

"SATURDAY REVIEW"NEW YORKMAY 2, 1953THE BLACK MAN'S OUTLOOK By Z.K. Matthews.

IF IT IS to survive, the Union of South Africa must develop a social, economic, and political system that will do justice to the legitimate aspirations of all sections of its multi-racial population. What are its chances? What is the outlook for South Africa in the ~~coming~~ generation?

The answer depends to no small extent upon the view which one holds regarding the ultimate responsibility for a solution. Because the white minority of two and one-half million at present holds the reins of power, it is commonly maintained that this burden rests primarily on the white rulers of the country. This is largely the view of the whites themselves, including both the advocates and the opponents of the policy of apartheid, or separation, which has gained the ascendancy in the country.

Segregationists and anti-degregationists among the whites seem to be agreed that the white man alone can and must solve "the color question", which Prime Minister Daniel Malan has said is the "greatest and most urgent matter on which the election (of April 15, 1953) must hinge." For the segregationist, the matter is quite simple. In Dr. Malan's words: "There are only two directions in which a choice can be made. Equality, that is, the abolition of all color discrimination, or apartheid (separation)...which will grant all those on both sides of the color line their own free development and encouragement according to their capacity and their level of civilization. Between them there is no middle way."

The white anti-segregationist, on the other hand, has serious misgivings about this formulation of the South African dilemma. First, he knows that any state founded on a denial of equality to the majority of the population has at its very heart the seeds of its own destruction. Second, he knows that, however plausible it may sound, the theory that apartheid will grant "free development" on both sides of the color line is a piece of deception that deceives no one, least of all the people on whom this policy is imposed.

The white anti-segregationist sees that his segregationist countryman has assumed an uncompromising attitude and that there seems to be no possibility of a change of heart on his part. This inclines him to become pessimistic and to regard the whole situation as a drama in which the principal characters move irresistibly to a tragic denouement which they seem powerless to avoid. Whatever may be the cathartic effect upon those who look upon the South African drama in this way, the present writer is not satisfied that this is a fruitful approach to the matter.

THERE is still another approach which seems equally erroneous, and that is the approach of the incorrigible optimist who subscribes to the adage "alles sal reg kom" - "everything will turn out right." This is the person who, Micawber-like, expects something to turn up somehow which will miraculously make all the pieces of the South African jig-saw puzzle fit into their places. So he specializes in advising the victims of apartheid to be patient and to trust the hite "friends" who by some sort of prevision have advance knowledge that things are bound to change for the better. This may be a relaxing attitude, but while there is no doubt a destiny which shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will, there is also something to be said for the view that faith without works is dead.

For my part, the crux of the matter can be quickly stated. It is that no solution of the South African problem, however enlightened or unenlightened, will ever be successful unless it takes account of the views of the non-whites of the country. South Africa is a country with a population of twelve million people, and not just two and one-half million whites. This may be an awkward fact to keep steadily in mind, but it just cannot be argued out of existence.

South African history has been full of attempts by the white man to proceed on the assumption that it is not necessary to take African views into account. Sometimes the view has been held that the Africans are a child racee who do not really know what is good for them and whose interests can be left in the hands of their self-appointed

white guardians. The emergence of any articulate opinion among Africans is discounted. African leaders have been called agitators or extremists for daring to suggest that their people have a stake in the land of their birth. Laws have been passed making it illegal for these "agitators" to utter any words or do anything that might "promote hostility" between black and white. A whole legal system has been created to make it "illegal" for Africans to promote their own rights and interests.

Yet attempts to silence African leaders cannot and have not resulted in the disappearance or any serious diminution of the African as a factor to be reckoned with in the situation. Those of us who have at various times been elected by the African people to express their views on matters affecting their welfare have tried to discharge our functions to the best of their ability. The function of an African leader, as I see it, is to put forward the views of the African not as the Government would like them to be but as they really are. It would be very easy to win the Government's applause by giving the assurance that all is lovely in the garden, that the African favours apartheid, or, to quote a recent newspaper report, that Africans are interested in "jobs, not politics", and that any trouble among Africans is due to the misguided efforts of a few intellectuals from the big cities. But none of these things would be true. A few Africans have reaped golden benefits from whispering these things into the ears of gullible whites, some in high places. This might deceive some Europeans; it only amuses Africans. Those Africans who are not prepared to sell their birthright have not and will not cease to state, without fear or favour, the short-term and long-term demands of their people.

