

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

JCB-28 The Hope for Change in  
South Africa

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2952 N. Kendale Avenue  
Toledo, Ohio

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Dear Mr. Nolte:

Since the end of World War II the world's condemnation of the Republic of South Africa has continued unabated. The General Assembly of the United Nations has passed resolution after resolution urging, demanding that the Government of South Africa change its ways. Because of its policy South Africa was forced to withdraw from the British Commonwealth of Nations in 1961. Its internal security was greatly threatened in 1960-61 and again at the end of 1962. It almost suffered economic collapse three years ago, after Sharpeville. Yet today, with apartheid, the South African Republic is stronger than it has ever been before.

Its economic development, considering world opinion, has been miraculous. In mid-November its gold and foreign assets totaled \$720,000,000, the highest level in history. There are few countries in our world which offer the investor such an attractive market. Last year American companies in South African industry averaged a 27% profit. Thus foreign investment which was leaving a few years ago is now rapidly pouring in. A good example is General Motors and Ford which plan to spend a total of \$45,000,000 for expansion in the next few years. United States investment is now over \$600,000,000 and British investment has risen to \$2,800,000,000.

Major building developments in Johannesburg alone indicate that White South Africans have great confidence in their future. In addition to a \$5,000,000 nineteen-storey office building and a \$6,000,000 seventeen-storey hotel, a \$28,000,000 thirty-storey center occupying four central city blocks (it will be comparable to Rockefeller Center) will be built. Then there is the Government's plan to spend \$630,000,000 on its Orange River irrigation and power scheme in the next decades.

Secondary industry has now developed to the point where it can supply virtually all the basic needs of the country. And even with the talk of economic boycott South Africa's exports and imports have reached new highs. It has gold (a record billion dollars produced in the year ending in June, 1963) and diamonds which the world's powers, both East and West, are reluctant not to buy.

What About Boycott?

A boycott of South Africa would be unsuccessful without an accompanying sea and air blockade. This is no more likely than the possibility that the Western powers might join in an embargo. At this time, the United States is even reluctant to cut off all arms shipments to South Africa and England is not even willing to respect America's embargo on Cuba when it means jobs and money for Britons. If England and the United States were to cut off economic contact with South Africa there are other nations (Italy, West Germany, Japan) willing and eager to take up the slack. Recently when the West German Government was approached by some African states to join a boycott against South Africa, it refused. The economic facts were clear: its general trade with South Africa amounted to about \$280,000,000 a year and South Africans bought ten times more from Germany than any other African nation.

Even an embargo on oil (a possibility suggested by knowledgeable students of the problem) which is crucial to South African industry, has not met with any success. Iran, the largest supplier of South Africa's oil refuses to participate unless there is world-wide agreement. Otherwise they believe their loss would be someone else's profit. South Africa would still get oil somewhere. Oil producers seek some kind of agreement while South Africa is stepping up her search for oil at home.

The Rest of the Continent

While African political leaders have talked a good game against South Africa few African nations are able to do more than just that. There has been a boycott of the South African Airways (which now flies to Europe via Portuguese territories) and some boycott of South African goods. These have caused South Africa some inconvenience but they have not hurt her; they have been more Africa's loss. For instance, Kenya's boycott will cost her much more than it does South Africa. Government leaders in Northern Rhodesia told me they might cut off some trade but it would be too costly for them to attempt a complete boycott. "We are too dependent on South African goods."

Algeria, Ghana and Tanganyika have given considerable help to South African political refugees, to the point of aiding in the training of guerilla armies. But there seems to be increasing support in Africa for the attitude that Africans within South Africa must do more for themselves if they want continued support from the outside. An important Government official in Kenya told me that if it were left to him alone he would personally see that no political refugees from South Africa were allowed in his country. "These people should not be leaving. They should be staying in their own country where the fight must be fought." He believed that only when Africans in South Africa showed that they were really willing to make sacrifices should

others make sacrifices to help them.

