SOUTH AFRICA -

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

by bob laufer

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PART ONE: BACKGROUND

The concepts of The Volk, Trekking, and Apartheid combine to form the core of Nationalist thinking in South Africa. The legislative program sponsored by the Nationalist Party are born out of the historical experience with which the Afrikaners (the descendants of Dutch settlers) identify. Each of the terms signifies a specific event or conceptualization of this experience. They feed on each other and give direction and support to the Nationalist leadership. The concept of The Volk is the most vital of the three, for it represents a "Unity", while the other two are means of maintaining that Unity. In order to actually comprehend the race problem in South Africa, it must be kept in mind that until very recently, the "race problem" was the antagonism between English and Afrikaners. The realization that the Afrikaners used every means at their disposal to avoid mixing with the English ought to provide some kind of measurement of their response to mixing with the non-whites.

THE VOLK

The Volk is a mythical conception of the race which came from Holland between 1652 and 1800. These men had in common a stern Calvinist religion, a code of law, and an education built upon their religious beliefs. The only relatively recent addition to the activity of the Volk is the political wing, the Nationalist Party. The necessity for political independence or dominance, depending on the situation, became apparent to the Boers (Afrikaners) during the 1800's as the only means of protecting the purity of the group. The purity to be maintained was not only sexual but religious and intellectual. The Volk was first threatened between 1820 and 1833 by the English, and later by the discovery of diamonds and then gold in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. The loss of the Boer War was another serious threat to the purity of The Volk. This is especially true in light of the role of Smuts and Botha (the first 2 Prime Ministers of South Africa; Botha died in 1919, while Smuts was in and out of power till 1948) in attempting to concilliate Boer and Briton between 1907 and 1948. In so doing they reaped the scorn and contempt of the pure nationalist elements of The Volk. The response of the purists has been to form thorough-going Nationalist Parties every time Afrikanerdom was threatened by moderation. In the case of the Hertzog-Smuts coalition (1932), Malan formed the Purified Nationalist Party. From the end of the Boer War till 1948, the Afrikaners struggled to maintain the pure Volk while in a politically subordinate role. Once they succeeded in attaining political control, nothing was to be allowed to interfere with the purification of The Volk. To insure this purity, all other groups had to be separated and thereby purified. Reification of "Volk purity" was essential for the Afrikaner. Only if he could implant in other groups a desire for separation would his separation and continued rule be insured.

It is within the context of Volk purity that both trekking and apartheid play functional roles. In other words, to examine the legislative measures introduced in the name of apartheid and to see whether or not Nationalists can be persuaded to change their policies is possible only if the role of apartheid is understood in relation to its function of protecting the purity of The Volk.

TREKKING

Trekking was the initial response of the Dutch to any threat to their system. The most famous of these treks occurred in 1835-36 and is known to history as the Great Trek. The result of the Great Trek was the re-establishment of the social system prevalent in the Cape and the founding of the Orange Free State and the South African Republic. This arrangement lasted until 1899, when the Boer War began. Having lost the war and having no land open to Trek to, a period of separation and struggle with the British elements began, culminating in the elections of 1948,

when the Nationalist Party came to power under the leadership of D.F. Malan. On
its ascendance a policy known as apartheid began to become the law of the land.

Trekking and the Great Trek in particular today represent part of the Volk history
and mythology. Historically it represents the strong desire to maintain the pur-
ity of the race and the intense suffering the heroes of these treks were willing
to undergo to maintain that purity. It also provides a historical basis -- mili-
tary conquest -- on which the Afrikaner justifies his control over the Bantu (Af-
ricans). Finally, it provides a legal base from which to argue against those who
claim the land was originally owned by Africans, inasmuch as it is true that the
Boers entered the Northern areas of South Africa at a time when few Africans were
living on the plains. The claim of the right of first settlement, however, is his-
torically inaccurate: the emptiness of the plains was due to a long period of war
and Zulu expansion. In the eyes of the Afrikaner population, however, the time
of the white arrival and the emptiness of the plains gives this argument validity.

The mythology of Afrikanerdom claims the great heroes from these treks. It is used
to emphasize the need to remain faithful to the heritage of the forefathers and
maintain the purity of the race in the great tradition of the Trekkers.

