

Apartheid and Diplomacy

South Africa and the World: The Foreign Policy of Apartheid, by Amry Vandebosch, *Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1970. vii + 303 pp. \$8.50.*

DR. AMRY VANDENBOSCH, currently professor emeritus at the University of Kentucky and an acknowledged expert on Dutch foreign and colonial policy, wrote his first book, *Neutrality of the Netherlands in the World War*, in 1927; in 1959, he wrote the more comprehensive diplomatic history, *Dutch Foreign Policy since 1815: A Study in Small Power Politics*. In the intervening thirty-two years he had published books on the Dutch East Indies, the United Nations, South East Asia, as well as countless articles in the fields of comparative and

international politics. Moreover, he has had experience in the U.S. Department of State, the Office of Strategic Services, and at the San Francisco Conference of 1945, at which the United Nations was founded. His magnificent study of South African foreign policy is therefore a logical outgrowth of his interest in world affairs, and he brings to the task a demonstrable skill in using sources written in Dutch and Afrikaans (both of which were or are official languages of South Africa) and in sifting through and utilizing the plethora of official documents of the League of Nations and of the United Nations.

This book is composed of seventeen chapters grouped into seven chronological parts, starting with 1652 (when the Dutch first established an outpost of the Dutch East India Company at Cape Town) and ending with the British and South African parliamentary elections of 1970. Roughly half of the book is concerned with the period from 1948 until 1970 and thus is devoted to what the author regards as the external ramifications of that domestic policy described by some as *apartheid* (an Afrikaans noun denoting apart-ness and connoting racial separation among all the different races in South Africa) and, more recently, by others as "separate development." Because the author handles his sources (official government and international organization publications, biographies, autobiographies, and the South African press) with such agility and documents this material scrupulously (with no less than 702 footnotes), the book is one that should satisfy scholar and layman alike, especially because it is neither superficial nor intensely partisan. Countless books on the South African scene can be classified as either shrill vendettas against the government of the Republic of South Africa or as barely concealed apologetics, and probably too many authors write too much too soon on South Africa with too little patient, disciplined observation on the spot. Professor Vandenbosch has been to South Africa (he returned only recently from a trip there) and he also makes his

value judgments clear at the outset. In the preface, he indicates that although he does ". . . share the views of many critics of apartheid," he nevertheless is ". . . not unaware of the difficult situation in which the South African whites find themselves."

Readers who wish to understand what the foreign policy of South Africa is must realize that those who participate in the formulation and execution of that policy are the whites of South Africa. Insofar as black Africans have been, are, and will be self-governing under the system of separate development (and this point is hotly debated between the proponents and opponents of the system of governance in South Africa), they are neither decision-makers nor decision-legitimizers in terms of foreign policy, even for their own homelands. In this respect, they resemble those Africans in the adjacent black-ruled states of Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland at the time when their respective territories were granted self-government (but not independence) by the British government in the mid-1960's. Under the British (and other Western European) systems that prevailed in Africa, self-government never involved the devolution of the power of the crown in the conduct of foreign affairs to the Africans. That power was a crown prerogative and was bestowed only when independence was granted by the necessary constitutional instruments.

Therefore, one must realize that South African foreign policy contains all the components one would expect in any given nation's foreign policy, such as the protection of one's nationals abroad, the promotion of export trade, the development of an intelligence-gathering and evaluating mechanism, and so forth, plus those that are possibly peculiar to South Africa because of the nature of its domestic order. For years that domestic order concerned the nature of the power equilibrium among three component groups that Professor W. M. Macmillan called "Bantu [African], Boer [Afrikaner], and Briton" (the title of his famous book on South Africa). Before

the advent of *apartheid* in 1948, South African foreign policy reflected the residue of the bitterness of the Afrikaner toward the English-speaking white South African resulting from Britain's victory in the second Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. Thus, the seminal questions concerned the propriety of South Africa's place in the imperial British sun of the Commonwealth and the vexing issue of neutrality in World War II. This was the time when the Afrikaner soldier and statesman, Field Marshal Smuts, cast a lengthening shadow over the Commonwealth, the League of Nations, and even the founding of the United Nations at the San Francisco Conference. Thus in his discussion of the pre-1948 era, Professor Vandenbosch concentrates upon South Africa's relations with its neighbors in Southern Africa (such as South West Africa, the High Commission Territories of Basutoland, Bechuanaland, and Swaziland, Rhodesia, and Mozambique), the British metropole, and India (because of the presence of persons of Indian descent in the South African population).

In the years after the implementation of *apartheid*, a greater reconciliation between English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking whites was effected under the primacy of the ruling National Party (which has enjoyed uninterrupted success at the polls since 1948), and the seminal question became the relationship of the white electorate to the remainder of the population. The more conservative Afrikaner tradition of race relations displaced the theoretically more liberal British one, and the former became institutionalized in the program of *apartheid*. This program of the separation of the body politic (the whites) from the remainder of the population resulted in increasing world hostility as evidenced in United Nations debates. The world of the 1950's and the 1960's was a world in which white leadership, tutelage, paramountcy, or perhaps even survival was questioned at every turn, especially by the new nations of Africa and Asia, which articulated the demands of majority rule, self-determina-

tion, and decolonization.

Thus, as Professor Vandenbosch lucidly demonstrates, South African foreign policy in the post-Smuts era had to devise new strategies and mechanisms both to win friends in the West and to keep its detractors in Africa, Asia, and elsewhere at bay. This is why he uses the subtitle "the foreign policy of apartheid." He concentrates, in the latter half of the book, on specific issues with which South African foreign policy planners and personnel had to deal, namely, the status of the Indian ethnic group in South Africa (this group, of course, was able to transcend the frontiers of sovereignty and to appeal to India to ameliorate its status within South Africa), the international status of the mandated territory of South West Africa, the types of relationships South Africa maintained with its neighbors in Southern Africa, and finally its departure from the Commonwealth of Nations. Aside from the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, he does not analyze the nature of South Africa's bilateral ties with the United States, West Germany, France, or the other members of the Atlantic Community, nor does he treat the very fascinating development of South Africa's newly emerging links with Latin America. The book has an adequate, annotated bibliography and full index and is not marred by any major flaws either of writing or of research. It is indeed an invaluable book, especially so for those in the intellectual community who have time and patience to read but one book on South Africa.

Reviewed by RICHARD DALE