

A soaring black population faces economic disaster

SIR, — Had Dr van Zyl Slabbert, former professor of sociology, explained the roots of rural black poverty to his academic audience at Natal University, whites would not have remained ignorant and euphoric about it, as he alleged (*The Daily News*, April 12). He could have shown how over-population conduces to poverty and slums and have mentioned the R8,5-million allocated in the recent budget for relief of unemployment.

And he did not explain how the trite catch-word phrase "real reform" could be a panacea for poverty, since, as the New Testament tells us, the poor are always with us.

President Nyerere's remarks would have been enlightening. He has said that agricultural production is the answer but that he could not perform miracles with his people who don't want to work. So, he has made joblessness an offence

and conscripted thousands of idle males for enforced labour.

Even in advanced countries, however, the poor are with them. Market and Opinion Research International Poll finds that seven million Britons cannot afford to pay for their food needs and three millions cannot afford to heat their homes (in that chilly climate!).

In wealthy America, young workless blacks loiter in streets piled high with garbage in the rundown inner city districts where poverty, overcrowding, slums and crime go together.

Ineluctably, the high black population growth rate is a major cause of poverty. A Transvaal hospital has said that it handles 2 000 black teenage pregnancies monthly. While one homeland leader has rightly said that even if the economy be doubled it could not provide jobs for all, yet another, Chief Phatudi, has said

that blacks refuse to limit their large families.

Our whites are among the world's highest-taxed people. They cannot, however, be a golden cornucopia pouring out endless jobs, homes, schools and medical services for a soaring population. As Abraham Lincoln said, you don't strengthen the weak by weakening the strong. Modern industry is increasingly turning over to technology that replaces jobs, and a robot-making firm forecasts that robots will increase five-fold in industry in the near future.

Of the millions overseas without work, many will never find a job, among them university graduates. In Britain 59 percent of young blacks are jobless and in America half of 17 year-old blacks are functionally illiterate and on a treadmill of failure.

Nor can this country's resources carry a greater population. Ineluctably, the choice must be between numbers and the quality of life.

GERALD MACHANIK
(Dr)

Hillcrest

IT is a fact that today's South African Government, under P.W. Botha, is reformist. Just stating this is not enough though — what is important is what lies behind, and has given birth to, this fact.

The Afrikaner parties of the extreme right accuse Botha of torpedoing the boat of "white power" through his reforms.

White liberalism, on the other hand — the dominant force behind the rationalist approach to capitalism — interprets the reforms as the only way to prevent a radicalisation of the anti-apartheid forces in South African society.

Liberals think that more reform needs to be put into practice more rapidly. They think that the current reforms, because they leave out the country's black population, prevent capitalism from seizing the political initiative in the long term. Many of them therefore voted "No" in last November's referendum.

Generally, anti-apartheid forces, inside and outside South Africa, have analysed the reforms as an attempt to perpetuate institutionalised racism. What to an Afrikaner, conditioned by decades of racism, looks like the regime committing political suicide, appears to anti-apartheid forces as just a package of cosmetic measures.

As for the regime, it presents itself as the force that initiated the process. It is quite logical that it should do so.

Reform — as others see it

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Carlos Cardoso, Director of the Mozambican News Agency AIM, attended the University of the Witwatersrand until his country's independence in 1975. After a nine-year absence he visited South Africa shortly before the signing of the Nkomati Accord. As a committed member of the Mozambican ruling establishment, he concludes that, for a variety of reasons, South Africa is in a process of change. The Daily News Foreign Service condensed this summing-up from a series of articles he wrote on his return to Maputo.



No government likes to admit that the policies it has adopted are the work of forces opposed to it.

But when Botha started off down the road of reform he had to explain what he was doing to the more conservative sectors of his electorate. He

used a very expressive phrase. He told his voters: "Adapt or die." In a very forthright manner, P.W. Botha explained that reformism was the order of the day, thanks to the force of history.

