

APARTHEID'S HOSTILITY to the non-tribal African and the cultural amalgam assumes a new significance against the background of the growing African emphasis on humanism, and the existence of potential allies throughout the world. Ethnic grouping and emphasis on the tribe could perhaps be an Afrikaner attempt to enable the African to cultivate love for what is distinctly his own in the mistaken belief that he does not already have something better. It could also be a sinister move to re-create a racialistic nationalism which would push *abantu basesilungwini* and their non-racial outlook back to the position of a third force between Afrikaner race consciousness and tribal racialism, when civil war or the threat of it among the Africans would weaken opposition to White domination. Tribal fissions could develop which would incapacitate the African for presenting a decisive challenge to White supremacy. The peoples of this country would be split into three groups: the White racialists, the Black racialists and, between them, a diminishing number of non-racialists. In such a situation it would be so much easier to push the majority of the Whites into one camp.

To guard against all these dangers, the Bloemfontein conference saw to it that the political realism of *abantu basesilungwini* became the dominant influence in the organisations they set up to oppose White domination. Its success in deepening the roots of non-racialism among the Africans can be seen against the fact that after 1912 no political organisation rose to demand the expulsion of the Whites from South Africa. Even the Pan-Africanist nationalists insist that they are interested primarily in the human being as an individual and not in race. They reject race rights or group privileges. They do this in South Africa because the Bloemfontein conference's rejection of racialism was complete and uncompromising. The All-African People's Conference held in Accra in 1958 merely did for the rest of

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the continent what the Bloemfontein conference had done for Southern Africa in 1912.

BEFORE WE LEAVE the Bloemfontein conference we must draw attention to the most important difference between it and the White united front. Union had been founded to ensure that the White man remained master. It was the point of final fulfilment for the Old Testament morality of survival; for the tradition of absolutism; for the race exclusiveness which had inspired the Great Trek and for Dutch-Huguenot attitudes to slavery. It was founded on the principle that the group is supreme.

The African united front was established on the conviction that the individual had an importance and sacredness which transcend the group. Merit alone and not race should fix his position in the life of the nation. This was the logical corollary to the respect for the rights of the individual first shown by *amahumusha* and *amakholwa* and later by *abantu basesilungwini*; to the traditions of humanism from both sides of the colour line and to the morality of fulfilment which the New Testament taught.

The present complexity of South Africa's race problem springs also from this polarisation of outlooks.

The men who accepted the Bloemfontein conference's ideal of rebirth into a new destiny and their predecessors regarded the cultural amalgam as a way of life which guaranteed their survival. Without it life would have lost its meaning. They valued it so deeply they were prepared to lay down their lives in its defence against whoever threatened it, regardless of race.

In 1879 *amakholwa* from Edendale mission station in Natal had taken up arms to fight with the British against Cetshwayo. In doing this, they were not saying that the White man had a monopoly of virtue. They feared that a victory for the Zulu warlord might revive the power of the tribe. The latter would in turn threaten their values, corrupt the cultural amalgam and finally destroy them as a community.

What decided their attitude and that of many others in similar situations at different periods in South Africa's history was not the race or the colour on which they fought. It was the ideals the side sought to defend. Thousands of Africans followed Smuts into the war against the Nazis not because they approved of his policy toward them but because they feared that a victory for Nazism would entrench racism in the world and narrow the area of fulfilment for them.

THIRTY YEARS LATER some of the leaders of the Edendale community went to Bloemfontein where they welcomed to their side the tribesmen they had fought in 1879. The latter had accepted the unity based on the cultural amalgam.

The Elder Jabavu was so heavily committed to the amalgam that he had serious reservations on the wisdom of building an African unity which could degenerate into a racial front. He feared that it might destroy the new cultural pattern by widening the gulf between Black and White. As we recede farther from his times and consequently view him with a little more objectivity, his real greatness emerges in clearer outlines. Like *amakholwa* of Edendale and unlike the authors of the *Grondwet* he was no longer concerned with race in his

assessment of the truth. The values of the cultural amalgam had a validity for him which transcended race. Whoever upheld them was his ally. Whoever threatened them was a foe. Whether or not he was a good nationalist is immaterial. The point is: he believed that there was such a thing as objective truth. His loyalty to it was not shaken by the hostility of his African critics or by the treachery of some of his White friends.

