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Daily Dispatch 21.3.1957

LONDON, WEDNESDAY

READERS'

"Black Englishmen"

To the Editor, Daily Dispatch.

Sir,—In the separate University Education Bill there is a provision dealing with the staffs of the Bantu Colleges saying that members of staff may be dismissed if they propagate any idea calculated "to cause or promote antagonism amongst any section of the population of the Union against any other section." Apparently the only person to be exempt from this regulation will be Sen. Verwoerd, the future controller of these colleges. For Sen. Verwoerd said at a meeting in Stellenbosch last Friday (SAPA 16/3/57) that these new Bantu Universities would not turn the Bantu into "a black Englishman to struggle against the Afrikaner." Thus Sen. Verwoerd subtly and falsely insinuates that the English-speaking South Africans are somehow "enemies" of the Afrikaans-speaking, and that they somehow are recruiting the Bantu in a war of conquest against the Afrikaans.

Does not a remark such as this of Sen. Verwoerd's stir up racial strife? Is his remark not calculated "to cause or promote antagonism?" Should not Sen. Verwoerd be dismissed under the very terms of this new Bill?

But perhaps I am maligning Sen. Verwoerd by failing to understand how phrases such as "to cause or promote antagonism" are to be defined. No doubt this phrase is to be defined as any criticism of Sen. Verwoerd; and any remarks he may make abusing any section of the population are to be taken, by definition, as models of "sweetness and light."

Rational men will see this double think for what it is.

Apart from the racialistic intentions of this phrase, "black Englishman," I wonder what else Sen. Verwoerd meant by it. What practical measures is it pointing to? Are we to understand that English Literature, say, as a subject in the tribal colleges, will be considered a dangerous subject? Perhaps Shakespeare is to be banned lest his works should create "black Englishman," this strange, new bogey in Sen. Verwoerd's mind?—I am, etc.,

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