

AN AFRICAN EXPLAINS
APARTHEID

JORDAN K. NGUBANE

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BOOKS THAT MATTER

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DEDICATION

To
my valued friends,
Hilda and Leo Kuper,
of
the University of Natal,
whose love, loyalty,
wisdom, encouragement,
and humanity were always
pillars of strength
in my moments of trial,
this humble effort
is
most gratefully
dedicated.

THIS COMPLEX PROBLEM
CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE SOLUTION. ←

PREFACE

* SOUTH AFRICA: A SENSITIVE SPOT IN THE
COLD WAR CONFLICT.
* BEEN FROM THIS
PERSPECTIVE, APARTHEID
CEASES TO BE AN
INTERNAL MATTER
OVER AFRICA.

THE internal and external tensions generated by South Africa's racial policy have one immediate danger for mankind: They transform the second republic into a sensitive spot in a turbulent continent that is becoming increasingly involved in the Cold War. This gives rise to the very real fear that the tensions might one day get out of control and start a racial war, which could, in a flash, ignite a world conflagration. The moment it is seen from this angle, apartheid ceases to be a domestic matter for South Africa. It becomes an issue of vital importance for humanity as a whole. The problems it has created are now of such a delicate and complex nature that they call for an immediate solution, as much by the black and white South Africans as by the rest of mankind.

Between the dominant black and white groups, there now exists a legal, emotional, and psychological no man's land, to venture into which means immediate and very serious trouble. If the African tries to move into it, as the Pan-Africanist Congress attempted to do on March 21, 1960, the white authority shoots to kill. The shootings at Sharpeville, Cape Town, Durban, and Clermont Township are proof of this. If, on the other hand, the white authority provokes the Africans beyond a certain point, they, too, shoot to kill. The murder of a mixed group of policemen at Cato Manor some time back and the recent disturbances

in Pondoland reflect the new mood of substantial sections of African opinion.

The race crisis has thus reached the point where, as will be shown in the chapter on underground forces, a relatively unimportant incident could start an ugly blood bath. This is not a prospect that any sane man can view with equanimity. It calls for immediate and decisive action on two distinct planes. Effective pressures must be exerted on the South African Government to force it to abandon policies that the peoples of Africa as well as the nonwhites of the world regard as a standing insult. Secondly, a positive alternative to apartheid must be worked out that will bridge the racial gulf, (give to citizenship) the same meaning on both sides of the color line, remove the fatal tensions, and enable the republic to become a stabilizing influence in sub-Saharan Africa.

Pressures can be effective, and a feasible alternative formulated, only if the actual forces in the race crisis are more clearly understood; if their origins, history, records of performance, orientations, and points of strength and weakness are more widely known. In the pages that follow, an attempt will be made to give an interpretative picture of these forces and to outline a program of action that indicates in fairly concrete terms—within the scope allowed by the laws of the land—what sort of alternative is feasible in a society where the basic intention is to provide safeguards against any man, woman, or child being punished for having been created a member of a particular race.

No pretensions to objectivity are made in presenting this picture. It is difficult to see how one can be objective when his very being is attacked as a matter of policy, where human resources are callously wasted in order to uphold an ideological preference. I am a partisan on the side committed to justice for the individual regardless of race or color, an opponent of racialism who abhors totalitarianism, whether it comes from the right or the left. Nor do I claim exclusive authority to speak for the African. Mine is but one of different voices raised in the clamor for freedom.

CLAMORING FOR FREEDOM

NO BANK: THE (INTERPRETATIVE) PICTURE OF THE ACTUAL FORCES OF THE RACE CRISIS

PONDOLAN REBELIONS

THE INTERPRETATIVE PICTURE TO EXPLAIN POLITICAL RIDDLES & MYSTERIES OF RACE CRISIS. PREFACE • vii

When our perspectives are defined, we can then turn to aspects of the picture that have a special value. Among other things, the picture has been designed to explain quite a number of political riddles and mysteries and to correct dangerous misconceptions on the race crisis. For example, the government encourages the belief by the outside world that the real issue at stake in the race problem is the clash of color. This gives the impression that on one side of the dividing line stand all the white people and on the other, the nonwhites. The truth of the matter is that the opponents of apartheid are drawn from every racial group.

For very obvious reasons the nonwhites in general, and the Africans in particular, lead the revolt against apartheid. But fighting side by side with them is a small and determined group of white men and women. These have not suddenly come to the fore because "the wind of change" is blowing. They belong to, and continue, a tradition that goes back in South African history for nearly one hundred and fifty years. They made serious mistakes in the past; twenty-five years ago, their activities were often looked upon with suspicion, but they have since learned their lessons. The present generation of these white people shows itself to be as ready to go to jail in the fight to destroy white supremacy as any African. Adelaine Hain of Pretoria, Peter Brown, the national chairman of the Liberal Party, and Patrick Duncan, the son of a former governor-general of South Africa, already know the inside of a jail for daring to oppose apartheid with determination. Others, too numerous to mention by name, have had their lives almost ruined by persecution, bans, and intimidation.