The Chances of Inside Revolt

Any serious internal disruption by Africans within South Africa does not now seem likely. Order is well maintained by a police force which has proved that it can deal capably with terrorist and espionage groups. It is backed by an effective military force which is much better equipped and trained than any on the African continent.

Also, Africans have received just enough materially that they seem unwilling to chance losing what little they do have. Wages, for instance, while still a fraction of what Whites receive, are higher on an average than those received by Africans in any other country. The possibility of Africans uniting to protest effectively, either peacefully or violently, is remote.

Any Hope for Multi-racialism?

The National Party Government, which has had the support of most of the Afrikaners, has now convinced most of the English-speaking Whites that there is no alternative to extreme Black domination other than race separation. The official Opposition (the United Party) thinks in the same terms although they would carry out separation by slightly different methods. Even Harry Oppenheimer, the largest financial supporter of the anti-Nationalist Progressive Party and head of the rich Anglo-American Corporation, has found common ground with the Government. He told a group of Americans that if the United States wants the destruction of the South African parliamentary system and its replacement with a one-man one-vote system (as he thinks we do) then he "may as well creep into the laager."

Many Africans have also succumbed to this 'either-or' kind of racial thinking. Coloureds and Indians both feel they would be as discriminated against by a Black dominated Government as they are now by a White. Aside from them only a few people, Black or White, publicly stand for a non-racial or a multi-racial society.

But South Africa is a multi-racial country: the various groups within the country are more dependent on each other than they are often ready to admit. If Black Africans were in control they would eventually find it necessary, for economic if for no other reasons, to move toward a non-racial attitude.

For the same reasons, while there appears to be little hope for changing the direction of apartheid in the near future, there are some rumblings within the power structure than may hold out some hope for eventual accomodation to this fact.

The economic boom has made more White South African businessmen aware of the country's great potential and the necessity, with an insufficient number of White workers, for non-Whites to enter the economy more fully. ISCOR, the Government controlled steel industry, has found that it now hires more Africans than Europeans in spite of repeated attempts to cut back on African labour so that urban Africans could be moved out of the cities. The Government's Economic Advisory Council has urged the Government to remove or change the job reservation laws so that non-Whites can move into the now-blocked skilled jobs. Many companies have already broken job reservation laws with non-Whites doing "Whites only" jobs more and more openly. The Minister of Labour, Mr. A.E. Trollip, unofficially tells businessmen to go ahead with their push for changes in the law. If there is enough favorable pressure he will make them. Publicly he stands fast for job reservation as a necessary protection for White and non-White workers alike. ("It prevents racial conflict because it removes competition.") He is very much aware politically that the bulk of National Party support comes from Whites who fear having their jobs taken by non-Whites. Any great change would not meet with their full approval so he moves cautiously. But economic necessity assures that he does move.

Coupled with the attack on job reservation is a push for an increase in non-White wages. This would increase the country's internal purchasing power and give the consumer market a big boost, an economic necessity if outside boycotts were to increase. Fifty companies have taken the lead of the Rembrandt tobacco group to see that the lowest paid African worker earns more closely to what he needs to keep his family above the subsistence level. They have guaranteed a minimum wage of \$62 a month compared to the present minimum wage average of \$50. (This still falls short of the \$70 needed to support a family of five.)

Black and White separation will continue: Non-White income will increase although there will still be a gap between their wages and those of the Whites. Job reservation will change but the change will only allow non-Whites to come up through the bottom ranks of White workers. But on the positive side, company managers and directors are beginning to consider their employee's basic material needs and are willing to put a minimum wage into effect where the Government has refused to do so.

#### Within the Afrikaner Community

For over a century and a half the Afrikaner has struggled to have his language (Afrikaans) and himself accepted as equals to English and the Englishman. He has gained political power and an increasing economic strength because his church (Dutch Reformed), his political party (the National Party), his schools (Afrikaans-medium and purveyors of a Christian National education), his businesses and his social life

have all reinforced each other to create a strong cultural unity. Since 1948 when the National Party came into power South Africa has been moulded more and more along Afrikaner lines: Afrikaans is now the major official language and separate development, which gave the Afrikaner his strength and his identity, has become the basis for South Africa's way of life.

