

SOUTH AFRICA'S "OUTWARD" POLICY

If foreign policy is the extension of domestic policy into the sphere of international affairs, then the purpose of South African foreign policy is to safeguard white supremacy in South Africa. This has been the consistent aim of South African foreign policy under both Nationalist and United Party Governments ever since Union was formed in 1910 – and its origins can be traced back even before that. The imperialist Rhodes dreamed of the control of Africa by the British Empire from the Cape to Cairo. Smuts concluded his "A Century of Wrong" (1898) with the words: "Then shall it be from Zambesi to Simons Bay: Africa for the Afrikaners". Smuts eventually came to believe that the interests of white South Africa could best be promoted in association with the Empire. The die-hard Nationalists, from General Hertzog to Vorster, have striven first for Afrikaner ascendancy in South Africa, fearing otherwise that the Afrikaners nation and language would be absorbed by the stronger English culture.

A secondary fear – to become primary as the menace became stronger – was that the English and their Empire could not be relied upon to defend white supremacy to the death. During the Anglo-Boer war, the English had used African levies, the Boers not. During the second world war, Smuts was at one stage prepared to contemplate arming the Blacks against the threat of invasion by the Japanese. He was strongly opposed by the Nationalists. In 1951, after the Nationalists had come to power, a conference to discuss a regional defence treaty for South and East Africa was held at Nairobi, attended by representatives of South Africa, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Ethiopia, France, Italy, Portugal and Southern Rhodesia. It failed to reach agreement partly because South Africa refused to be associated with any scheme involving the arming of Africans.

At the outset, the Nationalist Government had hoped to be able to persuade the imperialist powers to cooperate with South Africa in exercising control over Africa on the basis of white supremacy. Dr. Malan had proposed an African Charter based on four points:

1. Protection of the indigenous peoples of Africa against penetration by the peoples of Asia, especially India, which had repeatedly inter-



- vened in South Africa over the treatment of the Indian minority.
2. European "guidance" of African development, to ensure that Africa remained within the European orbit.
 3. Total suppression of Communist activities (including the propagation of equality).
 4. No arming of Africans anywhere.

Position of Domination

The correspondence between South Africa's internal and external policy was most clearly shown by Malan's statement in 1953, when negotiation over the future of the Protectorates of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland, that South Africa was opposed to suggestions that they be granted their independence. The Union could not, he said, "permit Negro states, Bantu states, to arise within our borders, States which are free and independent and which can lay down their own policy in every respect."

It was during this same period that Malan repeatedly rejected as a "caricature" of Nationalist policy the notion of separate development which later came to be incorporated in the Bantustan policy.

Strijdom carried on where Malan left off. In 1955, in one of his earliest foreign policy statements, he asserted that South Africa could not, by itself, maintain White supremacy in South Africa. There would have to be the greatest possible co-operation between the various white communities in southern Africa if they wanted to ensure their existence in Africa. "That is what we generally mean when we talk about an African policy", he said. During the same debate, when the opposition pointed out that South Africa's apartheid policies stood in the way of any agreement with the West, Mr. Blaar Coetzee (today Minister of Community Development) replied: "If we are to give up our position of domination in order to gain the friendship of the West, why do we really want their friendship?" This question still stands at the heart of South African foreign policy. Put as a statement, it makes clear that South Africa requires the friendship of such other states as can assist her to maintain "our position of domination". The

thought that the imperialist states in Africa began to fade as the process of decolonisation was set in motion, followed by the disappearance or diminution of many of the communities of white settlers in colonies "threatened" with the grant of independence. In 1950 there were only two independent states in Black Africa — Ethiopia and Liberia. Today there are 41 (in both cases excluding South Africa).

