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The Natal Witness

During recent years forward-looking South Africans of more than one political party have been actively considering what modifications in the present "homelands" policy would be needed to make it more just and more practicable. A minority of thinkers has stood out for a united South Africa with a common roll type of franchise. The majority opinion has been in favour of some type of federation in which the "homelands" would play an important part.

In his book Paul Malherbe has introduced a new and original conception which may well affect the thinking of both groups. His oddly named "Multistan" signifies a unified area with a common roll forming part of a Federation composed in the main of "white" or "black states". It is arguable that if this "Multistan" proves a success, it may lead to a gradual development of both the Federation and its component states in a "Multistan" direction.

This able little book—another of David Philip's outstanding publications—exhibits very welcome signs of practicability and thorough research. Mr Malherbe shows a touch of real genius in selecting Kwa Zulu (which he persists in calling "Zululand") for his first experimental "Multistan". Within the present Government's policies, Kwa Zulu faces insuperable difficulties. If all white-owned land is excluded from its boundaries, Kwa Zulu will inevitably be split into at least ten different fragments, a fact which makes independence or even local autonomy extremely difficult. If on the other hand these rich sugar lands are to be expropriated the cost will be intolerably high. But if white land-owners retain their property, a franchise on a common roll dominated

REVIEW

"MULTISTAN": A NEW FACTOR

Malherbe, Paul N: "Multistan": A way out of the South African dilemma, (David Philip, Cape Town, 1974) R4,95

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by Zulu voters, and equal (but not superior) civil rights, Kwa Zulu can have viable boundaries, the white landowners can preserve the property which their hard work and technical skill have built up, and white residents can remain political sharers in Kwa Zulu without humiliation. It is pertinent to say that this happy result would be better achieved under the leadership of Gatsha Buthelezi than under a less diplomatic and skilful ruler.

As the neighbouring segments of South Africa watch this development, some with hope and some with fear, they will be, so Mr Malherbe hopes, converted to the view that a black majority can rule whites without economic, political or personal disaster. From this may gradually work out the kind of solution which the minority group of liberals would prefer—a united South Africa with a common roll.

It is an example of Mr Malherbe's sobriety and modesty that he does not attempt to take us all the way along this route. He injects a new factor into our thinking by giving us a practicable example which will certainly work and might take us a long way. His book gains from not being written to support a theory, but from being rather a practical and most useful contribution from a South African who loves his country to the easing of that country's problems and needs.

As he is a son of E. G. Malherbe, it may be permissible to describe him without irreverence as a valuable chip from a valuable old block.□