However, now that the Afrikaner has been more than successful the solidarity of his community is weakening. With the movement of Afrikaners from the country into the urban areas, even though they are still largely isolated by language and education, they have been exposed to a wider world and a different kind of life. The result is reflected in the membership of the Dutch Reformed churches which has not kept pace with the increase in the Afrikaner population. Many church leaders are concerned by the movement away from the prohibitions of their Calvinistic faith. Recent church pressures to force municipalities and the National Government to reinforce church law against swimming and athletic contests on Sunday is an indication that they are no longer able to influence their members as in the past. They have been partially successful in limiting sports but even in the Afrikaner city of Pretoria the municipal council refused to ban Sunday swimming. Contrary to the church's opinion, Mr. Paul Sauer, Minister of Lands, claimed such prohibitions were not of vital importance. He reminded the Whites that they could never be united if one group tried to force its will on the other. "Swim on Sunday - any time you like", he concluded.

Although the bulk of the clergy and congregations of the Dutch Reformed churches support the Government's official policy of racial separation there are a surprising number of clergymen and laymen who do not. In 1961 eleven Dutch Reformed theologians authored the book Delayed Action which denounced race discrimination and called for a new outlook in racial attitudes. It caused all kinds of repercussions within their church. Many of these clergymen have had to fight to retain their positions, but they have stood firm.

The most noted case of in-fighting was that of Albert Geysler, a professor at the University of Pretoria Theological School, who was found guilty of heresy by his church (Nederduitsch Hervormde) and was defrocked. From a new professorship at the University of Witwatersrand he has continued to exert considerable influence. He appealed the Church's decision to the State Supreme Court but recently, even before the case came to court, he was re-instated.

Last August talks which had gone on quietly among representatives of the major faiths culminated in the formation of the inter-racial inter-denominational Christian Institute of South Africa.

The Dutch Reformed churches have not cooperated with other Protestant churches since 1961 when the World Council of Churches criticized

their support of separate development. But membership in this new organization is by individual affiliation and a number of ministers and laymen from the Dutch Reformed churches have joined. The Prime Minister and Dutch Reformed officials have attacked the Institute as an attempt to subvert the policy of separate development. They consider it dangerous for members of their church to associate with churchmen whose denominations have been working to lower racial barriers. (An African minister was recently elected President of the Methodist Church in South Africa.) In spite of this criticism there has been a flood of requests for membership.

In September the Reverend C.F. Beyers Naude resigned as Moderator of the Southern Transvaal Synod of the Nedertuitse Gereformeerde Church to become Director of the Institute. He had for some time been identified with a more liberal approach to race relations. Pro Veritate, a monthly non-denominational magazine which he edits has a Coloured and an African minister on its editorial board and has been critical of segregationist practices. More than this his conscience prompted him to break the bonds of secrecy of the Broederbund, the super-secret organization which is the backbone of Afrikaner power. After 22 years as a member of the society he became so concerned over their influence on the church that he allowed some Broederbund documents to be made public. They appeared in an expose in the Johannesburg Sunday Times. It is also suspected that they played some part in the re-instatement of Professor Geyser. (Supposedly it was when he revealed that he would use Broederbund documents in his appeal that Church lawyers announced his re-instatement and the fact that the Church would pay all court costs.)

The severity of attacks on Dr. Naude and on the Institute reveals that the Broederbund is now on the defensive and that there is a growing restlessness within the country's power group.

#### Accommodation within Separate Development

Government leaders are sensitive to world criticism but by their tradition they can see no way for Whites and non-Whites to live in the same country together. To appease world opinion they are willing to consider alternatives and make some adjustments as long as it is within the framework of separate development. The development of the African homeland areas (Bantustans) has been speeded up considerably. They have granted partial independence to the Transkei in order to prove to the world that they are sincere; that they are not opposed to political freedom for Africans within their own area.

