

in this issue . . .

EDITORIALS

1. AFTER VORSTER'S SIX MONTHS	Page 2
2. THE GOVERNMENT AND THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE	Page 3
THE LEGALISATION OF ABORTION IN SOUTH AFRICA by Majorie Dyer	Page 4
DEATH OF A LEADER by Ivor Shapiro	Page 9
HISTORY TEACHING IN AFRICAN SCHOOLS by Edgar Brookes	Page 11
IMPRESSIONS AND THOUGHTS by Peter Royle	Page 12
EDENDALE by Selby Msimang	Page 14

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EDITORIALS

1

AFTER VORSTER'S SIX MONTHS

Almost but not quite everything has been said which could be said about Mr. Vorster's famous "six months".

On several occasions recently Mr. Vorster has stressed that one of the great achievements of this period has been the acceptance by African states of South Africa; the recognition, as he told one audience, that South Africa was and would remain a part of Africa and had as much right to be there as any other nation.

We hope Mr Vorster won't mind if we point out that this attitude of African states to South Africa is not a thing of the last six months. Six years ago the signatories to the Lusaka Manifesto made perfectly clear their acceptance of the right of all South Africans of whatever colour to live in Africa and to enjoy the same rights there. But there was a condition applied to this acceptance, and it still applies. It was that

there should be an abandonment by White South Africans of discriminatory policies directed against other South Africans. Recently President Kaunda has made this point again. In a recent speech in the United States, in which he called for increased isolation of South Africa, he said "Mr Vorster thinks we are interfering. We are not. We are trying to help. We recognise three-million White settlers in South Africa are African, but they are not super Africans."

Somehow, and soon, Mr Vorster and his supporters and White South Africans generally must bring themselves to face this one simple fact, that, if they want to be accepted as Africans and to continue to live peacefully on the continent and to contribute to and enjoy its prosperity, it is going to have to be on a different basis to the one on which they have lived here up to now. Because the fact is that up till now most White South Africans **have** regarded themselves as

super Africans. They are going to have to change their way of life and this way of thinking, and Mr Vorster is going to have to change as much as anyone.

The policy which Mr Vorster applies to South Africa is a minority policy imposed on a majority of people. No amount of talk of "separate freedoms" and "multi-nationalism" and "independent homelands" can alter the fact that no Black man had anything to do with coining these catch-phrases or working out the policies behind them. The one consistent theme of Nationalist government over the past 27 years has been that all fundamental questions are decided by the Party and presented to the rest of us as accomplished facts. This is particularly true of race policy. What African leader would ever have agreed to Nationalist policy if he had had any say in the matter? Who on earth would ever accept that freedom for African people, such as it is, should be confined to 13% of the country; that in the other 87% of the country, where more than half the African population lives and a much higher percentage works, they should have no control over the laws by which they are governed; that the vast wealth of that 87%, which has been created by the joint effort of people of all races over many generations, should now be regarded as a White asset; that there should be gross discrimination on a purely racial basis in the provision of every

single social service—education, health, pension, to name just three? One has only to cast the most superficial glance at the South African scene to see that, up till now, this has been a country in which 17% of the population has always imposed its political views on the other 83%, whether they liked it or not. Black Africa is affronted by this, as it is by a hundred-and-one laws which prohibit mixed club sport, mixed trade unions, mixed schools, mixed marriages, and so on—each one hurtful and offensive, all seen as the acts of people who regard themselves as **super** Africans.

Mr Vorster has certainly achieved more than most people expected in his six months, but he has only just started out on a long hard road if what he wants to do, as surely he must, is to achieve real acceptance for South Africa in Africa. To do that he is going to have to set about dismantling the apartheid edifice which his Party has spent 27 years erecting and he is going to have to sit down with people of all colours and many viewpoints in South Africa and work out a new policy which is reasonably acceptable to them all. Can he bring himself to do it, if not immediately, at least within a reasonable time! We certainly hope so, because only then will Black Africa cease to regard White South Africans as bigoted **super** Africans and welcome them as part of the continent. □

THE GOVERNMENT AND THE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE

The Government's shameful treatment of the Christian Institute has been fully discussed in the newspapers. There seems to be no point, therefore, in repeating either the main facts of the case or even the primary reasons for the indignation and dismay which all civilised and alert South Africans have felt. What we propose to do instead is to consider some of the wider implications of the Government's action.

The Christian Institute, as a body dedicated to the study and the implementation of the social aspects of Christ's teaching, has found, not surprisingly, that it is bound to be sharply critical of the way in which South African society is organised. The C. I. has in fact stated boldly that apartheid is unChristian. But—argues our Government—apartheid is the cherished ideal of one political party, and therefore to criticise it is to indulge in politics, and therefore a body which does so has no right to receive money from overseas sources.

In terms of crude power-politics, the Government's argument was to some extent predictable: the Nats want to stay in power and they are happy to have a crack at anyone who says anything at all which disagrees with their traditional dogmas. Nevertheless this latest act of theirs is somewhat remarkable. For one thing, they seem to be prepared to enter into combat with all those Christian denominations who have declared that apartheid is incompatible with the Gospels' statements about love and justice. Why have they done this? Is it because they are confident that when confronted by the might of the state most Christians wilt and become silent or allow their views to go a little blurred or return to the safety of purely private prayer? If this is the Government's assumption, let us devoutly hope that it is a mistaken one. The second remarkable feature of this latest piece of tyranny is that it should have been performed for all the world to see (the world sees most things