APARTHEID

Apartheid (or separate development, as it is now known because apartheid has bad
connotations) is the functional equivalent of Trekking in a situation where there
is no place to Trek to. Its thrust is twofold, creating conditions which are most
favorable to the maintenance of white supremacy (thus ensuring Afrikaner purity),
and being theoretically and morally justifiable because it provides for the pro-
tection and purity of all groups within the Republic.

Its second function is just as important as the first, since it makes good sense
to the Afrikaner to protect the purity of a national group. Indeed, the Afrikaner
can place God and virtue on his side regardless of any opposition, since he is
doing for the other groups what he claims is so essential for his own. By main-
taining, in theory at least, that he is providing the means whereby the native may
flourish according to his own customs and traditions, the Afrikaner is giving the
African theoretical equality with himself. This does not mean equality in the
sense of equal footing in South Africa; in fact, the opposite is true. He is of-
fering the African the opportunity to withdraw from White South Africa and seek
his future in the Black Bantustan. Just as the Afrikaners have done in every in-
stance, the Africans ought to maintain their purity through isolation.

Only if the force behind apartheid is understood does the danger of this pholosophy
become clear. Persuasion by friends to abandon what appears as a policy calculated
to bring about national suicide appears to the Afrikaner to be a threat to their
national integrity and racial purity. Any such advice will be rejected and blamed
on either naivety or community propaganda. In either case, it cannot make a dent
on the leadership of the Nationalist Party, for they are supported by the institu-
tions of the Church, School, Family, and History. In this perspective, only two
possibilities are open to those who would eliminate this regime: (1) an interna-
tional boycott, or, if this fails because the major powers are unwilling to cooper-
ate, (2) an internal guerilla-type uprising.

PART TWO: APARTHEID—ITS MEANING

In South Africa, the government pursues a policy known to the world as apartheid
(now called separate development). In essence, this means keeping the large ma-
jority of the country free for whites: about 86% of the land is to go to the
whites. The remaining 14%, to become self-governing Bantustans (African reserves),
is left for the 70% of the population which is African. This land is today barely
capable of holding those who occupy it, much less all those Africans presently en-

gaged in the industry of South Africa. This question aside for the moment, the recent election in Transkei (a Bantustan) shows what is really meant by the Nationalists when they talk about African self-government.

In November of 1963, there occurred the first election in Transkei, Xhosa, and Sotho Bantustan, of a 109-seat legislature. Of these seats, 45 are elective and the remainder (64) appointed by the South African government (4 paramount chiefs and 60 recognized chiefs). Chief Mantanzima, the favorite of the Nationalist Party, formed a party and contested the elective seats. Though he lost most of them, he was still asked to form a government, which he was able to do with the support of most of the appointed chiefs. Thus, the election was merely an impressive but harmless sideshow put on for the benefit of the world.

"SELF-GOVERNMENT"

Though South Africa has made much of self-government in the Bantustans, it has kept control of external affairs,and defense, certain aspects of the administration of justice, and South African police sent to the Transkei or for the maintenance of law and order or the preservation of internal security.[1] As a last straw, all legislation is subject to approval of South Africa's President. Instead of self-government for the Transkei, a puppet regime has been established to give South Africa a more favorable international posture without in face changing the situation at all.

A brief look at education, income, military expenditures, trade, and foreign investment will make it quite clear what are the major problems in trying to turn South Africa from apartheid toward multi-racialism.

EDUCATION

In the field of education, the record of South Africa is no better than in the execution of the Bantustan plan. Total figures of the number of school children enrolled are presented as evidence of the great effort being made to give the African a good education. (See Tables 1 and 2 below!) In addition, it has been stated by the Minister of Bantu education that the annual expense per pupil is 130 Rand (Rand = $1.40) on white children and 13 Rand on African children.

TABLE 1: PUPILS BY RACIAL GROUP AND BY STANDARD (GRADE), 1958 -- in 000's[2]

Standard	Sub-St. A & B	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
White	130	66	66	65	64	58	61	54	39	24	17
African	628	221	166	119	89	59	46	30	9	2	1
White as % of African	21%	33%	40%	55%	72%	98%	130%	180%	430%	1200%	1700%

TABLE 2: AFRICANS IN EACH STANDARD AS A PERCENTAGE OF AFRICAN POPULATION OF THAT AGE[3]

Sub-St. A&B	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X
45.8%	16.3%	12.2%	9.6%	6.0%	4.4%	3.5%	2.2%	0.7%	0.0015%	0.0007%

The actual development of educational opportunities for the African can hardly be considered a major opening of education to the African. Indeed, it is hard to see it as any opening at all: of the Africans entering the first standard (grade), 0.4% go to the tenth standard, compared with 26% of whites. As South Africans need education in order to participate effectively in an industrial society demanding technical and verbal skills, it is clearly to the interest of the whites to keep education a scarce commodity in the African community.

