

"INTERNATIONAL DECOLONIZATION"

Washington, D.C.

Sir: Thomas Molnar's dispassionate presentation of the virtues of South Africa's Transkei (*worldview*, June 1964) is certainly a model of objectivity in a turbulent world, but it hardly deserves to go unchallenged. Its idyllic conclusion is just too much: Molnar's happy Bantustan family presents "a picture of work and improvement; and, in the case of this lovable couple and others like them, it was a picture of constructive citizenship".

Meanwhile, back in the world of harsh reality, the happy Bantustan Molnar describes is the final stage in the implementation of a white dominated policy of apartheid. Separation of the races is complete, as the white man helps his little black brother return to the tribal situation which is obviously his natural state for all time to come. No nonsense here about a "separate but equal" status for the Bantu. Dr. Verwoerd's white supermen are convinced that the black men are inherently a lesser breed, and must always remain so.

That an intelligent American observer of the world scene should have been taken in by such prehistoric fantasy is, to say the least, discouraging. Continuing turbulence in the Congo as the United Nations forces withdraw proves nothing about the ultimate ability of the African to govern himself. Nigeria is a powerful argument for the viability of even large, complex African states. Closer to the South African multiracial situation is Kenya, now demonstrating the ability of several races to live together under African rule. And this is the crux of the matter: the preponderant majority of black Africans in Kenya exercise principal control, just as they must eventually in South Africa. It makes no difference that the white man has been in South Africa since 1652. This does not entitle him to dominate forever a majority black people who have been in Africa since time began.

"One man—one vote" is the political equivalent of the Christian's belief in the equality of all men under God. Another powerful political slogan of the past decade, "Good government is no substitute for self government," may seem closer to the irrational in spirit, but I think not. The happy natives of Transkei are not *really* self governing, even though the Verwoerd government has set up one Chief Kaizer Matanzima (Molnar's "tall, good-looking, well-dressed university graduate") as a black symbol of

authority in this first Bantustan. The political scientist in me tells me to look for the location of sovereignty as the acid test of a government, and clearly here this rests in white hands.

It is true that the United States has its counties in Mississippi where a 72 percent black population is dominated by a white minority that intends to remain in control, by force if necessary. But this is not the law of our land, and the white oligarchy's hold is now being challenged as never before. This unhappy local situation should remind the intelligent American that even "separate but equal" treatment of the races is not good enough in today's world. It certainly should not produce in him admiration for an African system of white minority rule designed to perpetuate inequality.

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Sir: In so far as Thomas Molnar expresses a personal opinion on the South African Government's Bantustan plan he seems to say that it might be acceptable. It is, I suggest, fatal to a helpful discussion of the plan to leave out of account the fact that the whole policy of apartheid is based upon a lie. The lie says that the black man in South Africa is inferior to the white man. A Government officer who spent a whole day with me in the summer of 1961 said, as we visited "locations," "Education and training will take the black man just so high and then you will find he can go no higher." When I mentioned the high competence to be seen in African leaders in Kenya and other new African nations he said, "Take my word for it. Whenever a black man seems to show great ability there's a white man behind him."

No matter what the books and speeches of the Africaners may say about their good intentions, this lie is the central assumption on what the Government's policies are based. In line with this assumption, the Bantustan plan and all other plans for dealing with the racial problem are made by the white man, with responsible leaders of the African community having nothing whatever to say about them. In line with this assumption, the control of the crucial areas of foreign affairs, defense, finances

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and railways would remain in the hands of the white man. And what shall one say about a plan that claims to meet the needs and aspirations of the black majority but which is rejected as no solution at all by such men as Luthuli, Sisulu, and Mandela, who are equivalents of our most respected Negro American civil rights leaders? The superiority-inferiority lie is perfectly exposed in Mr. Molnar's statement: "There is embarrassment in the air since the Republic's policy is never to have a white man work in a subordinate position to a black man." If this is the Republic's policy—as indeed it is—why waste time trying to make any of its specific racial problem solutions look morally and politically acceptable?

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Sir: Thomas Molnar's article "The Transkei: International Decolonization," reminded me of Orwell's world of 1984. Professor Molnar's confusion however was not between "think" and "no-think," but between "colonization" and "decolonization." His thesis is that the area called the Transkei, where the South African Government has established the first in a projected series of so-called "bantú homelands," or Bantustans, represents a unique and original formula for decolonization. The facts point in the opposite direction—the Transkei represents a unique and original formula for extending colonization. I would agree with Alan Paton's descriptive summary of the Transkei; "Let us recognize . . . that it is a fantasy." The Transkei experiment represents the greatest public-relations effort so far on the part of the South African Government to win approval for its apartheid policy. The government publication, *Digest of South African Affairs*, quoted the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development, Mr. de Wet Nel, who said that the granting of "self-government would quiet world criticism of South Africa."

It doesn't take too astute an observer of South African affairs to recognize the first element of the "fantasy." Presumably all of the Africans in South Africa will eventually have their own "homeland" under the Bantustan system. The catch is that the African population comprises about 70 percent of the whole and yet, at a maximum, all of these so-called Bantu homelands would amount to only 13 percent of the land surface of South Africa.

A closer examination reveals the second fantasy. Within the Transkei Bantustan there are "white spots" which do not fall under the jurisdiction of the

newly established African government. The white farmlands and their occupants are only subject to the laws of the Republic of South Africa. The area's single port, Port St. Johns, is likewise excluded from the jurisdiction of the Transkei government, and the urban areas within the Transkei are subject to South African, not Bantustan laws.

Real power is in no way being turned over to the African government. Significantly, Pretoria retains the right to veto all legislation, and the legislative authority is itself severely restricted. It does not include the crucial areas of defense and external affairs, internal security, posts and telegraph, transport, immigration and fiscal policy, customs or excise taxes.