The autonomy of the Transkei is not as great as might be expected. Citizens have no control over arms, international relations, railways, harbours, national roads, aviation, customs and excise, "the entry of persons other than Transkeian citizens", currency, public loans, banking, postal, telegraph, telephone, radio and television services, and "entry into and presence in the Transkei of any police force of the Republic." (They do control local police turned over to them by the Republic.) The

Republic still has part of the new nation under its emergency regulations. And every piece of legislation must pass through the office of the South African Minister of Bantu Administration and be signed by the South African State President.

When Chief Victor Poto, a leading candidate for the Transkeian premiership, indicated that he would like a multi-racial administration the South African Government made it clear that the Transkei could only move in one direction; it must have an all-Black Government. Even though he received the majority support of those members elected to the Transkeian Assembly, the Government-backed Chiefs (who have a 64-40 majority over elected members) swung the election to Chief Kaiser Mantanzima, the candidate favoring the Government's policy.

Even with eight other Bantustans the remainder of South Africa will be a multi-racial state in which Africans outnumber Whites by almost 2 to 1. And there are also two and a quarter million Coloureds and Indians. Perhaps the most hopeful sign brought out in the Transkeian election is the popular support for multi-racialism as expressed by Chief Poto. (In the Afrikaans press one editor pondered, "This just shows how liberalism, in spite of emergency regulations, can penetrate through the finest security net and commit sabotage of the spirit...")

The Transkei and other African areas will give Africans and Whites opportunity to work together in a new relationship as Africans take over some of the machinery of running their own state. For Whites this experience may lessen their fears and prejudice. Even in the old relationship working in the reserves tempered the thinking of some, not to change Government policy but to improve its implementation, to make it more humane and just. If they could only take the next step and realize that from every point of view but their own it is the basic policy which is unjust!

The Transkei, with its partial independence, will give the South African Government many headaches and may well become the catalyst for greater changes. The decade-old idea among Nationalist intellectuals has now sprung into public prominence: partition. Since the Whites have always made much of their arrival in the Western part of the country at the same time Africans (the Bantu tribes) were arriving in the East, some would consider the possibility of dividing the country according to the main areas each of them had settled. The present Bantustans are centered around what were the original African areas so that there has been some preparation for the idea of cutting up the country.

There are a number of reasons why this solution would not work. The biggest block, of course, is that discussion of partition has been unilateral, among Whites only. African leaders see South Africa as one nation with many diverse citizens. They want to share in all its potential. Coloureds and Indians also want a share. And most Whites

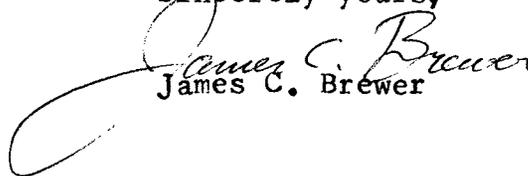
would not accept today the idea of cutting up their country, particularly with its growing affluence.

What is hopeful is not the possibility that such a plan could work but that there are conservative Nationalists who would seriously consider an alternative to Bantustans which would increase the size of African areas from the present 13% to nearly 50%. For Whites who have been raised in an environment where separate development is considered the only answer this is quite a concession. It indicates that there is a serious search going on for an alternative which they feel will be acceptable to both Whites and Africans.

Ten years ago these signs of change might have been considered dynamic; today, in the face of non-White aspirations, they seem so anemic as to be negligible. Yet right now that's all there is.

It is difficult to see any great change in South Africa's racial policy and it is equally difficult to see what anyone will do that would be immediately effective. Presently, at least we can step up pressure on the South African Government and make them aware that we are sincere in our disapproval; we can give the greatest possible support to multi-racialism, both in South Africa and in our own country; and we can encourage greater contact between South Africans and the outside world in order to break down the isolation on which narrow nationalism and racism thrive.

Sincerely yours,



James C. Brewer

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