The close relationship between educational and economic supremacy is shown clearly when the income of the South African white is compared with other Europeans, while

the plight of the African in a country as rich as South Africa becomes an even greater inequity:

TABLE 4: 1959 NATIONAL INCOME PER CAPITA BY RACIAL GROUP -- in pounds[4]

	South Africa	Britain	France	Italy	Ghana
Whites	425	364	312	163	
Africans	39				88

DEPRIVATION - REVOLT - REPRESSION

A nation developing its economy through the deprivation of one sector of its population must either be willing to increase that sector's share of economic wealth as soon as possible, or prepare itself by arming a sufficient number of men to keep the slaves from staging a successful rebellion. South Africa has chosen the second path, and its 1963-4 security budget of over 200 million Rands is more than two and a half times that of 1960-61.[5] Inasmuch as South Africa has not been engaged in any war with an external enemy (nor is this presently a likely possibility), this amount is almost completely used for suppressing its African population. By the end of 1964, an estimated 140,000 men will be in uniform, plus a police force of 29,000 men.[6] The rationale that this is preparation against "communism" is clearly fraudulent, since the term as used in the General Law Amendment of 1962 is so vague as to include anybody who advocates policies other than those approved by the Nationalist Government.

In late 1962, a terrorist organization known as Toqo began activities in South Africa. This gave the South African military an opportunity to hunt "Communists" and by June 1963, over 3000 alleged Poqo supporters were in jail, along with some 1400 members of other banned organizations.[7] This intense police activity seems to have dealt crippling blows to Poqo (connected with the Pan-African Congress). At the same time, another group, known as Umkonto We Sizwe and connected with the African National Congress , is still very much alive. In contrast to Poqo, Umkonto We Sizwe is oriented more towards acts of sabotage. As both terror and sabotage mount, counter terror -- police action legitimated by the state -- grows as well.

The internal dangers are not the only ones which the African faces in overthrowing the South African regime. Countries whose citizens invest in and trade with South Africa are also a major roadblock facing the African population.

AMERICAN INVESTMENT AND TRADE

American investments total more than $700 million.[8] The firms involved are among the most important U.S. corporations in many fields of consumer and industrial goods, and finance. In addition, American money is involved in gold production in the Anglo-Transvaal Consolidated Co., Ltd. through Kennecott Copper.[9]

British investment totals $2,500,000,000; and French, Swiss, and West Germans have sizable investments in South Africa also. A careful look at UN debates indicates that no effective action can be taken against the Republic of South Africa because these investors won't cooperate. They will vote for resolutions calling for voluntary sanctions and then will have nothing to do with them.

To investments is added the question of exports and imports. Here again, the US does a nice piece of business with South Africa:

TABLE 4: US/SA TRADE, 1961, in $ million [10]

US Exports to South Africa		US Imports from South Africa	
Machinery	$73.3	Uranium	$86.8
Chemicals	26.5	Woos	24.1
Cars	22.3	Diamonds	20.7
Cotton	16.2	Copper	12.7
Synthetic Fibre	15.8	Lobster tails	11.6
Paper	10.2	Other	49.6
Other	63.5		$205.5
	$227.8		

These figures clearly indicate the unappealing nature of any economic boycott of South Africa. Close ally Great Britain's hold on 50% of South Africa's trading makes a US-supported boycott even less likely.

PERSUASION — ITS LEGACY, VIOLENCE

Rather than support a boycott, then, the US and England are going to continue to use persuasion to change the attitude of the South African government. It is quite clear to South Africa that words do not cost money or squeeze the economy. As long as only words are used, no change will occur in their racial policies.

