

ON THE IDEOLOGICAL FRONT

By PHEPHENG

THE Native Affairs Department might well pat itself on the back for hitting upon the idea of "an informal publication" labelled "Bantu." Mr. C. W. Prinsloo, chief information officer, is chairman of the Editorial Committee of "Bantu," on which are also represented the Divisions of Bantu Education and Bantu Areas.

The thing is presented in magazine form changing the cover colour from month to month, so that those Africans among whom it circulates mostly should not be scared away from reading it because of an unpleasant official odour it would otherwise have in abundance.

But make no mistake about it. It is unashamed State propaganda straight from the shoulder. It has no distinctive Nationalist Party flavour about it: it represents the whole attitude of white South Africa towards the intelligence of the African—the attitude of contempt.

For instance, the June issue—No. 6—begins with an editorial on the recent decision taken by the Transkeian Bunga to disband and adopt Bantu Authorities instead. **"It is also significant,"** says the editor, **"that this decision was freely reached by the leaders of the Bantu people . . ."**

We all know the political blackmail that has driven the Bunga to take this step. If they didn't "choose" Bantu Authorities, how could the chiefs even hope to have their voice heard by the Government. Not only is the Bunga a toy provincial council which the chiefs have wearied of, but the Government was already worried that their Bantu Authorities scheme would not be uniformly applied while the Bunga existed. But we are told that the Council made a free choice!

The very next feature in this issue of "**Bantu**" makes a double fisted attack on Hertzog's Native Trust and Land Act of 1936. It has failed to provide the material and moral benefit Parliament advertised in 1936. The reason for this failure, says the writer, is due to the fact that the Trust has been administered from above—from the N.A.D. "and not from within the Bantu themselves." He goes on to sing praises to the Bantu Authorities Act as "sound constitutional organisation, which is based on the background, culture and traditions of each race." It is true, as it was in the days of Goebbels, that the propagandist must never get tired of using cliché or worn-out phrases!

One of the celebrated speeches of the deputy paramount chief of the Bantu, Mr. M. D. C. de Wet Nel, member of the Native Affairs Commission, is reported. He is selling Bantu Authorities and their local councils. Sandwiched between the paragraphs of this speech is an extract from "Die Vaderland" of April 23, which bears the caption

“Ommeswaai ten opsigte van Regering se Bantoe-beleid”—Swing over to the Government’s Bantu Policy.

Another extract—quoted from “Die Transvaler”—says the Bunga’s decision is a “triumph for the Government and the policy of apartheid” and for a system of government based on ethnic grouping.

“But I say to you: you must love your enemies . . .” This Biblical text introduces an Afrikaans feature on Dingaanstat mission station, which is in Natal. In bold type the writer says that during the unveiling of a monument to Piet Retief and his 70 followers in 1922, “who were so cruelly murdered,” a certain minister, A. J. Louw, said: “Come, let up put up a mission station here and teach the Zulus never to strike a death blow again.”

The reader is subjected here to sanctimonious sentimental twaddle about the implied breach of faith in Dingaan’s order to have the Boers killed. This, according to the writer’s reading of history, happened before a contract was to be signed ceding vast tracts of land to Piet Retief.

Under an Afrikaans headline which means: “The road which lies behind and the road ahead,” comes the speech delivered by Mr. Prinsloo, information officer, to a gathering that met recently to celebrate the centenary of Kroonstad.

In his outline of the historical events that surrounded the entry of the Voortrekkers into the Free State, Prinsloo tries to make out a case for his forefathers. According to him they came in just when the Free State Africans were in utter distress after the armies of Tshaka and Mzilikazi had “plundered and destroyed” villages. The implication is that the white man’s entry was providential. Moshoeshe, he complains, did not help Moroka, the Borolong Chief, and the Boers who joined hands to drive out Mzilikazi.

One of the things that are never given the prominence they deserve, says Prinsloo, is that the Africans in the Free State acquired education and a knowledge of the Bible from the Boers on the latter’s farms. Here we have in Prinsloo’s speech a political sermon on the Mount, in which he virtually numbers the blessings the white man brought us.

Elsewhere in this issue, the reader sees a large finger pointing at the stolid faces of tired men and women at Witzieshoek meeting. The finger is that of Verwoerd. As if he were talking to a bunch of boys and girls, he tells them that it is the duty of their chiefs and authorities to plan for the better use of the land they have before they ask for more. This is used as an introduction for a feature that preaches the message of self-help among Africans.

There is a news item headed “Untouchability in India,” which states that there are about 50 million Untouchables in India. A comment by Mr. Govind Point, the Indian Home Minister in New Delhi is quoted: “With what face can we demand equality for all peoples, races and communities if we do not sustain the principle of human dignity in our own land . . .?” The item stops at that. The object is obvious. Deliberate omission is made of the laws of India passed making discrimination against Untouchables illegal—as distinct from South African laws that **create** a class of untouchables.

There is a series of articles—"Know Africa"—running in "**Bantu.**" These articles put on the cloak of innocent objective travelogue, in which the geography and history of various parts of Africa are given. But the writer cannot resist the temptation to put in a paragraph on the Asiatic policy of Mozambique, the subject in the number under review.

"Although race does not count here," says the writer, "Portuguese Indian immigrants to Mozambique are accepted without question while British Indians cause greatest official concern. The function of these Indians as traders in remote Native areas is now-a-days often taken over by Portuguese immigrants who contribute more to the development of the country, leave their children in the country, and do not carry the earned money away when they retire. The strictest control, however, cannot prevent rich Indians from sending their money somehow to India."

One cannot end such a review without mention of contributions from Africans who are selected from the crowds that are enchanted by the music of the Pied Piper of Bantustan—Verwoerd. One sings a praise in Zulu to the Hlubi clan (Bantu culture) another says with pride that the Vendas have accepted Bantu Authorities; another asks the editor to include more news in Sepedi because "**Bantu**" contains delectable stuff.; Mr. R. Cingo, headmaster of the Kroonstad Bantu United School, urges in Bantu fashion that his people should take more to handwork and manual labour, because there are too many teachers.

An African with misplaced poetic inspiration writes verse in praise of Verwoerd as if he were a god. The substance of this is too nauseating to review here. A white agricultural officer, perhaps sick of the smell of manure, brings up the rear with a verse tune that tells a story about stock culling, in which the African "sirs" the white official to immortality—all to the purpose of selling the rehabilitation scheme.

Pick out any number of "**Bantu**" at random and you will realise the obtuse, and perhaps for that reason, efficient manner in which the Government dishes out its propaganda. The Information Office is prepared to do this by flattering chiefs and other simple-minded people, always with sickening paternal mawkishness and the superior familiarity of an old-fashioned Calvinist evangelist.

IT'S UP TO YOU

It is well-known that the cost of printing newspapers and magazines is not covered by the money obtained from their sales. The one who pays for those pages and pages of print is the advertiser, the firm urging you to smoke this, drink that, wear this and buy that.

There are no advertisements in **LIBERATION**. The question then arises — who pays for the printing of this magazine?

The answer is a simple one. Unless you, reader and supporter of **LIBERATION**, help us pay for printing costs, then we get in such difficulties that we cannot issue the magazine regularly.

We can't rely on advertisers. The policy and contents of our magazine obviously will not appeal to them. We cannot cover printing costs by the amount each reader pays for his copy—it is insufficient. That is why we have to have your support—you, if you think that this is a worthwhile publication.

Send us a donation for our Printing Fund. Collect regularly from your friends — however small the amount, it all helps. Let's keep **LIBERATION** going. Let's do more — with just a bit of extra money we can improve the appearance and increase the contents of the magazine. What about it?