In other words, had there been no continued

struggle by the South African people after the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela in 1963, had there been no mass mobilisation of black workers in the factories, had there been no Soweto uprising, if the ANC and Swapo had not existed, if there had been no independence won by Mozambique, Angola and, later, Zimbabwe — in short if the peoples of Southern Africa had not been the ones who were making history over the past 20 years — the South African regime of today would still be apartheid in its "pure" form, apartheid as Verwoerd knew it.

The reforms spell out the fact that apartheid has now been obliged to present a new face to the world.

It is natural for anti-apartheid forces to continue stating that the reforms are not sufficient, and that the struggle will end only when the last apartheid law is swept from the Statute Book, giving place to the legislation of a united and anti-racist South Africa.

But it is also neces-

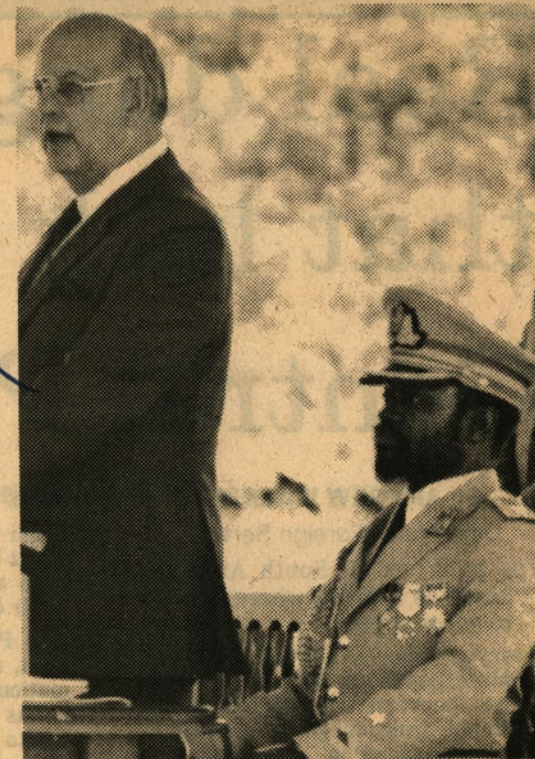
sary to claim the reforms as the product of popular struggles, struggles which, in daily life, are breaking down the barriers between South Africans of different races and colours.

In the universities it is obvious that contact between the races has greatly increased.

This contact has also noticeably increased in suburbs such as Mayfair. This was once inhabited exclusively by whites, mostly Afrikaners. Now you can find whites, coloureds, Indians and blacks all living there. Likewise in the wealthy and cosmopolitan neighbourhood of Hillbrow.

Contact is also normal in the houses and flats of many whites who are regularly visited by black, coloured or Indian friends and acquaintances.

There exists in today's South Africa a black middle class of considerable proportions. In common with the millions of other blacks in the country, it shares the absolute deprivation of political rights. But, in economic terms,



Nkomati... culmination of complex forces.

some blacks are less oppressed than others.

Anyone who visits Soweto today will find a number of urban neighbourhoods that did not exist at the beginning of the 1970s. They are not mere repetitions of the monotonous rows of miserable houses where the black proletariat lives, and where several families will inhabit each matchbox-designed hovel.

In these new districts there live businessmen, doctors, middle level functionaries working for multinational companies. They have cars. They have television sets in their living rooms. They have smart furniture. Their houses

have gardens.

Nowadays there is nothing unusual in members of this class refusing solidarity with black workers' strikes, if these will bring them no immediate benefit.

Many children from this background left South Africa after 1976 to learn the art of guerrilla warfare outside the country. Equally, many of these middle-class families are active in anti-racist organisations, and their involvement in these struggles merits as much praise as does that of poorer strata of the population.

But this is the class which the South African Government sees as a potential buffer between

itself and the mass of black workers. How might the overall behaviour of this class develop?

