

# SEPARATISM OR SEPARATION

## A discussion of Separatism in America as compared with the policy of Apartheid or Separate Development

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You cannot clog  
My direction.  
Life's pattern's  
My own  
To decide.

I have arrived  
Within myself —  
liberated.

*From: "My Thing",  
by Horace Mungin.*

**THIS POEM SYMBOLISES** to me the Black American spirit today and is the major theme of the Black Revolution — expressed in cries for liberation, self determination and for a positive identity. It embodies a refusal to be oppressed, restricted or relegated to a state of nothingness, but rather a security in the awareness of having arrived at last, "knowing who I am".

The Oxford dictionary defines "separatism" as follows: physically disconnected, forming a unit that is or may be regarded as apart or by itself, distinct, to cede from, go different ways.

This is not the best definition but describes enough of what separatist movements have spelled out over the years, and will be used as a framework for this paper.

The whole concept of separatism in America is not a new theme and to a student following the historical evolution of Black Americans in this country, a move in this direction could perhaps have been predicted. Over the years most protest movements have embodied the separatist theme in varying degrees, sometimes more strongly advocated than at other times. The recent emphasis towards separatism seems to me yet another effort on the part of the Black man to shake off the image of nothingness, inferiority and to assert his worth, to validate his claim to human rights. Since the onset of slavery, Black people have

protested against enslavement, subordination, and cruelty. The Black man has always felt the alienation from the mainstream of American life — both economic and political. Although the various civil rights struggles strove towards integrating the Black and White American, the efficacy of this method is now being questioned. James Weldon Johnson wrote: "There comes a time when the most persistent integrationist becomes an isolationist, when he curses the White world and consigns it to hell." Is it any wonder that waves of separatism have permeated the various movements and persisted throughout the years. The main thrust of the Negro revolution has been to take a rightful place in American life, side by side with white Americans, with the emphasis on political and economic opportunity. Several Negro leaders have over the years stressed separation. Booker T. Washington for instance, preached separation of the races but sought to train Negroes to be integrated into the economic life of the country, the ultimate aim being equal rights on all levels of life. C. Eric Lincoln asserted that, "nationalism" of the American Negro was not voluntary, but was prompted by a desire to set himself apart in order to preserve some cultural values and was a defensive response to external forces which threaten his creative existence.

Elijah Muhammad's teachings were that the only solution to the Black man's problems was "complete separation from the White man!" He felt that no sane black man would opt for integration into the corrupt society of the white man, and that his salvation lay in separating from it, "to a land of your own, where we can reform ourselves, to lift up our moral standards."

### Separation not segregation

Malcolm X attempted to define separation as not being synonymous with segregation. He said, "we reject segregation, we want separa-



tion. Segregation is when your life and liberty is controlled, regulated by someone else. To segregate means to control. Segregation is that which is forced upon inferiors by superiors. But separation is that which is done voluntarily by two equals — for the good of both!”

Aruthur Lewis (New York Times magazine 5/11/69) drew clearly the differences in the issue of segregation elsewhere in the world and as it is viewed in America. Blacks everywhere else in the world strenuously fight against segregation, even though they may be in the majority in some of the countries. He says however, there are situations where the minority may strengthen itself by temporary self segregation and this has occurred with minority groups here in the U.S., not just peculiar to the Afro-American. While there is integration by day, there is segregation by night, as each racial and ethnic group goes off to their separate social life. This segregation however, is voluntary and not imposed by law. For all its stand on separate development in South Africa, the Government has been unable to keep the races strictly apart. For sheer survival each group is mutually interdependent on the other. This dependence is often a feature of multiracial societies, each race or ethnic group having a contribution to make to the other. In South Africa, the white man has the good fortune to be at the top of the heap and runs the show. However, he has this position only because the Black man's sweat and toil makes this possible. The country depends on the Black man's labour. South Africa produces 74% of the free world's gold and plays an important role in maintaining the gold standard. Could the country have this important role in the international monetary world without the Black man's contribution? I doubt it!

The revolutionary movement among Blacks in the U.S.A. has passed through many phases — from the first efforts of fighting for emancipation from slavery to the nationalist movements of recent years. One persistent theme throughout has been the demand for a positive assertion of the Negroes' blackness, and the goal has been to have this acknowledged. This concept has operated within the Negro protest movement in two ways and has led it in two directions simultaneously: wanting out and wanting in. Wanting out has been expressed in several ways. In the early nineteenth century, free Negroes broke away from established churches and set up independent

religious bodies to escape prejudice and to be able to run their own affairs. This led to similar action in other fields — newspapers, schools etc.