The African has hitherto taken his stand on a policy of cooperation between black and white at all levels of our national life. He has rejected the notion that he has less claim to some areas of the country than he has to others. He maintains that what has been built in his land has been the result of joint efforts of black and white. However humble the contribution of the African may have been in certain directions, there can

to his mind be no doubt that his contribution has been indispensable. But whatever the different stresses laid by European or African, the fact is that all we are and hope to be is a compound of the efforts of all sections of our population. To the African the policy of apartheid, or separation, or non-cooperation, flies in the face of the facts of our national life.

IT MAY be argued that even if the European were prepared to accept and put into practice the policy of cooperation, the African in the present state of his development would not be in a position to cooperate with the European on a basis of equality. Admittedly not every African is ready for this cooperation. But neither is every European. There is an increasing number of Africans in South Africa today who are more Westernized in the real sense of the term than many a European, just as there are Africans who may not for a long time be ready to participate intelligently in the business of modern government. But is there any sound reason why all Europeans should be lumped together as politically wise and all Africans as politically unintelligent? The unit of cooperation is the individual and the stress belongs on individual merit, not on any group's lack of merit.

It may be objected that such a policy might result in placing some Africans in positions of authority over some Europeans, violating the South African tradition that authority is the exclusive province of the white man. I can only say that as long as that tradition or attitude of mind prevails, we shall of course search in vain for peaceful and harmonious relations between black and white in South Africa.

As against apartheid or total segregation as proposed and practised by the Nationalists the United Party (the principal opposition party) defines its racial policy under the term "trusteeship." This purports to be based on the principle that those who can stand on their own feet should exercise guardianship over those who cannot until the latter are able to stand by themselves on more or less equal terms. Properly understood, this implies that the European's duty is to assist the African to advance as rapidly as possible

Unfortunately, the high-sounding moral principle stated here comes into conflict with the self-interest of the European, who is not at all sure that "trusteeship" will safeguard his present supremacy for all time. The advocates of trusteeship keep assuring their more timid brethren that the European has had such a long start over the African in the arts of civilization that he did never fear being overtaken. In other words, trusteeship, as a policy, is designed to achieve the same goal as apartheid, namely, to assure the European permanent paramountcy in the country.

A FURTHER objection to this policy is that it implies that all Africans, whatever their level of development, require the tutelage of the white man. This may conceivably have been true at some time. It is true no longer. The idea of trusteeship can be justly applied only if it is applied not only to sections of the African population who need tutelage but also to sections of the white population which need it just as badly.

For these reasons Africans do not favour trusteeship, because it would appear that the trustee is given greater protection than his ward, and it is taken for granted that the trustee will always be white. Neither apartheid nor trusteeship are compatible with the principle of cooperation which the African has regarded as the only sound policy for South Africa.

The African stand has always been for cooperation, as I have said. But the rise to power of non-cooperationists among the Europeans is giving rise, as it was bound to do, to a movement of non-cooperation among Africans. If the African does take the cue of non-cooperation from the whites who force it upon him, it would be well to understand just where this is likely to lead.

The white advocates of apartheid do not really mean to divide white from black entirely. They mean to keep the black in subjection. To this the Africans will not docilely ~~concede~~ submit. But carried to its logical conclusion by Africans, non-coope-

non-cooperation would mean absolute division into two wholly independent and unavoidably hostile units. No African State would countenance for long the "free movement" of Africans to provide migratory labour for the White State. As rapidly as it could such a state would try to make itself as self-reliant as possible in every conceivable sphere and to this end would seek cooperation not from its neighbour but from other foreign states. Just as the Union seeks today to distance itself from Great Britain, such an African state would do its best to distance itself from the Union.

