not be prepared to allow the producer of the play to use a non-white actor for the part of Simon of Cyrene. Nor can a coloured opera group use a white singer without permit.

IMMENSE FATUITY

It would be tiresome to retail the thousand-and-one permutations and combinations for which permits would be required. The whole thing is an immense fatuity, irrational and derisible, with an element of cruelty that is inevitably present when one race group assumes the task of preserving the cultures of others.

The same fatuity characterises the Government attitude towards sport. Spectators in segregated seating may, if a permit is granted, witness cricket, soccer, rugby, football, tennis and other games, but no mixed team can visit the country. Nor can any mixed team be formed in the country, except presumably to play on some private ground, nor can a team of one race play against a team of another race without a permit.

The reader must note, however, that this would not apply if the two mono-racial teams were both white; it is the element of colour that is the important consideration. It will therefore be seen that apartheid or separate development is not solely concerned with the preservation of cultural differences; it is equally concerned with the preservation of racial differences, and above all, of course, with the preservation of white racial purity, such as it is after a period of three centuries.

MORE RIGIDLY

Again, hardly a day passes without news that sports apartheid is being more and more rigidly enforced.

The South African golfer Mr. Papwa Sewgolum is of Indian descent, but he can no longer play in any open golf tournament. He can therefore no longer win prizes, and must rely on charity to enable him to golf abroad, for example, in Holland, of whose Open Tournament he has been the winner on two occasions.

The Government has already announced that if Mr. Basil D'Oliviera, a South African coloured man living in England, is selected to play for England in cricket in 1968, the team will not be allowed to enter South Africa.

As I write this, it has just been announced that Mr. Ronnie van der Walt, a leading South African boxer who has been fighting in "white" boxing for 12 years, has now been classified as a coloured man. When interviewed by newspaper men, he broke down and wept. His tears will bring no relief; the Government will go ahead with its task of creating a happy and harmonious community out of the unhappiness of individual men and women.

The people who suffer most from these restrictions are those Africans, Indians and Coloured people who are eager to enjoy and to learn more about Western music, ballet, theatre and opera. Such people are, incidentally, characterised by their quiet behaviour. They do not go to concerts and plays to demonstrate, they go to hear and enjoy and learn. Their numbers are in general not great, so that they are unable to organise such occasions for themselves. In any event it appears to me impossible for any non-Westerner, except the most exceptional, to make much progress in the understanding of Western culture unless he is in touch with those who are part of it.

FORMIDABLE BODY OF LAW

In 1948 apartheid, though it certainly existed, had not yet been translated into the formidable body of law the making of which has occupied so much of the time and energy of successive Parliaments. Cultural contacts between and among South Africans of different races were steadily increasing. It would almost appear that South Africans were growing in cultural awareness of one another.

This tide has now been halted and is in fact receding. Yet one hears the preposterous suggestion that the children in rigidly-segregated schools should be taught to appreciate and understand the children of other races. They are in fact to be taught to love others, while being strictly forbidden to play or eat or have any meaningful relationship with them.

Apartheid has a crippling effect on the art of writing. I give it as my considered opinion that any play or work of fiction which dealt with any racial topic or any act of injustice in a way uncongenial to the Government, would today have little chance of passing the governmental organ known as the Publications Control Board, whose powers are very far-reaching. I add that such a work need not be brought before the Board, but that few publishers or producers would risk a ban after publication or production.

It could of course be said that the banning of publications has nothing to do with apartheid, but in fact the banning of publications is directed as much against books dealing with racial topics and injustices as it is against the flood of pornographic trash which would pour into the bookstalls.

REAL PURPOSE

The real purpose of publications control is shown by the attitude of censors towards "Selma", that distasteful tale of the freedom fighters in the Deep South. Any novel dealing with love or sex affairs between black and white (unless it does so with considerable restraint, as in my own "Too Late the Phalarope") would never be allowed to enter South Africa. But "Selma"

was allowed to enter because it showed freedom fighters as unsavoury characters; who would want integration if these are the people who fight for it?

One must not think that apartheid and authoritarian control of thought and education are separate entities. They are one and the same thing. Without authoritarian control there could be no apartheid. Both of them powerfully influence the culture. Some years ago African education was largely in the hands of missionary bodies, who gave what one could generally describe as a liberal education. Today, with the exception of the Transkei, it is firmly in the hands of the Bantu Education Department.

Greatly against the desires of the parents, primary education is given in the vernacular, whereas parents want it to be in English. They believe, and university teachers confirm, that their children are retarded by one or two years by this vernacular teaching. What is more, they want their sons and daughters to be at home in the Western, or shall we call it the modern, world. They (though not often publicly) deride the idea that their culture must be preserved by others and say that they will preserve what they choose to.

TIGHTER CONTROL

There are already signs that the Government would like to exercise a tighter control over the education of white children also, which at the moment is controlled by the provincial administrations. Although white unity is thought to be necessary in the face of threats from within and without, Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking children are educated in separate schools. They may later co-operate in commerce, industry and other spheres, but during their impressionable years they must be kept apart. The Government has also given signs that it is preparing to exercise greater control over university affairs.

Finally, apartheid has had a calamitous effect on that part of culture which has to do with moral ideas. Here I shall confine myself to the moral ideas of the white population. Apartheid, because it has been elevated to the status of the supreme value, has wrought devastation amongst the other values. The rule of law is one of the outstanding casualties; people are banned, banished and detained in solitary confinement for periods up to 180 days without any recourse to the courts of law. White South Africa, with laudable exceptions, accepts this procedure on the grounds that such people "must have been up to something".

ONE CRITERION

Certainly the proposition that the end justifies the means is not now much debated. Such things as the rule of law, university autonomy, parental rights to choose the language in which children are educated,

the freedom of the churches, have all suffered erosion. The value of any thought, any activity, is officially judged by one criterion and one alone — does it further or does it impede the cause of apartheid?

The Press, especially the English-language, is under continuous fire. Although as yet no direct steps have been taken to curb it, the editing of a paper is, in the words of one of our leading editors, "like walking blindfold through a minefield".

Therefore, although one of the main aims of apartheid is to develop the cultures separately, its effect is to ossify them separately, and to make them resistant to the entrance of new ideas. Whether the State will be in the long run successful in maintaining its hold on culture, or whether culture has some inherent and independent life of its own, remains to be seen.

GIGANTIC SELF-DECEPTION

One takes hope from the knowledge that there are South Africans of all races who reject apartheid as a gigantic self-deception, who reject what is called the "traditional way of life", and who speak and write openly, and boldly present their ideas for the consideration and criticism of younger generations, though it may be dangerous for them to do so.

Nor should one overlook the fact that despite the laws and the conventions, and despite the attempt to preserve the separate racial cultures, a great deal of cultural assimilation has already taken place, and though attempts are made to reverse the process (as in making the vernacular the medium of school instruction), there are grounds for believing that they will not be successful. The forces that make for apartheid and those that make for assimilation will continue to fight each other, in a struggle that is as old as South Africa itself.

— Reprinted from
THE UNESCO COURIER, March 1967.

NATIONALISTS, LIBERALS AND APARTHEID

By LEO MARQUARD

LIVING in Cape Town has a number of advantages. To start with, it is not Pretoria. In the second place, we get our political news oven-fresh, as the bakers say, and not through the S.A.B.C. Whichever way one gets