The growth of the independent African community resulted in increasing pressure on South Africa for the relaxation or abolition of apartheid — through the Organisation of African Unity, the United Nations, and international support for the nation liberation movements of southern Africa. Coinciding with this was the upsurge during the fifties and early sixties of the oppressed peoples of South Africa itself — the Defiance Campaign in 1952, the Congress of the People of 1955, the adoption of the Freedom Charter and its consequences the treason trial of 1956–61, the political strikes, the bus and potato boycotts, the anti-pass campaigns culminating in the Sharpeville and Langa shootings. Ultimately came the inevitable adoption of a revolutionary strategy by the people's organisations as the only answer to the ever-intensified repression of the state. From all these pressures emerged South Africa's new policies of Bantustan or "separate development" at home, coupled with the unfolding of its concomitant, the "outward" policy abroad.

Old Wine in New Bottles

It is quite wrong to associate these new developments with Premier Vorster, as though they were his special brainchild — and least of all as though they embody some special quality of enlightenment for which he is supposed to stand in contrast to his predecessors. In fact, it was Premier Strijdom who in 1957 first declared in Parliament that as the African states developed there would have to be ordinary relations with them "and even diplomatic relations" — a view subsequently endorsed by Foreign Minister Eric Louw, though he postponed its imple-

mentation to the indefinite future. Bantustan and the "outward" policy were the new strategy by the Nationalist Government to ward off foreign intervention and divert and split up the forces of national liberation at home. It was Dr. Verwoerd who adumbrated the new techniques most clearly and provided some sort of ideological foundation for them. In a policy speech on April 10, 1961, in which he indicated that the Bantustans could develop into "separate Black States", he admitted: "This is not what we would have preferred to see. This is a form of fragmentation which we would rather not have had if it was within our control to avoid it". Verwoerd blamed the pressure of forces outside South Africa for the decision of the government to embark on the Bantustan experiment at all. "In the light of the forces to which South Africa is being subjected, there is, however, no doubt as to what must be done in the course of time".

The Year of the Guerrilla

1961 was the year in which the South African military organisation, Umkhonto we Sizwe, fighting wing of the African National Congress Alliance, first launched its campaign of sabotage as a prelude to intensive guerrilla warfare. 1961 was the year in which guerrilla warfare was launched in Angola — a savage surprise for the Portuguese colonialists and a warning to South Africa of the shape of things to come. 1961 was the year of South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth because, according to Dr. Verwoerd, the Government was not "prepared to pay the price (for membership) of allowing interference in her domestic policies, of sacrificing principles on which her Government has been repeatedly elected since 1948 or of submitting to any reflection on her sovereignty or her national honour". In 1961 the Government took the decision to face the world and its own people from a position of strength. 1962 saw the doubling of the Defence budget and the introduction of the Sabotage Act. 1963 — the year in which the Central African Federation, South

Africa's and imperialism's buffer against Black Africa, collapsed — marked the introduction of detention without trial and warned the world that if the country's Whites were defeated, it would be the end of Western influence in South Africa. Further, the West would not be just poorer, it would lose its access to Africa. "We are the bearers of the values that made the West great. We are Europe in Africa", declared Dr. Diederichs.

Addressing a students' symposium in Stellenbosch on May 7, 1967, Premier Vorster said that "separate development was not only a policy which would ensure a place in the sun for the different nations of different colours living together in South Africa, but it would make it possible for the Republic to take the lead in Africa... As the rest of Africa became disillusioned, as they would to an increasing degree, they would turn their eyes towards South Africa". The Minister of Transport, Mr. Ben Schoeman, addressing a meeting in Kempton Park in April 1970, said that by establishing and maintaining diplomatic relations with neighbouring African states the Government was safeguarding the borders of the Republic against "terrorist" incursions. Dr. Connie Mulder, Minister of Information, told a meeting in Durban in March 1970 that closer ties with neighbouring Black states could lead to the formation of a solid anti-Communist bloc in Southern Africa which would be in the interests of the Republic. It could include South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Mozambique and Rhodesia. He believed that Zambia was not beyond the pale and might be persuaded, or be forced by economic considerations, to join the bloc. Such a bloc would make it possible for the Whites of Southern Africa to exert strong influences in the future political developments of the Continent of Africa. On the other hand, if South Africa isolated herself, the Whites would be doomed.