It appears that the US believes it has somewhere between ten and twenty years before the situation in South Africa reaches the revolutionary stage. Under this assumption, a policy of persuasion rather than pressure is being applied to South Africa by the major Western powers. Under such conditions, it appears likely that the world is in for another round of violence and bloodshed. A long and protracted guerilla-type war in South Africa is inevitable unless there is international interference in the form of a boycott or (that failing) UN military intervention. The boycott ought indeed to be tried first. But if a racial war breaks out, it would be both genocide and suicide. This would leave a mark on South and the world from which we would nottsoon recover, and we have a responsibility to protect South Africans (black and white), and all of us, from that prospect.

PART THREE: POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS

This section will be a brief descriptive presentation of the political organizations which exist in South Africa today.

NATIONALIST PARTY

Leadership: Hendrik Voerword
Supportive base: Afrikaner population of South Africa
Power position: The ruling party in South Africa, with 104 seats in parliament
Policy: White supremacy through apartheid

See part one of this article for the background of the Nationalist Party. Historically it came into existence as the Purified Nationalist Party in 1932 under D.F. Malan. The various elements were combined in 1944 when Malan, Strijdom, Swart, and Voerword reorganized the Party. It was the Opposition until 1948, when it became the Government Party in a coalition with the Afrikaner Party, led by Nicholas Havenga. These two parties later merged, and the Nationalist Party has maintained itself in power since its first election. The apartheid legislation is its major achievement. Another cornerstone of its policy was the initiation, in 1961, of the Republic form of government

UNITED PARTY

Leadership: Sir Villers de Graaf
Supportive base: The English-speaking population in South Africa
Power Position: The official Opposition, with 49 seats in parliament
Policy: Economic integration and social discrimination; still essentially racist

in its outlook.

The United Party is essentially the remnant of the party led by Jan Smuts, but stripped of most of its Afrikaner support. Since its loss of power in 1948, the party has continually lost strength and has little to offer in the way of opposition to the Nationalist Party. It is less committed to economic discrimination and recognizes the importance and dependence of South Africa on its black population in the functioning of the economy. If it were to achieve power, it probably would repeal some of the repressive legislation which is likely to interfere with the economic development of South Africa. It is far more sensitive to external criticism and might be pressured into some ameliorative moves by international opinion, in the hope of giving the nation a better outside press. Its policy, as far as social discrimination is concerned, is relatively close to the Nationalist Party's, and it has supported much of the legislation which is aimed at keeping the races socially segregated. At one time it campaigned on the slogan of "Discrimination with Justice". It is a party which was closely tied to Commonwealth policies and opposed to the withdrawal of South Africa from the Commonwealth (in 1961, with the coming of the Republic). It would probably be more prone to living under a "rule of law" than the Nationalist Party.

PROGRESSIVE PARTY

<u>Leadership</u>: Jan Stetlyer and Harry Oppenheimer
<u>Supportive base</u>: Big business and the more liberal elements of the United Party
<u>Power Position</u>: one seat in parliament
<u>Policy</u>: Suffrage based upon educational and financial qualifications. The approach is to limit the numbersof non-whites voting, which will enable the white man to perpetuate his control over the nation for the forseeable future. And those non-whites who are able to participate, would do so under white tutelage. The attempt is to ensure political and economic domination by the whites by erecting a front which indicates a tendency toward equality -- or show without substance

The Progressive Party, if it were to come to power, would give some electoral power to the non-whites and would enable the non-white leadership to take a part, though a minor one, in the political process. It would probably remove nearly all the repressive legislation in the economic sphere and a good deal in the social sphere. It favors a constitution with an entrenched bill of rights and a Senate with the power to block discriminatory legislation. At the present time it might be able to avoid a complete breakdown between white and non-white and serve as a short-term transitionary government. As far as a long-term government in South Africa, it is unlikely that it could succeed.

LIBERAL PARTY

<u>Leadership</u>: Peter Brown (formerly Alan Paton)
<u>Supportive base</u>: a small liberal element in the population
<u>Power position</u>: no seats in parliament
<u>Policy</u>: universal suffrage and a non-racial society

The Liberal Party, if South Africa is ever to become a truly multi-racial society, could successfully participate in a government in which white and non-white cooperate. Its membership is essentially white and drawn from the English-speaking part of the population. The Liberal Party is presently trying to increase its cooperation with the non-white organizations and taking an active part in trying to bring pressure -- both internal and external -- to bear on the Nationalist Party to change its policies. Its size is quite small and its appeal to the white population extremely limited. It is not likely in the near future to increase its white membership. Under these conditions, it cannot play a dominant role in the struggle between the whites and non-whites in South Africa.

