

best that the European Universities can give. The scholastic philosophy of St Thomas is catholic and should be intelligible to the Hot-tentot, the Hindu and the survivor of Hiroshima. But it needs to be put into the ideas and terminology of those people. St Thomas himself attempted the task for the Spanish Arabs of his day in the *Contra Gentiles*. His example must now be followed on a wider plan and the attempt at Stellenbosch will be a test case. There the predominating European thought is Calvinist; but the traditions of that creed are reaching their expiry; and if its corruption is to be the generation of something at once Catholic and indigenous these Dominican studies provide the seed of the new life.

South Africa, therefore, as a subject for a special number of BLACKFRIARS, provides an interesting study. Not only has it importance in working out its own problems in its own way; it also stands as an example of what must be secured in the future in order to preserve the full Christian tradition even though its original home may crumble.

THE EDITOR

'I, TOO, AM AN AFRICAN'¹

HISTORICALLY, from the fact of its colonization by white men from the sea, Southern Africa has been linked in men's minds rather with Europe than with the rest of the African continent, and the truly African character of its inhabitants, even of the Whites, has been too easily forgotten, in spite of the use of the name *Afrikaner* (meaning merely *African*). In recent years, however, largely owing to the war and consequent movements of troops and population, the average white inhabitant of Southern Africa has become much more conscious of his relationships with the rest of the continent and with its aboriginal inhabitants, and aware of his responsibilities and the opportunity there is for him to play a decisive part in the future of Africa south of the Sahara, now in a state of rapid social, economic, religious and political development. This new awareness, long latent in the land-consciousness of the Afrikaans-speaking population, and now making itself felt among all sections of the people, is given utterance in the words of Field-Marshal Smuts used as a title to this article, and may be traced in many recent items of news from South Africa.

It is necessary, in order to avoid misconceptions, to preface a few statements of fact about the area of which we are speaking. Southern Africa² differs from the rest of Black Africa in being the

¹ Field Marshal the Rt Hon. J. C. Smuts in the Union Parliament, April, 1947.

only part in which a people of European origin have made a home, though it can be doubted whether this colonization will be permanently successful much further north than Pretoria or Durban or in the arid western parts of the region. The ancient inhabitants, the Bushmen and Hottentots, have succumbed to the invasion of Bantu from the north and of Whites and their slaves from the south. As a result of these invasions of the last few hundred years the whole area has come under the political and economic domination of the Whites, in number some two millions, of whom about half are Afrikaners of seventeenth century Dutch, German and Huguenot origin, and the rest British, Portuguese, German, Jewish, etc. The non-European population is divided into two groups by a line running down the middle of the area around the 24th degree of longitude, into about ten million Bantu in the eastern half, closely related by origin and language to some thirty millions in East and Central Africa, and in the western half nearly one million Cape Coloured, a race that has arisen from a mixture of Bushmen and Hottentot remnants with Malay and other slaves brought by the Whites, to which is added some European blood (a considerable element near the coast) and some Bantu. In the last few years Bantu immigration into the Cape Coloured area has become very extensive. There is also a group of some two hundred thousand Indians in Natal, originating in coolie labour brought from the Madras area at the beginning of the century, and hence differing considerably from the Indian population of Bombay traders in East Africa.

Southern Africa, the homeland of these thirteen million people, is essentially the tip of a continent, and shares in physical and climatic conditions of the continent. For Africa is a remarkable unity in this respect: anywhere in it the white African (not to attempt to interpret the minds of other groups) feels himself at home, and recognises the same contours, the same reddish soil, the same vast hardness under a brilliant sun, to name some of the more salient features. There is no doubt that Africa has a most powerful effect upon those who dwell in it, and the white settler becomes aware of this when he attempts to live in Europe again. It is difficult to define its effect on character, but a sense of being on a vast and ancient mass of land, not seen through the humanizing glasses of an age-old accumulated culture as Europe is, but overpowering and unconcerned with man, is an important factor in producing the change. The Whites of South

² That is to say, Africa South of the Zambesi, a geographical unity, including the Union, the Protectorates, S. Rhodesia and S. Mozambique, as distinguished from East, Central and West Africa. The Mediterranean Littoral and Abyssinia are linked with Europe, and separated from what may be called 'Black Africa' by the desert: we do not include them when using the term Africa, by which we mean Africa south of the Sahara.

Africa inevitably become Afrikaners, Africans, though some may for a time attempt to resist the process. And in becoming Africans they acquire something in common with the non-European inhabitants that no other Whites possess. They also cease to be Colonials, that is to say, people who look back to a home overseas and are but sojourners in Africa, and hence view the problems of Africa and its other inhabitants in quite a different manner, as problems about which they and their children will have a permanent responsibility, and people with whom they must live.

The vast social, economic and political injustices and inequalities to which the non-European population of Southern Africa has been subjected as a result of white colonization are often written about (not infrequently with little understanding and with exaggeration). This article is not in any way an attempt to deny or minimise these things, but merely tries to bring out certain more positive elements that are commonly overlooked, and which may be of value in the future. In a recent visit to East Africa, the writer was much struck by the difference in attitude towards the Bantu population between the Whites in East Africa and the South Africans. And this not only in the case of the Kenya settlers, whose attitude to the Africans and manner of speaking to them would be impossible to most South Africans,³ but also in the case of the officials, educationalists and missionaries who devote their whole lives to the good of the Africans.