#### "Back to Africa" movement

There were also the various efforts to emigrate, yet another way of wanting out. In 1862, President Lincoln promised governmental aid to those wanting to leave. Marcus Garvey in the 1920's revived the emigration scheme, popularly known as the 'Back to Africa' movement and he got as many as 4 million interested people. His main goal however, was building Black economic power in the ghettos, which was yet another form of opting out.

#### Economic and political control

In the 1930's the popularity of the 'Black Nation' concept of the communist party and in modern day black nationalism, there is again the common theme of wresting economic and political control of black neighbourhoods from the white power structure. The most militant elements in the current movement want 'out' in the sense that they have decided to end co-operation with the liberal established in and outside of the government and to go it alone. An example of this is the Lowndes County Freedom Party which attempted to take over control of Alabama county by political action. Local groups in the north too have moved towards gaining control of community boards of the Office of Economic Opportunity, or they have demanded control of local school boards, community centres and are making known their feelings in community efforts across the board — in health, education, welfare, religion etc. A great deal of governmental attention in recent years has been focussed on the Negro for two reasons: the Negro vote and the Negro protest of the 1960's. In essence it all boils down to an increased awareness of the Negro as being a power to contend with — his vote and therefore his role in the balance of power has increased and for no other reason is he now the centre of attention and controversy. Black power has made its presence felt.

#### Wanting in

A large part of the movement has however always wanted in and has sought to fight for Negro rights within the system and by its rules — its main aim being for Negroes to take their rightful place in American life — alongside the white. The main goal has been integration, with whites and blacks working



towards this — in the areas of transportation, schools, housing, jobs, politics and economics.

A pertinent question to pose at this point would be — can conditions be alleviated or changed to persuade the Black man to join the majority society rather than leave it — or to fight to change the system itself? It would be too simplistic to suggest that inclusion would solve all that exclusion from American society over 300 years has reinforced. Economic and other deprivation, exploitation and the massive indignities perpetrated against Black people will not be wiped out overnight. There has always been a resistance to accepting the Black man as an equal and a human being. This is something I know and understand so well. South Africa has an equally black record of discrimination and oppression of its majority citizens for almost 300 years too. The United States and South Africa are blood brothers in more ways than one, except that the American system has a slightly more subtle and sophisticated approach and the South Africans spell it out with no holds barred.

#### Apartheid in South Africa

What then are the implications of apartheid in South Africa? To different people it connotes different things — the black man interprets it differently, as does the white man, and to the liberal and the white nationalist conservative it has another meaning. Most whites see it through rose coloured glasses because they are anaesthetized most of the time and it is far too painful to dwell on.

The official government viewpoint on apartheid is as follows: "In South Africa with its multi-national population, the policy of separate development has been evolved in an endeavour to find a satisfactory pattern for the harmonious co-existence of divergent national communities with the same geopolitical borders." (S.A. Information Service booklet, 1968). To quote the Prime Minister, John Vorster (1968) who said, "I believe in the policy of separate development, not only as a philosophy but also as the only practical solution in the interests of everyone to eliminate friction, and to justice to every population group as well as every individual. Separate development is not a denial of human dignity of anyone. On the contrary, it gives the opportunity to every individual within his own sphere, not only to be a man or woman in every sense, but it also creates the opportunity for them to develop and advance without restriction or frustration as circumstances justi-

fy, and in accordance with the demands of developments achieved. Every population group has something of its own, that is beautiful and that can be developed." A rather long winded fairy tale but fervently believed by the white sheep who follow without question! Unfortunately I have heard similar viewpoints voiced by certain black militant leaders who also fervently believe that developing on ones own, and the "black is beautiful" bit has merit. They might change their minds if they spent one day in the South African milieu watching the police implement this separate development nightmare! Mr. Vorster's "dressed up" version of separate development is of course specially designed to allay fears and to lure the American and other tourists and all individuals who still believe in myths and fairy stories, to this White man's paradise.

The National Party's stand when they came to power in 1948 was as follows: "In general terms our policy envisages segregating the most important ethnic groups and sub-groups in their own areas where every group will be enabled to develop into a self sufficient unit. We endorse the general principal of territorial segregation of the Black (Africans, Coloured and Asian) and the whites. The African in the urban areas should be regarded as migratory citizens, not entitled to political or social rights equal to those of the whites. The process of detribalization should be arrested." (1947 election manifesto of the National Party.)