Opinions are sharply divided. Some argue that, as a class, it has already been co-opted by the regime. Others deny this, and argue that this class could have a key role to play in the creation of a majority-ruled but capitalist South Africa.

A new class alliance could slowly be forged between this class and the white middle class, and perhaps also with a privileged stratum of

skilled black workers (a group that the multinational corporations are carefully nurturing).

In 1976 the Soweto uprising took the initiative away from the Government. Today P.W. Botha is trying to regain that initiative — his government intends to go on the offensive rather than merely respond.

It seems that central to Botha's strategy is the creation of a federal South Africa — which would be composed of a dominant state in which the whites had guaranteed their hold on economic power, surrounded by a number of ethnically-based and poverty-stricken mini-states — today's bantustans.

Botha could then grant South African citizenship to four or five million urban blacks, with the rest of the black population being consigned to the bantustans. The essentials of apartheid would be maintained (even if po-

litical rights were conceded to urban blacks).

Botha has started this process. While the most obvious aspects of discrimination (segregated park benches and so on) are being phased out, hundreds of thousands of blacks are being thrown into the bantustans with a violence that has shocked even Western governments closely allied with Pretoria.

Paradoxically, it happens to be true that P.W. Botha's regime is a reformist one. Changes, reforms, are happening, and are altering the political landscape of South Africa.

But they do not arise simply out of the desires of the National Party leaders. It was mass struggle inside South Africa, on many fronts, and the entire liberation process in the region that obliged the Pretoria Government to look for a reformist way out of its problems.

And in historical terms, that is actually a retreat.

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REFORM - AS OTHERS SEE IT.

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No real progress, warns US official

'Angola, Mozambique accords fragile'

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WASHINGTON. — Recent South African agreements with Angola and Mozambique marked "no real progress toward the goal of regional stability," according to the chairman of the US House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa.

Mr Howard Wolpe, calling the agreements "inherently very fragile," said they result from South African military power and economic collapse of the states in the region.

But Mr John Chettle, a South African who is president of the South Africa Foundation, contended that US policy toward Southern Africa should receive a lot of credit. The Foundation oversees South African business interest in the US.

Mr Chettle said US policy "has led in a greater measure to peace and reconciliation in the area than anything that has happened in the last quar-

ter of a century. I think it deserves enormous congratulations."

The two men took part in a debate on South Africa to be transmitted by a Washington television station, Weta-TV, tonight. It was taped last week.

Forced
Mr Morley Nkosi,

South African-born director of African studies at Hofstra University in New York State, said Mozambique was forced to sign a treaty with South Africa because of the military incursions into Mozambique and the economic hardships caused by the drought.

Another participant in the programme, Mr Pat

Buchanan, a syndicated newspaper columnist and former aide to President Richard Nixon, argued however that South Africa used its military power effectively in Angola which was partly why "the Angolan government has apparently made an agreement to remove 25 000 Cuban troops."

"If that leads to Angola ceasing to be a part of the Soviet empire it'll be good for Black Africa, good for South Africa, good for the United States of America," he said.

Reform

Mr Chettle welcomed the discussions in South Africa about constitutional reform and added, "the idea that the Whites could dictate the future of the country is finished. The idea that this had to be a one unitary state — that there could be no federation or confederalism ... is also out the window". He indicated this could lead to a federalised state with a strong human rights potential.

But Mr Nkosi pointed out the debate was taking place only in the White community because Blacks have been left out.

And Mr Wolpe commented that in the past three years there had been "a very dramatic increase in representation."

He said the Reagan Administration's "constructive engagement" policy has the US being seen "as entering into a long-term accommodation with apartheid," which he said "can only be destructive of American influence and prestige."

Mr Buchanan said US corporations in South Africa were providing jobs and economic growth. "The vast majority of the Black people, in my judgement, in South Africa are interested in progress — economic progress," he said.

Mr Nkosi said US manufacturers go to South Africa for profit from cheap labour and stability provided by "a very repressive regime". — Sapa-AP.