Christian, Western Idea

The Minister of Defence, Mr. P. W. Botha, told a meeting at Epping in February 1970 that Communist count-

ries wanted the White man out of Africa "because when the White man is in control there is order. In the technical and diplomatic fields South Africa will try to make friends to the north and so keep the wolf from the door. Our task is not only to protect South Africa but the whole of Africa". At a meeting at Randburg in November 1968, Dr. Mulder said the frank aim of world communism was to appropriate Africa and thus to encircle Europe. Only two states today were still obstacles in the way of the Red plan — Israel and South Africa. South Africa was pre-eminently well-equipped for the task of extending its sphere of influence in Africa. "We are the Western People who are the best equipped on earth to transmit the Christian Western idea to our neighbours".

Dr. Mulder said South Africa was tired of being a scapegoat. "We refuse merely to defend. The eyes of the West must open and they must realise that the Republic is the key to the conquest of Africa — conquest without violence". Not, of course, that South Africa is afraid to threaten violence if she does not get her way, as she has already threatened Zambia and Tanzania if they continue to harbour anti-South African guerrilla movements.

The History of Dialogue

South Africa today calls for dialogue with Africa — but it is to be dialogue on her own terms. When in 1962 the Prime Minister of Nigeria, Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, announced in the Nigerian House of Representatives that not only was he prepared to visit South Africa, if invited, but he was willing to exchange ambassadors with Pretoria, Dr. Verwoerd accused him of a provocation and said he was not prepared to allow into the country people whose only aim was "to help turn the Government away from its policy". A later more significant approach was made by the independent African states in 1969 in the form of the Lusaka Manifesto. This was first adopted at the fifth Summit conference of 13 East and Central African states held at Lusaka in April 1969,

and later endorsed by the Organisation of African Unity in September.

The Manifesto stated: "We wish to make clear, beyond all shadow of doubt, our acceptance of the belief that all men are equal, and have equal rights to human dignity and respect, regardless of colour, race, religion or sex. We believe that all men have the right and the duty to participate, as equal members of society, in their own government. We do not accept that any individual or group has any right to govern any other group of sane adults, without their consent, and we affirm that only the people of a society, acting together as equals, can determine what is, for them, a good society and a good social, economic or political organisation".

The manifesto declared that it was in pursuit of these principles that the African states were forced to adopt a position of hostility towards the white-dominated regimes of southern Africa and to work for their liberation. "If the commitment to these principles existed among the States holding power in Southern Africa, any disagreement we might have about the rate of implementation, or about isolated acts of policy, would be matters affecting only our individual relationships with the States concerned... "We would prefer to negotiate rather than destroy, to talk rather than kill. We do not advocate violence; we advocate an end to the violence against human dignity which is now being perpetrated by the oppressors of Africa. If peaceful progress to emancipation were possible, or if changed circumstances were to make it possible in the future, we would urge our brothers in the resistance movements to use peaceful methods of struggle even at some compromise on the timing of change. "But while peaceful progress is blocked by actions of those at present in power in the States of southern Africa, we have no choice but to give to the peoples of those territories all the support of which we are capable in their struggle against their oppressors".

South Africa was openly being invited to make some gesture, however small, of goodwill towards her own non-White people and the peoples of all Africa. In October 1969 Foreign Minister Dr. Hilgard Muller, in a passing reference, said there was "a lot" in the manifesto with which white South Africa agreed, but a great deal of the

document was "based on misconceptions and failure on the part of its authors to inform themselves of the contents and objectives of South Africa's policies."

For the rest there was no official reaction from South Africa at all. But in November 1970, in an interview with the London "Sunday Telegraph", Premier Vorster made it clear that any relationship South Africa entered into with Black African states would be made on the basis that there was no interference with the Republic's domestic policy of apartheid. He was not even prepared to have apartheid on the agenda.