From the beginning there were two co-existing concepts of apartheid. One was that the races should be sub-divided into tribes and be completely segregated into self-sufficient territories. The other was that apartheid was not only to mean complete territorial segregation but a more rigid enforcement of non-white social, economic and political inferiority!

### Voteless majority

I should stress here that the non-white people of South Africa, having no vote, have no voice in deciding what is or is not for their benefit. They number at least 15,170,000 and are a voteless majority while all the power lies in the hands of the white minority of 3½ million. Furthermore, it is hoped that while the political and economic aspirations of the Africans, Coloured and Indian groups would be met by 'separate development', the privileges of the white South African will be guaranteed. So much for the hypocritical statements about the benefits blacks will derive from the system. We have had 20 painful years of white domination at its worst, during which time valiant efforts on the part of the oppressed groups to oppose the system have resulted in more stringent laws to put down any resistance. South Africa has built up powerful military and economic armour to secure a total hegemony over the black people of South Africa who are kept under a form of medieval slavery. Our best black leaders rot in prison, are banned or under house arrest or have fled the country and are in exile. It is against the law for black and white to have any joint political affiliations whatsoever! So over the years the granite policy has not cracked one iota but increased in intensity to squash any protest or resistance. An almost totalitarian regime exists and there is not much hope for change in the foreseeable future. The reason for this is very clear. The white man in South Africa has so much to lose. To give blacks an in would be to share his good fortune and he wants the whole pie. There does not appear to be even a stirring of conscience about the inequity of the situation as it stands. As world opinion and criticism of apartheid gathers momentum — it serves only to bring the minority white group closer together firmly determined to hold out to the bitter end.

### Opposition to Apartheid

The policy of apartheid has given rise to opposition. There have been protests, demon-

strations and riots from the non-whites, while among whites opposition to the government's policy has ranged from criticism to more active political involvement.

It would seem that a minority can hardly succeed in preserving its absolute supremacy in all spheres without the use of force. It is therefore not surprising that the implementation of the policy of apartheid has been accompanied by the abuse of police power, a disregard for the integrity of the individual and by indirect control of the press. If the blacks really believed that apartheid was for their good, would there be a need for a police state and force to implement government policy?

The real or imagined fear of counter violence has led those in power to a multiplication of procedures aimed at strengthening the system of apartheid, by destroying all opposition. Anyone vaguely suspected of anti-government views could be detained for 180 days recurring, banned or put under house arrest.

### Separation a failure

In spite of the ideology of apartheid, the uprooting of thousands of families, the complete separation of people into tribal and ethnic groupings has proved a failure. The closely integrated economic structure, the location of all the major industries, all the mineral wealth, the important harbour facilities, all the best arable land in that part of South Africa which is outside the black reserves in white ownership, means that Africans, Asians, and Coloureds remain dependent on the town and farming complex of white South Africa for a livelihood. Even the government's attempt to encourage African owned small scale industries in the Transkei (the first African homeland) has come up against the relative poverty of the area, the comparative lack of natural resources and the lack of accumulated capital. For good or ill therefore the white and black South Africans remain economically interdependent. If blacks need the job opportunities so does white South Africa need their labour to maintain their present industrial and agricultural production and their present high standard of living.

### The mutual need

As I see it black and white Americans are pretty much in the same boat. I cannot see that one can survive without the other or at the expense of the other. I have wondered how black Americans could believe that establishing a separate nation within the United



States can offer any solution to the black/white problems. Separate states for blacks or even separate neighbourhoods does not seem feasible especially considering that blacks are a minority and have not got the same kinds of institutions as whites and cannot depend totally on their own resources to survive. I cannot see that anything is going to change the multiracial composition of this country, and as each group plays a vital part in the life of the other, it would be suicidal to minimise the mutual need. Black power movements are making a strong case for community power to give each neighbourhood control over its own institutions. However, some 50-60% of the labour force moves out every morning to work outside of the neighbourhood and a black strategy which concentrated exclusively on building up the black neighbourhoods would be dealing with less than half of the black man's economic problems. Arthur Lewis in his article (N.Y. Times magazine 5/11/69) states that American economic life is dominated by a few large corporations which do the greater part of the country's business all of which is done in an integrated world, and there is little hope that such corporations as General Motors, Union Carbide or Standard Oil, are going to move their plants to black neighbourhoods. The blacks have few jobs at the top and are mostly concentrated at the bottom. It seems logical for blacks to press for jobs at the top and the middle to enable them to gradually get a bit more of the pie. The ghetto as I see it is not a viable economic unit and one cannot talk about economic development of the ghetto in isolation. To change this there has to be changes in many areas, for the problem is really a political and social one.