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

<u>Leadership</u>: ex-Chief Albert Luthuli
<u>Supportive base</u>: a large segment of the African population

Power Position: it is presently banned
Policy: Universal suffrage and a non-racial society

The African National Congress goes back as far as 1882 and first took on its present name in the early twentieth century. It has battled against discriminatory policies since its inception and until very recently was dedicated to a policy of non-violent opposition as its means of protest. When this policy was turned into a farce by the police methods and the subsequent banning of the Congress, it went underground. At the present time, it may well be the best hope of South Africa's turning toward a non-racial society. The longer the present situation is allowed to continue, the less likely becomes the possibility of Congress' leading the society to a peaceful non-racial society. In addition, as the situation becomes worse the more radical and anti-white elements will come to control the Congress; and the chances for a non-racial society will be dead.

PAN-AFRICANIST CONGRESS

Leadership: Robert Sobukwe
Supportative base: the more radical and anti-white groups in the African population.
Power position: banned
Policy: African domination of the political institutions, tinged with some racialism. They claim that those whites who are willing to cooperate with them are welcome, and this is undoubtedly true. Patrick Duncan, son of the former Governor-General of South Africa, is an adherent of the PAC.

The Pan-Africanist Congress is a splinter group from the African Nationalist Congress and is more militant and anti-white. The split occurred in 1958. It has a sizable following, which tends to grow as the repression of the African grows. It is the group which organized the Sharpeville demonstration, which the South African police turned into the Sharpeville massacre. Sobukwe was arrested for that demonstration and in court challenged the validity of the pass laws (which caused the demonstration in the first place), and refused to plead wither guilty or not guilty. The PAC has been associated with a terrorist group known as Poqo, which was responsible for a great deal of unrest during 1962-63.

CONGRESS ALLIANCE

Composed of: The African National Congress, South African Indian Congress, South African Coloured People's Congress, the white Congress of Democrats, and the South African Congress of Trade Unions.
Policy: universal suffrage and a non-racial society

The Alliance is an attempt to bring together the various non-white elements in South Africa and those whites who are willing to work with the non-whites. It was chiefly responsible for the development of Umkonto We Sizwe (Spear of the Nation; see above), an organization specializing in sabotage. The parent organization, or the most influential, is the African National Congress.

NAT'L UNION OF SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS

Leadership: Jonty Driver
Supportive base: South African English Universities and Fort Hare University
Policy: universal suffrage and a non-racial society

NUSAS has worked dilligently with such organizations as the Liberal Party and the ANC in protest campaigns against the policy of the present government. It has tried to gain help for those who wish to get education (non-whites) both in the Republic and for those who could not be educated inside to get them scholarships outside the country.   It has tried to exert pressure through the organ of the international student community, and has asked for economic sanctions against the government as long as it continues its policy of apratheid. It has worked vigorously against all sorts of discriminatory legislation over the past years. In addition, it is itself a multi-racial organization and does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race or religion in its membership criteria.

FOOTNOTES

1. Report of the (UN) Special Commission on the Policy of Apartheid of the Government of South Africa (9-19-63), pp. 48-9

2. Economic and Social Consequences of Racial Discriminatory Practices (1960: UN).

3. same as note 1, p. 95

4. same as note 2, p. 16

5. same as note 1, pp. 120-122

6. ibid.

7. ibid., p. 112

8. Gonze, Colin, George Hauser, and Peggy Sturges, "South African Crisis and US Policy" (1963: NY: American Committee on Africa), pp. 48-49

9. Ainslie, Rosalynde, "The Unholy Alliance" (1962: NY: American Committee on Africa), p. 22

10. Gonze et al, op. cit., pp. 48-49.

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Stone's Weekly; ( ) Liberation; ( ) The liberal democrat (Cal.); ( ) The Minority of One;
( ) Monthly Review; ( ) National Guardian; ( ) New Generation (liberal Catholic); ( ) New
University Thought; ( ) Peace Politics Newsletter; ( ) Southern Patriot; ( ) Texas Observ-
er; ( ) War/Peace Report