The participation of these people in the fight to destroy white supremacy is emphasized to underline the need to achieve a balanced view of the race crisis, to put the race problem in the correct perspective. Humanity in general—and in particular the free peoples of Africa who rightly want to remove the insult of apartheid from their continent with the minimum of delay—need to know these aspects of the race crisis and to gain a realistic ap-

NOUBANE DENIES HERSELF: AN OPPONENT OF RACIALISM & TOTALITARIANISM TO POSE AN ALTERNATIVE FEASIBLE IN THIS SOCIETY

C.P.A. BEEN CALLED AS A RACE THREAT WITHIN CONTEXT OF CAPITALISM
TO WIN POLICY OF RACE CRISIS
NO PRETENSIONS OF OBJECTIVITY

CLAMORING FOR FREEDOM
HUMANITY
OF APARTHEID
NATIONALISM

OPPOSITIONS OF APARTHEID FROM ALL COLOURS
DETERMINATION OF WHITE SUPREMACY
INSULT OF APARTHEID

→ Africans NOT HELPLESS VICTIMS OF APARTHEID

THE OTHER THEMES OF THE BOOK: RESISTANCE TO IT

precipitation of their implications in order to exert effective pressures against race oppression. The government of South Africa plays up the racial aspect to maintain its hold on white opinion within its borders and to divide opposition in Europe and America. The technique incites most of the free peoples of Africa to react by emphasizing race in their support of the oppressed in the republic. When this happens, difficulties that favor the government arise inside the republic.

On quite another plane, the emphasis on white initiative has given rise to the mistaken view that the Africans are the helpless victims of race oppression who need as much pity as assistance. In the pages that follow, the story unfolds of a virile people fighting against great odds—sometimes succeeding and often failing—to move events away from the goals prescribed by apartheid. They have, over the last fifty years in particular, made recognizably realistic efforts to lay foundations for a society in which the individual, regardless of race or color, will be able to make better use of his life. When they ask for humanity's assistance, they do so because they realize that humanity has the duty to support those who fight to uphold the dignity of the individual.

Something else happens as the story unfolds. Those aspects of the race crisis that baffle foreigners and most white South Africans become more intelligible—for example, the monumental, almost saintly spirit of tolerance and sense of justice of men like Luthuli and large numbers of his people; or the fact that there is still racial good will side by side with race hatred and relatively less bloodshed in situations where the persistent and continuous provocation of the African is the general rule.

My qualifications for presenting this interpretative study, which is also a plea for a more constructive approach to South Africa's race problem, can be stated briefly. I have been involved in the fight against race oppression now for nearly twenty-four years—in my roles as an editor, a political commentator, and an active participant in the formulation of policies. I had the singular advantage of entering journalism and politics when most of the African men and women who laid the foundations for the turn

* Africans HAVE TO MAKE THE FOUNDATION OF AN ALTERNATIVE POLICY

TO MAKE INTELLIGIBLE A PICTURE OF THE PROBLEM

* IN ORDER TO FIGHTING TO UPHOLD THE DIGNITY OF THE INDIVIDUAL

* COOPERATION OF LUTHULI

AUGUST 1949

From 1929

→ AN EDITOR, POLITICAL COMMENTATOR, PARTICIPANT IN THE FORMULATION OF POLICIES

→ R.V. SENOPE THEME: THE BOOK IS A CRITIQUE OF WHAT R.V. SHOULD HAVE DONE

→ TO DRAW A CLEARER PICTURE OF SOUTH AFRICA FROM A PERSPECTIVE OF THE VICTIM OF APARTHEID

the race crisis is taking were still active in public life. I lived and worked in close collaboration with some of the most distinguished of them. Later, I found myself actively involved in nonracial politics. These factors gave me an experience in African politics and a view of the race crisis that are unique. I have drawn freely on these to introduce the reader to a world that he does not often come across in the books on South Africa. This has been done in the hope that it will enable him to have a fuller and possibly clearer view of what is actually going on in the republic—as seen through the eyes of a victim of apartheid.

Now, for a word of apology. I am painfully aware of the shortcomings of the present effort. The signs of writing in a hurry—in the heat of battle, so to speak—are all too conspicuous. To avoid them, I would have needed time and an atmosphere that is no longer to be found in South Africa. This is not an attempt to cash in on the genuine and appreciated sympathy of the world toward those who oppose apartheid. The plain fact is that the opponent of race discrimination, whether he has been banned or is still "free," lives in constant uncertainty about his fate from day to day. Each knock on the door while this book was being written sent me dashing to the place in the house where I hid the manuscript! At first, this amused our last-born child. But he realized its grim seriousness when the police banged on the door after midnight to arrest me. Since then, I, like many others, have been appearing in court on a charge that arises strictly from our political activities. If the courts find against us, each one of us might go to jail for a maximum period of ten years.

This prospect has forced me to rush the writing of this book. I snatched whatever moments I could between my not infrequent appearances in court in faraway Johannesburg and the task of straightening out my affairs in case the worst happened. For me personally, these were not the best conditions for writing. All I could do, then, was to put my message down as briefly and clearly as the circumstances permitted and pray for the reader's indulgence.

Finally, I should like to place on record my very sincere

THE BOOK WRITTE IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE

THE BOOK ACCURATELY WRITTEN IN S.A

thanks to the friend who suggested the idea of this book and to others whose encouragement and assistance made its writing possible. I wish I could mention them by name. But in my country today, one cannot take too many precautions to be on the right side of the law. Needless to say, the views expressed here and the conclusions arrived at are mine alone, and I take full responsibility for them.

JORDAN K. NGUBANE

"Emandleni,"

P.O. Inanda, Natal,

South Africa

August 18, 1961

Leo Kuper

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