

polygamous household, presently known as the general heir, be changed from that of the administrator of the estate to that of an overseer and that the widow should administer the estate.

To ensure that the widow does not abscond with the estate and leave her children destitute, provision is made that upon the death of her husband she should go to the Chief, or Township Council and have an inventory of the assets and liabilities of the estate made, which in turn is to be registered at the Magistrate's Court.

These provisions with the recommendations that the estate should devalue in accordance with the Common law (and

not Bantu Law) and that the marriage should bring about community of property should provide the widow with sufficient protection.

CONCLUSION

The Committee notes that "... if our proposals are accepted, Zulu women will be at par with the other women of the world and the rest of their battles they can fight on their own. Let us hope that these far-reaching and long-delayed reforms are speedily accepted and the Code amended accordingly so as to finally alleviate the crushing burden of disability under which the Zulu woman groans.□

MR VORSTER

AND THE WHITE BACKLASH

by Jan van Eck

Most South Africans are today aware of the fact that a White backlash is building up in South Africa. Although it is a quite recent phenomenon and although it has an in-built ceiling, I believe that we cannot afford to ignore it.

Conservative White South Africans have always existed, but they have never been so outspoken, angry and militant as right now. Allow me to illustrate this. In the Transvaal an organisation was formed on the banks of the Vaal River and the members of the society had to take a blood oath for their cause: "To fight for White survival". The same group rejected the H.N.P. as being 'too liberal' (!).

At a Congress which I attended earlier this year in Pretoria, resolution upon resolution pledged to organise conservatives into a new political party in order to safeguard the White man's future. An interesting new note was introduced, i.e. that not only Afrikaans-speaking Whites should be drawn into the new White "laager" but also English-speaking conservatives. This, surely, makes sense, since verkrampptes have never been limited to the Afrikaans-speaking section of our population.

The group which organised this Congress calls itself 'the Committee for Informing the People' and has established strong contacts with leading conservatives in the National Party Establishment as well as in the United Party. They

also have strong contacts with people in the Rhodesian Government and spread the story quite openly that the Vorster Government is selling them (the Rhodesians) out to the Blacks. Leading South African conservatives have frequently appeared on Rhodesian TV and have tried to convince White Rhodesians that White South Africa is behind them in spite of what Mr Vorster may say.

Although I do not believe that this conservative backlash poses any serious threat to our country, I believe that it would however be utter foolishness not to take serious note of them since they can, after all, exert a considerable braking pressure on the Government just at a time when it should be moving much faster ahead.

The ostrich-attitude which many Government spokesmen and newspapers adopt, i.e. to ignore them and to act as though they do not exist, will not really help. The fact is that they **do** exist and that their ranks extend beyond the H.N.P. into the N.P. as well as the U.P. As and when Mr Vorster moves further forward into the 20th century according to the demands of detente, the White backlash will, of necessity, increase.

This is, after all, what caused the backlash originally; the promise of change in Mr Pik Botha's speech at the United Nations and Prime Minister Vorster's 'six month' speech.

This, coupled with the rapid changes in those countries surrounding us and the disorder that has frequently accompanied this change, has caused fear amongst especially the Whites in the Transvaal—the province closest to the changes.

When two of your leaders declare that your country is going to scrap discrimination; when your Government then acts upon this and opens up theatres, trains, hotels, job opportunities, etc.; when your Prime Minister states with regard to Mocambique that he is “not concerned with the colour of that Government as long as it is a stable one”, and when your Government moves its police out of Rhodesia, it takes a very courageous White person not to feel slightly uncomfortable.

In spite of the fact that the Government tries to ignore this right wing movement which has been established in opposition to its internal and external policies, it is still terribly sensitive and I believe over-sensitive to the prejudices of like-minded people who make up a considerable section of their own support. It is not that Mr Vorster cannot afford to lose their electoral support—he can easily afford to lose between 6 and 12 seats to them. The reason is, I believe, that he does not want to go down in history as the Prime Minister who broke the Afrikaner’s political unity twice during his term of office.

Because of this, the Government’s philosophy is to bring about as many changes as are possible and still to take their people with them. Mr Vorster is therefore going to play a see-saw game between the pressures of detente on the one side and the retarding influence from this right wing on the other side. The end product may, of course, be that he lands up high and dry in the air unable to move in any direction at all.

During the Middelburg by-election the H.N.P. newspaper, the Afrikaner, claimed that the Government had opened **all** hotels to all races. A terrified National Party reacted to this ‘smear’ (overseas they would probably spread this smear themselves) by publishing a full-page advertisement in Die Transvaler which said that only **some** hotels and definitely **not all** hotels were being opened to Blacks.

Pressed by White voters at a public meeting during this same by-election, the Minister of Labour, Mr Marais Viljoen, said that the jobs of Blacks would, during difficult times, be given back to Whites. So while the Government makes some bold moves into a more enlightened direction, it undoes a lot of this by pandering to the prejudice of its own followers. It puts a serious question mark behind the sincerity of the Government’s declared intention to move away from discrimination—permanently or only temporarily. It puts an even more serious question mark behind the Government’s ability to make the promised changes.

I believe very strongly that the Government will never be able to bring about the sort of radical change that is needed if it insists on keeping its verkrampte right wing in its midst.