### Sweeping generalisations

The white man in South Africa as in America questions the capacity, potentiality and integrity of the black man to function in certain fields. His smallest failure is pounced upon and his ability and success in many areas overlooked. An abuse or misuse of authority or finance calls for a hue and cry and sweeping generalisations are made about all blacks. However the privileged white forgets that for centuries all legitimate means to negotiate or acquire certain benefits was closed to blacks and the only way was to use other and often illegitimate means, which system the white man has not only perpetuated but encouraged. To allow blacks to negotiate legitimately would be to accept him as an equal

and that was not permissible. I therefore reject any suggestion that the black man is less capable of being honest and if he errs in this direction, he is a victim of circumstances and his white counterpart should share the responsibility of his deeds.

### Desire to reject

Arising out of recent militant movements, there is a tendency to reject any white participation in black affairs and their role and presence in some professional institutions is being questioned. I think that some of this is a bit precipitate for although the desire to reject it is strong, the white contribution may still be necessary and the gap left by their going may not always be easily filled, especially in fields of medicine, nursing, social work etc. This might be the eventual goal but hasty action may be to the detriment of the black group. I can sympathise with blacks with wishing to rid themselves of white paternalism. The current feeling is that as long as they are here, black people will continue to be dependent on the white man's contribution.

The separatist movement in America spells out several things to me. I get the impression from whoever is espousing it that it sometimes follows a more literal definition — a break away from and a go it alone policy. At other times it seems to symbolise a wielding of power and a testing of black strength, and by no means should be interpreted as a plea for separate development in the South African sense. Ever since Stokely Carmichael first raised the cry of 'Black Power' he has had both support and condemnation. The moderate black leaders have come out in a spate of criticism of his stand. Roy Wilkins of the NAACP said, "No matter how endlessly they try to explain Black Power, the term means anti-white . . . It has to mean going it alone. It has to mean separation. (Excerpt from Life magazine—article on Stokely Carmichael.) This is I think a limited and short sighted interpretation and appears to come from someone who perhaps does not see himself as being black any longer and I am sure there are many more who think like him. This attitude is only possible because white domination has done such an effective job in stripping black people of their racial identity. They have lost themselves in the white man's world and his value system. Perhaps it is therefore important that they break away from the dominant white influences for a while to re-establish and reinforce what is



peculiarly their own. This could be a massive undertaking because for 300 years the black American has fashioned himself in the image of the white man and adopted his culture and way of life. A search for a new identity will require more than adopting African hair styles and dress. The African heritage has much more to offer than these superficial symbols. The present pressure from black students for courses in black history and culture is not only legitimate but necessary. For too long there have been distortions and deliberately fostered misconceptions of blacks and this must be corrected. Both black and white have been brainwashed about the racial issue and a massive deconditioning process has to be evolved. I feel very strongly that both groups should be exposed to this and that it would be a mistake to keep out white students from this educational process. Both desperately need new insights and one group is not going to benefit at the cost of the other being excluded. In the hassle over technical details of who will teach and what will be taught, there is the danger that the real purpose of such programmes will be obscured. The intent of such programmes should not be just to give psychic refurbishment to blacks who have suffered the ravages of racism but to instil and motivate a commitment of service focussing not just on individual achievement but on creative, productive work that benefits the whole black community.

#### Imposes greater responsibility

Whitney Young, of the National Urban League felt that there would be no dignity in the Negroes' withdrawal from society, that Carmichael preaches. He felt that this would give too many blacks a chance to escape responsibility. This I feel is far too simplistic an interpretation. Far from escaping responsibility, this coming together as a group to resolve the racial dilemma must impose greater responsibility on the individual in terms of decision making for himself. As Floyd McKissick said, "Black Power is a drive to unite the Black man in America in a gigantic effort to erase the effects of alienation, despair and hopelessness. Its got to be good if the white man is against it." The white press makes capital of the black power drive — whipping up fear in the whites who have had white power for 300 years. What most whites forget is that the ideology of separation of the races is the brainchild of the privileged white man who wants to hang on to the goodies! Who separated the black man from the main-

stream of American life and prevented them from a rightful share in the American heritage? The Blacks have never had any choice before and if separatism means putting power in black hands for a change, then I am all for separatism!