But the logical outcome of this kind of African nationalism would also be a policy of "Africa for the Africans." The ultimate aim of such a movement would be the eventual capture of the whole area for the eight million Africans and the removal of these Europeans who are not prepared to live on terms of equality with Africans. The two and one-half million Europeans who nowadays talk so glibly about deporting the country's 300,000 Indians may not realize that to the African nationalist the deportation of two and one-half million Europeans does not appear any more preposterous or impracticable.

The European may feel confident that he could, by superior force, make such a prospect impossible. But he would do well to ask himself how much help he could really depend on from the outside to maintain himself if his policies threaten the peace and the delicate balances of a world already heavily burdened with conflicts and divisions. The time is past when the white man in Africa can live by the gun alone.

The point I am trying to make is that if the idea of non-cooperation prevails, it will be incompatible with the preservation of an integral South Africa. If this is to be the development - non-cooperation on both sides of the color line - there will be no "areas of liberty" for anyone, black or white. Yet this is the direction in which the Nationalist leadership in South Africa has pushed all of us, unleashing passions and fears that are making more and more difficult any efforts to teach a peaceful solution.

During the past year, South Africa has been the scene of a passive resistance movement on a scale never before witnessed in the land where Mahatma Gandhi first tried

out his methods of non-violent struggle. This method, used before by Indians on a small scale, has now been embraced by the Africans, the great majority of the country's population and the backbone of its economic life. This movement was launched last June by the African National Congress, the premier political organisation of the Africans, as an attempt to bring about social change and induce cooperation by peaceful means. The response of the people and the self-control and discipline of great masses of people in the face of police provocation and ill-treatment in the prisons has amazed and alarmed the white population. The government's response is shown by the two bills recently passed by the Union Parliament empowering the Minister of Justice to declare emergencies where organised resistance to apartheid appears, and to impose on resisters penalties up to five years' imprisonment, fifteen lashes, and a fine of £500. These measures were supported not only by the Nationalists but by the principal white opposition, the United Party.

THIS means that the majority of the white population has aligned itself with the extremist racialist policies of the Nationalist government. Because of this the Nationalists could and did win the general elections held on April 15. They will undoubtedly regard their victory as a go-ahead signal for the use of the extreme measures already authorized. The use of these powers will in all probability discredit in the eyes of the Africans and other non-whites the use of peaceful, non-violent methods of bringing about social change. In other words, the use of force on the white side will bring to the forefront among the non-whites those leaders who also believe in violent methods as the best way of achieving their ends. That is the sombre prospect now in view.

This is what will surely happen unless the believers in cooperation between black and white, especially on the white side, can come forward and summon up enough courage to break loose from the fanaticism of the present white leadership and @luuch a new current in the direction of the policy of equal rights for all.

This is not alien to South Africa. On the contrary, it had a long and honourable tradition in the old Cape Colony in the past. There are signs that such a movement is at least being considered by certain groups in the white population. These include the small group of Europeans led by Patrick Duncan who have identified themselves with the passive resistance movement, the leaders of the Anglican and other non-Afrikaner churches who have registered their opposition to the present totalitarian trend of events, some leaders of industry who see that their economic interests are bound up in the development of a better-paid, better-educated, better-skilled, better-living labour force, and the small band of liberals who have recently announced their intention to form a new party.

The big question is the extent to which these groups are going to seek the cooperation of the non-whites. The question is whether they have enough strength and enough ability to overcome the reluctance of the average liberal white South African to work with instead of for the Africans.

The other big question is whether they have time in which to produce and display these qualities. For it is clear that meeting-points between Europeans and Africans are disappearing. We are entering a phase which will witness even more intensified and fanatical attempts to entrench the system of permanent baaskap - bosschip - of white over black. This will in all likelihood bring on violent explosions of both a local and general character.

But this will not be the end. I reject the apocalyptic interpretation of these events. Something lies beyond if we keep struggling toward it. It may still be possible, I am convinced, for South Africa to find itself, and for South Africans to produce a generation and a leadership which will abandon the separatist tradition that has grown, like a cancer, past these forty years. But to bring this about we have to struggle to keep this hope alive in the turbulent days that seem to lie so immediately ahead.