If one talks for long enough with prominent Nationalists, they admit that this is true, but they also admit that they do not know what to do about this.

And, it is in the light of this pessimism, that talk about a so-called ‘compassionate dictatorship’ has started. As fear for the consequences if detente should fail and a belief that Mr Vorster’s own people will not allow him to move far and fast enough have made many prominent Nationalists admit to me, in all seriousness, that they wonder whether a compassionate dictatorship is not the only way out. “Then, Mr Vorster”, they say, “can make all the changes that have to be made without worrying about the results at the ballot box”.

Besides the fact that very few such dictatorships remain ‘compassionate’ for very long, and besides the fact that there is another far more honourable way out for Mr Vorster, i.e. to get rid of his right wing before he becomes-like Mr Ian Smith—their captive, most people in opposition and especially Black South Africans will see this move (justifiably) as merely the entrenchment of White Power and an effort to extend White ‘baasskap’, however compassionate it may be, for ever.

I believe that there is another way to make Mr Vorster do the “impossible” (scrapping his right wing) and that is to pose a more serious threat to him from the left. A determined enlightened opposition on Mr Vorster’s left can pose a very serious threat to him with regard to his more verligte supporters. The stronger this threat, the more Mr Vorster will be forced into a situation where he will just have to choose between losing his right wing, or his left wing—or otherwise resort to this so-called ‘compassionate’ dictatorship.

This is why a powerful opposition party on Mr Vorster’s left—a party such as the new Progressive Reform Party—is so crucial. The stronger it is, the stronger its support amongst all sections of South Africa’s people—White and Black, Afrikaans and English—the less Mr Vorster, or anyone else in his cabinet, will be tempted to resort to some sort of dictatorship.

Personally, I put my bet on Mr Vorster and his Government moving much faster left if pressed to do so, because he realises what the cost of declaring a dictatorship will be.

- * the end of detente with Africa, not because Africa is necessarily opposed to one-party rule, but because it will also be seen as oppression of the Blacks;
- * world-wide action against South Africa;
- * internal resistance from liberally minded people—Black and White.

If Mr Vorster overcomes his fear of again splitting the Afrikaner politically, I believe he will move forward at a much faster pace, scrapping his right wing, realising the benefits of such a move:

- * the success of detente on an impressive scale (this will open up the door for him to resign on the crest of a wave);
- * world-wide growth in acceptance:

* the retention of his powerful verligte supporters and the gaining of new support to his left, especially amongst English-speaking people.

There is no logic, although a lot of emotion, in the argument that because Mr Vorster has altered course, one should now support him. Being a pragmatist, Mr Vorster moves under pressure. The sports policy should illustrate this clearly enough. One wonders what sports policy we would have had today if there had not been someone called Peter Hain!

If all enlightened people should join Mr Vorster now, the strongest reason for him to move further and faster would

disappear and his right wing would again grow in importance.

If one therefore directs an appeal to all enlightened South Africans to help build up the Progressive Reform Party into a powerful verligte force, one is not in the first instance motivated by party-political reasons. One does it in the belief that only such a strong force on Mr Vorster's left can force him to scrap his right wing and move more boldly in an enlightened direction.

And, one does it in the belief that the pressure of such a Party will make anyone who is considering establishing a dictatorship, seriously think twice. □

RELIGION AND PREJUDICE

A Review of "Religious Beliefs and White Prejudice" by Robert Buis
Raven Press 1975 R2,40

by Colin Gardner

This is an interesting little book. It records a sociologist's attempt to demonstrate in an objective way his suspicion that the attitudes of white South African Christians are partly affected by the specific nature of their religious beliefs.

He proves his point conclusively. He takes samples of white members of the Dutch Reformed Church, the Presbyterian Church and the Roman Catholic Church, and, having conducted a survey, he finds that the former have a distinctly "less favourable attitude towards blacks" than the latter. The Presbyterians fall in the middle, but closer to the RCs than to the DRCs.

To a layman all this may sound fairly simple; but it isn't. The book is partly an account of the concerns, problems and techniques of a practising sociologist. Mr Buis discusses such fundamental questions as the differences between "attitudes" and "behaviour" and (Weber's distinction) between "ideas" and "interests". He then goes on to consider the exact nature of the beliefs of the three denominations in question, and his ways of determining

these beliefs, and methods of testing the religious committedness of the actual people that he is to interview. He talks also of the different ways of classifying and testing racial attitudes. Then he describes the drawing up of the survey itself, with all its complex checks and counter-checks. Finally there is an account of the carrying-out of the survey (this is fascinating, and at times amusing), and then the conclusion.

Mr Buis is giving us facts and—correctly—doesn't attempt to make large deductions from the facts. But the liberally-minded reader can't help doing so. He finds himself dismayed, once again, at the thought that the Christian denomination that is most powerful among South African whites regards racial separation as an important part of God's plan. But he is distressed, too, that even the "better" denominations—in this survey the Roman Catholics—don't on the whole set a particularly striking example. If Jesus Christ's call that people should love one another were taken **really** seriously by those who consider themselves his followers, racial prejudice—prejudices of every sort—would begin to evaporate like morning mist beneath the splendour of the sun. □