For him, the logical answer to the White united front was the establishment and reinforcement of the unity of the like-minded. Some, the genius behind the Bloemfontein decisions, regarded the unity of the like-coloured as the first essential. Both men were in no doubt about the significance of the cultural amalgam in their lives.

Some of the implications of what has been written so far might now be gone into.

ALTHOUGH MUCH IS MADE of race as a factor which complicates the relations between Black and White, it is by no means the basic influence in South Africa's colour crisis. Two virile cultures, both of them young and about the same age and which have been exposed to more or less similar experiences are involved in a fierce struggle for dominance. While both have their roots ultimately in the Christian tradition their outlooks on life are irreconcilable. Afrikaner Nationalism adopts the Old Testament approach which lays the greatest stress on race. African Nationalism attaches maximum importance to the individual.

Two different ways of life have emerged from this polarisation, giving rise to opposing political traditions. The one, descended from European absolutism, is totalitarian in character. In Europe absolutism produced Communism, Nazism and Fascism, apart from the Inquisition. In South Africa it gave birth to Apartheid. The other, with its roots in the humanism of *ubuntu* and the New Testament, is democratic, non-racial and egalitarian. The former is exclusivist while the latter is integrative.

SECONDLY, THE Africans are no longer a culturally homogeneous people. If one section remains tribal in outlook the other, which is the majority, adheres to a way of life which is basically Western in orientation. By compelling the majority to look to the tribe for inspiration, apartheid forces the most progressive section to see fulfilment for itself in a destiny which has no meaning for it. It compels the new African to belong to a world in which he is a complete and unwanted stranger. It denies him the right to shape his life in accordance with the demands of a culture he has perfected for himself. It ignores the fact that he is as devoted to it as the Afrikaner is to his. For apartheid to force him to abandon what is his is a clear act of injustice.

THIRDLY, THE emergence of the detribalised section as the leaders of the African created a somewhat unique situation. To a very large extent these people owed their cultural pattern to the presence of the White man. If he had not come they might probably not have left the tribe. As a cultural group they had never taken up

arms against him, not because they regarded him as having a monopoly of virtue but simply because they appreciated more keenly what contact with him had awakened in them. Consequently, the nationalism they developed rejected racialism. It sought to see the individual free to make better use of his life.

Because of this the two nationalisms in conflict in South Africa are not both of them racial. The one certainly sets the greatest store by race. The other derives its inspiration from a given set of ideals. Contrary to popular belief we do not have a solid bloc of White opinion on the one side opposed by an immovable Black mass on the other. Dr. Verwoerd and Chief Kaizer Matanzima are devoted as passionately to apartheid as African and White Liberals are to non-racialism.

Seen against this background, South African Liberalism is not and cannot be a third force between an organised racialism which exists and another which does not. It is the logical, perhaps extreme, spearhead of the humanism which has its roots in *ubuntu*, in the New Testament morality of fulfilment and in the democratic tradition. It translates into action the ideals and hopes which made agreement possible in Bloemfontein in 1912. To the extent that it does this it is as legitimate an offshoot or school of African nationalism as any other. The Bloemfontein conference wanted equality and non-racialism. The Liberals do not stop at shouting about these virtues. They translate them into practical deeds in their public and private lives. They accept the ideal of rebirth into a new, larger and more satisfying destiny. Because of this they have already reached agreement on ultimate objectives. Black and White move arm in arm toward a society in which no human being shall ever again be punished for reasons of race.

If the above theses are right, the relative ineffectiveness of Liberalism would then be ascribable to the mistaken belief that the Liberals are a White movement inspired by White ideals and that they are a third force between Black and White racialists. As a result they have placed themselves in the position where they could function largely as a negative influence, barking up the wrong tree and often failing to take their rightful position by the side of the upholders of the cultural amalgam. Too much valuable energy was spent on the image of a third force which *abantu basesilungwini* had already rendered redundant.

I am a Liberal because Liberalism is the logical projection into our times of *amahumusha's* will to make better use of their individual lives; of *amakholwa's* determination to identify themselves with the like-spirited, regardless of race; of the humanism which abolished slavery in the Cape and, finally, of the realistic statesmanship which upheld the rights of the individual and rejected racialism at the Bloemfontein conference.