#### Ambiguity

Many still believe that the black power slogan means only that Negroes should take pride in their race and organise themselves for political and economic action. Others view it as an anti-white rallying cry. Still others see it as a sort of paramilitary slogan that leads to riots and rebellion. A limited few look upon it as a chant that will ultimately lead the Negro to his own homeland. It strikes me that the very ambiguity of the phrase is its main strength as a rallying cry for the blacks. It has served to bring the most diverse black political groups together because each saw "black power" in his own way. Surely it has served an important function — the creation of solidarity which is a very much needed ingredient if common objectives are to be realised. One of the weaknesses of the past with the 'middle of the road' civil rights groups has been that they were so easily co-opted by the establishment and after a while they were being run and financed and serving white needs instead of black.

What future is there for the separatist trend? A difficult question to answer right now. It depends on the dent they can make with both white and black. Black power has come into its own and perhaps the time is ripe for relevant change in the existing power structure. No longer can white, complacent America relegate 11% of its people to an inferior status. A noticeable feature of the present military groups is the leadership—mostly of young people — very often intellectual, sensitive and impatient for a change. I can see a new order emerging of black people with a pride in their race and colour, no longer cringing and apologetic about their presence and it excites me to have witnessed such a development. I feel reassured that it is happening someplace if not in South Africa just yet. I feel that the emergent African nations, gaining independence and taking their rightful role in world affairs has given the movements here added impetus.

What hope for South Africa? Precious little right now. The situation gets worse daily, with new laws to enforce apartheid in sport, religion, education, welfare, employment etc. The lives of blacks are regimented



beyond belief and I see no glimmer of hope that she might change. America, France and Britain have tremendous investments in South Africa and it is to their advantage that the present order of things remain. South Africa

can rely on their support because of their vested interests, so 15 million blacks can very readily be sacrificed. I see more hope for the American black than there will be in South Africa for a long time to come.

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# THE STRATEGIES OF BANTU RESETTLEMENT

LAWRENCE MORGAN

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**T**HE GRAVEST MATERIAL and physical problem facing South Africa is that of resettling millions of Bantu. The factors determining ultimate success or failure now hang desperately in the balance. The scale of this problem and its decisive role in determining whether or not White South Africans can maintain the viability of their society in the years ahead should logically make its solution a basic issue in any parliamentary general election.

That it is quite unlikely to displace the issues of Maori rugby players, television, and what Dr. Hertzog said to some nonentity 40 years ago is indicative of the widespread ignorance and lack of perspective regarding the realities of the crisis towards which most White South Africans, of all shades of political opinion are so apathetically and perilously drifting.

**W**hile we have not yet reached the point of no return, and while we still retain considerable opportunities for bringing the situation under control, indications of failure are already apparent in some specific facets of the problem.

No longer, for instance, can we justifiably hope that we will be able to overtake the rapidly accumulating backlog in housing, and at the same time retain those structural and amenity standards which we thought in the past to be not only possible but essential. This failure, the roots of which are at least 30 years old, in itself poses a considerable threat to our projected industrial and urban growth points.

If we have considered resettlement in the past, we have usually focused our attention on its tactical implications, rather than on its wider strategical nature. It is the strategies of Bantu resettlement which I wish to discuss this morning. The tactical considerations which concern us from time to time involve the mechanisms and nature of specific "removals": the justice or injustice of government action; the efficiency or blundering,

the heroism or villainy of local officials; the hardships or advantages experienced by those removed. But we tend to give minimal consideration to the broader issues of resettlement — the strategies — in which the removals of the past constitute merely an infinitely small part of the total problem. For Natal, the strategic demands of the resettlement issue are ominously clear.

In the older urban areas, housing facilities for the existing Bantu population are ludicrously inadequate. Many of the major centres have as many illegal residents as they have lawful tenants and householders. The numbers of squatters living under Cato Manor-style conditions are increasing at a disturbing rate. New industrial growth points are being generated. They will provide jobs for many thousands of Africans, who will have to be resettled in new townships.

In overpopulated rural areas, safety valves in the form of new employment opportunities and new townships will have to be created. As a result of land betterment schemes, scattered kraals will have to be relocated at a more rapid rate and their occupants resettled in village-type groups.