When the South African Government launched a high-pressured world campaign last November to publicize the first elections to the Transkei legislature, it did not publicize the fact that emergency regulations were still in force, and that these regulations prohibited any meetings or gatherings of more than 10 Africans without special permission. Or, that under these regulations, it was an offence to make any statement or perform any act likely to have the effect of interfering with the authority of the state. Or, that it was an offence for an African to treat a chief or headman with disrespect, even if that person happened to be campaigning for political office. Further, the Minister of Bantu Administration and Development could prohibit any person to enter or leave the Transkei. One candidate for election, an outspoken opponent of the Government's apartheid policy, was simply barred from participation in the campaign by being banned.

A third fantasy is Molnar's parroting the line that South Africa consists of many "nations"—not white and black, but white, Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu, Swazi, etc. The intent is to make us swallow the fiction that Africans are not really united, but would much rather live under traditional chiefs, removed from the impact of modern African nationalism. Dr. Molnar should be aware of the fact that detribalization (i.e., the breaking up of traditional social structures) began in South Africa earlier than anywhere else in Africa. South Africa is one nation, one economy, one people. The Bantustan idea was not conceived as a system of genuine partition involving the creation of new sovereign areas. Indeed, Verwoerd and others have denied any intent of giving ultimate independence to areas such as the Transkei.

I wonder why Dr. Molnar and other apologists for South Africa's vicious racial policies find it so difficult to call a spade a spade. Very few people are fooled into believing that the real reason for the establishment of the Transkei is decolonization, or

even giving a semi-autonomous status to the Xhosa people. The real reason for setting up Bantustans is fear—fear on the part of the European minority that the African majority will some day seize power and drive the white man out of South Africa. Therefore, just as segregationists in the United States rationalize their position by contending that the Negroes are really happy and that only outsiders are stirring up discontent, the apologists for apartheid claim that the creation of Bantustans is not only desired by the African people, but will restore to them their own culture and give them political freedom.

Professor Molnar's attempt to convey the impression that African leaders in the Transkei had pressured the South African authorities to set up the experiment was almost amusing. "It was by no means easy for a handful of Xhosa leaders to persuade Pretoria to embark on the Transkeian adventure," he says. Last November's election for the Transkei Legislative Council is rather instructive in trying to assess just how anxious the people of the Transkei were for this experiment in "self-government" to begin. Of the 109 members of the Council, only 45 are elected by popular ballot. The remainder are Government-appointed chiefs whose salaries are, of course, paid by the Government. Thirty-eight of the 45 popularly-elected members followed the leadership of Chief Poto, an opponent of apartheid. Only seven supported Chief Kaizer Matanzima, now the Chief Minister, who was and is backed by the South African regime. If the majority of the Legislative Council seats were elective rather than appointive, it is clear that an opponent of apartheid would now be Chief Minister.

No one can deny that there are great problems to be dealt with in arriving at a creative solution to the racial problem in South Africa. But it is hardly less evident that the creation of a fiction, a fantasy, an escapist dream, which the Transkei represents, is no solution whatever. Dr. Molnar does a disservice because he hides the real issues, thereby preventing people not very familiar with the South African scene from coming to grips with the measures which must be taken to establish racial peace at the tip of the African continent. He makes no mention of the 1958-59 revolt in Pondoland, a part of the Transkei, which led to the imposition of the emergency regulations. There is no hint in his article of African dissatisfaction with the apartheid system as reflected in the large popular vote for candidates favoring Chief Poto. We are instead handed a portrayal of the "happy native" who, by being non-political, and "minding his own business" can operate his own store at a small profit. It is only too reminiscent of the

Uncle Tom in the United States who gets along well with white people because he "knows his place."

If Dr. Molnar wishes to be taken seriously, he should deal with real issues. The most outstanding characteristics of the South African economy is the reliance on contract, migrant labor from the reserves (now renamed Bantustans). Three percent of the African labor force finds work in these areas. The balance are hired by recruiting agents and transported to white-owned farms, mines and factories. Most are forbidden to learn a skilled trade, all are forbidden to join trade unions or to strike. At any one time, one-third of the African population is in the towns, one-third on farms, and one-third in the reserves. To what reality does Molnar address himself, then? To a redress of this system of economic exploitation? Or to its extension, in perpetuity?

No apology, such as Dr. Molnar's, can hide the fact that the only solution to the South African problem is the establishment of a non-racial democracy. Any other solution can only compound the difficulties of establishing racial peace.

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The Author Replies:

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Sir: These days when Moise Tshombe, called in 1961 a "puppet" of the Union Minière and driven by the U.N. from Katanga, has returned to be prime minister—of the Congo—it is perhaps unwise on my critics' part to speak of the white man's black stooges, referring to Kaizer Matanzima, Chief Minister of the Transkei. But my differences with them goes deeper: Messrs. Ferwerda, Reissig, and Houser have in mind an ideal solution for the race problem in South Africa, whereas I tried to understand and evaluate the *real* elements of a particular situation. Race relations in Africa will never be harmonious, just as they are worse than ever in our country, one hundred years after Lincoln. Mr. Ferwerda says that here, at least, the law proclaims equality, even if the citizens break it. Precisely: for one hundred years the law has been unable to create more than a blanket of hypocrisy under which clashes and conflicts continued. And although the law is now being made stricter, the conflict grows, and spreads from South to North.

It is utopian to announce one's confidence in multiracial societies in Africa. Mr. Ferwerda refers to Kenya as an example of harmonious racial coexistence. What an example! When I was there, one month after independence had been proclaimed, half

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