The frontier wars were too near the delegates to the Bloemfontein assembly to enable them to translate their aspirations into non-racial collaboration. We are too deeply involved in the ideological challenges which threaten the foundations they laid not to realise that salvation for Black and White democrats lies in their closing their ranks and in their co-ordinating their activities in ways which apartheid cannot crack.

FOURTHLY, THE failure or otherwise of other African peoples to establish non-racial societies—as a matter of fact indications already show that as soon as the Whites accept the full implications of non-racial citizenship, African race consciousness subsides—is not in any way the proper yardstick by which to tell what the local African will do if granted citizenship rights. The centuries of contact with the White man and the cultural amalgam have produced outlooks, thought habits, responses and customs which have almost no parallel in any other part of Africa.

Most local Africans have outgrown the limitations imposed by thinking in terms of the tribe. They have behind them a long-established and tested tradition of voluntary, conscious movement toward the non-racial ideal. There is thus a solid bloc of opinion which is

ready, willing and able to participate responsibly in running a non-racial government.

The absence of organised anti-Whiteism springs ultimately from recognition of the fact that in spite of the bitterness and humiliations resulting from contact with the White man, the experience has not been without its gains. These are such that in a free society the African would go out of his way to ensure that the White man stayed here not only because he was human but also because it was in the interest of the Black man that he

should.

Where the paucity of numbers gives the Afrikaner Nationalist his sense of insecurity and in that way has developed in him an exaggerated regard for race, numerical superiority guarantees survival for the African. Fulfilment for him is thus not in the direction of asserting racial rights or, for that matter, of vengeance. It is in making the best possible use of his life. He wants to participate in making the laws which shape his future. He wants to live in a decent house, to have

a comfortable bank balance, to own a car, to be assured of comfort and security in old age, to be able to give his children the best possible education and not to go about insulted because of his race.

Most free African peoples still have to evolve their cultural amalgams or equivalents of it. For this reason, their attitudes cannot be a guide to what the South African will do when free.

FINALLY, THE power reserves the African has been building within the last fifty years are now reaching parity with those on the White side. One only has to look at the hardening of world opinion in the United Nations on the one hand and the growth of the sabotage movement on the other. The emergence of free African states is one additional accretion of strength to the Black side.

These developments bring a bloody collision very much nearer than most people imagine possible. We are least likely to have a Mau Mau in South Africa. The necessary conditions for its successful organisation are to a very large extent not there. The South African army is well equipped to ferret out guerilla fighters. There is no longer that coherence in the African community which tribal discipline imposes and without which no Mau Mau movement can be organised successfully. There is not even the uncompromising rejection of the White man's culture. People have to feel that the latter threatens their very survival before they can be worked up to attack it with the will to destroy. In spite of apartheid's bid to drive wedges between Black and White, the overall reaction has been to establish powerful friendships across the colour line and in many ways to strengthen non-racial bonds. Integration

is going on in the churches at a pace which the government cannot stop.

What we are likely to have, however, is a protracted campaign of sabotage which would provoke savage reprisals from the government. There would follow mass arrests, perhaps some shootings and a few hangings. These might in the end narrow down the area within which explosives would be used.

After that there might develop a wave of bitter political feeling among the non-Whites which would find expression in widespread arson. Industry, commerce and agriculture would then be the main targets. There might not then be an easy answer to a concerted campaign in which every other African with a grievance and a box of matches in his pocket regarded himself as a front-line soldier in the fight against race humiliation or economic exploitation.

When this point is reached, apartheid will be absolutely powerless to protect the White man or to change the direction taken by events. Three courses suggest themselves where the intention is to stop the drift to disaster before it gets out of control. There must be a convincing rejection of apartheid by a substantial proportion of Afrikaners. There must be closer co-ordination of Black-White democratic power reserves both to rid South Africa of Verwoerdism as well as to frustrate communist attempts to retain the initiative in influencing events on the African side. Finally, the goal toward which all this would drive would be the establishment of a non-racial government within the shortest time possible.

Where these conditions were satisfied there would be no insurmountable barrier to the solution of our more complicated problems as a nation.