At his famous first public press conference held in Cape Town on May 30, 1971, Vorster made a slight concession. He was prepared to discuss the policy of separate development "for the simple reason that more nonsense has been written and spoken about the policy of separate development than about any other subject I know of. And I will gladly take the opportunity to explain the policy for what it is, and not for what people think it is".

Asked, "when can we expect the first independent Bantustan in South Africa?", Mr. Vorster replied that it was impossible to lay down a timetable. "It depends entirely upon the circumstances of each and every case.. What is important is that it is the policy of the Government to grant full independence to these various nations".

Is this the sort of gesture the African states were thinking of when they adopted the Lusaka Manifesto? It is vital that there should be absolute clarity on this point, because without it, the Lusaka Manifesto could itself prove to be a weapon of disunity in Africa, undermining the entire liberation struggle of the peoples of South Africa.

To sum up:

1. The national liberation movement of South Africa rejects Bantustan as a total fraud, designed to divide the peoples of South Africa and perpetuate their exploitation and oppression by the White minority. The 1955 Freedom Charter of the South African Congress Movement declares: "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White... only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people,

can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief". Bantustan, whatever it is and whatever it becomes, has not been chosen freely by the South African people but has been imposed on them by force by a White minority Government.

2. The national liberation movement of South Africa, irrevocably committed to armed struggle, totally rejects dialogue between the White minority Government of South Africa and the states of independent Africa. There can be no meaningful dialogue until the South African people are free.
3. Dialogue is a weapon of the White minority Government of South Africa to strengthen apartheid in South Africa, to promote the interests of apartheid South Africa in the rest of Africa, to entrench White domination and neo-colonialism in Africa under the banner of anti-communism.
4. The proposal for dialogue has already split the ranks of African unity and weakened the international front against apartheid. Once a meaningful proportion of African states show that they are prepared to compromise with apartheid South Africa, the way will be prepared for the resumption of the arms traffic and full trade relations between the Western states and South Africa, Rhodesia and the Portuguese territories.
5. The African states supporting dialogue are precisely those most closely associated with imperialism; by contrast those opposed to dialogue are in the vanguard of the struggle to establish their own independence and the united action of a free African continent.

African Munich?

Let no one forget that the main African protagonist of dialogue, the Ivory Coast's Houphouet-Boigny, in an interview published in the Abidjan daily newspaper *Fraternite-Matin* on May 3, 1971, said: "Apartheid is a relatively minor aspect". Apartheid as such could not divide Africa, he said, be-

cause "though Africans are victims of it in South Africa and other places the issue of apartheid neither divides the world nor threatens world peace. But if, by guilty negligence or blind fanaticism, we let ourselves be drawn into a war with South Africa about apartheid, we would be offering a new opportunity for communism".

Houphouet-Boigny speaks with the voice of Vorster, to whom he wants to surrender, just as he has surrendered to France. The Paris correspondent of the "Rand Daily Mail" reported on November 6, 1970:

"Ivory Coast's desire for a new form of relationship with South Africa is understood to have the full support of France's President, Mr. Pompidou. Some circles in Paris even claim that President Houphouet-Boigny's policy has been master-minded by Mr. Pompidou personally... France is known to be anxious to maintain her valuable arms contracts with South Africa while at the same time keeping friendly ties with Black Africa."

The African policy of Britain's Tory Government is more guarded, but in essence the same. The arms embargo against South Africa has been relaxed; negotiations with Rhodesia are under way.

Britain's Foreign Minister is Sir Alec Douglas-Home, the man of Munich, who helped Chamberlain in his bid to strengthen Hitler as a bulwark against Communism in Europe. Is not Britain now, for the same reasons, trying to legitimise the South African regime, using the same bogey of the Communist danger in Africa and the Indian Ocean?

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