The South African has the segregationist attitude, which has so far prevented native development of any significance; but curiously this would seem to be coupled with what is actually a greater confidence in the possibilities of independent progress and fundamentally greater respect for the African as a man. His fear for his own and his children's future is in no small degree born of a respect for the African's capacities. In East Africa, on the contrary, this fear does not exist among the officials, teachers and missionaries, who will return home to Europe; and in consequence African progress is rapid. But there seems to be less confidence in the capacity of the African to develop on his own and conduct his own affairs, and a tendency to hold him under tutelage in the spheres of government, education and religion through distrust of his capabilities.

One may therefore wonder if in the end African progress may not be greater in the south than elsewhere, when the Whites of Southern Africa acquiesce in such progress, and there are not wanting signs of a profound and rapid change in opinion. In the last few years there has been a noticeable growth of a sense of responsibility

³ For corroboration see the recent pamphlet, *An African Soldier Speaks*, by R. H. Kakembo (London; Livingstone Press).

towards the African and coloured population on the part of the rank and file of the white people, which has manifested itself on the domestic side (where it is perhaps most significant) in better wages, treatment and housing for servants, and in greater interest in the living conditions of the non-Europeans on the part of municipalities and the farming community. Criticisms from U.N.O. and elsewhere, the fine record of coloured and African soldiers, the world-wide cry for social justice, have all helped in developing this improved attitude; and the airing of the grievances of the Natal Indians has both drawn attention to the position of the rest of the non-white population, and produced something like a sense of solidarity with them against the Indians, who seem to act as non-Africans. There are adumbrated changes in legislation, such as the recognition of the African trade unions and the entrusting of some authority to the African Representative Council, which give hope that this change of mind is going to be effective, though results may seem slow; while a modification of the policy of segregation is forecast by the introduction of the concept of *apartheid*⁴ into parliamentary discussion. Segregationism has been shifting during the war years from an idealistic policy of restricting non-Europeans to separate territories, where they are theoretically at liberty to develop the highest civilization in their own way, to a more realistic concept of their gradual integration into the economic and industrial life of the country. This involves a rapid economic, educational and social progress and the provision of all kinds of amenities, and so *apartheid* envisages the establishment of non-European communities of a normal standard of civilization, apart from, but close to, each European group.

The consequence of this for the future of South Africa and its place in the development of the continent are enormous. Its non-European people, at present less advanced than those of East Africa, may rapidly put on European civilisation. They will have the advantage of long contact with established European culture as servants and workers, which may make this adoption of an alien civilization less disconcerting and unbalancing than it has been further north; and those who attain to higher education, having the full culture all around them with which to compare themselves, may be less assertive and 'half-baked' than is the case where Whites are few. It is possible to forecast the emergence in South Africa of a Bantu form of European civilization that by reason of its economic superiority and the advantages it gains from the white civilization will lead in the development of the rest of Black Africa. Africa, having no

⁴ *apartheid* is a new word to the Afrikaans language, and can be rendered 'apartness'.

indigenous higher culture of its own, must needs build its own culture out of that of Europe, and developments in South Africa will have powerful advantages over those in the north. Already, besides the blots of the colour-bar legislation and segregation of the worst type, South Africa has the only functioning university college for Africans (at Fort Hare) in the whole of British Africa, and there is likelihood of great developments in this direction. When the resources of an established and rich civilization are turned to the task of African progress, with the realistic understanding of several centuries, results may be extremely rapid and solid. The Catholic Church and the Dutch Reformed Church have also each recently commenced colleges of university standard. These, and a multiple of other small signs, point to a growing realization on the part of White South Africa of its position in the continent, and the necessity it lies under of giving the non-European population a fair opportunity of development, and of finding a way in which all races can live in peace and harmony. This is a development of the tradition rather of the Afrikaners than of the English Liberals, arising as it does from a deep sense of responsibility and an underlying unity with the non-European population, resulting from the adoption of Africa as a homeland. It is along this line that the best hopes for a satisfactory and lasting solution of the racial problem lie, and the cross-currents of apparently more liberal opinion from foreigners, British and otherwise, who have not made Africa their home, only serve to rouse antagonism and to confuse the issue; the solution to the race problem must come from within the country. And, though a dark picture can easily be drawn, and though most accusations are true, there are yet the brighter sides of the picture to which attention has been drawn, and signs of great changes.

THE CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

If there is then some truth in the above contentions, the position of the Catholic Church in Southern Africa is of importance in the future of the whole continent.

In Black Africa there are about ten million Catholics out of a population of 150 millions. This represents a five-fold increase in the last fifteen years, and it may be anticipated that progress will continue to be extremely rapid, and of a snowball type. There appears to be no doubt that from a strictly religious point of view Protestantism is rapidly losing its appeal throughout Africa, and the tendency to turn to Catholicism for solid religion is noticeable. The harvest for the Church is indeed ripe, and depends very simply on the number of priests, sisters, schools and churches available. It is also most

urgent that the greatest possible advantage should be taken of the opportunity for vast numbers of conversions, for Africa is in a state of rapid and seething development, and it may soon be too late; while every little done now will bear enormous fruit in the future for the continent and for the world.

In Southern Africa there are over three-quarters of a million Catholics out of the population of thirteen millions, thus approximately the same proportion as in the rest of Africa, or one fifteenth of the whole. Among the Whites the number is about one hundred thousand, or one twentieth, and mainly among the English-speaking population, with the result that the proportion of Catholics in the larger industrial towns reaches nearly one tenth, while in the country it is exceedingly small; and further that in the parliament and civil service, where Afrikaners predominate, the number of Catholics is little. In consequence Catholic influence among the white population is strongest in industrial communities, and has relatively little direct influence on governmental circles.

In regard to the Europeans, therefore, the chief problem of the Church is the apostolate among the Afrikaans-speaking people, and this is rendered especially difficult owing to the strong hold which the Dutch Reformed churches have, and the widespread dissemination of anti-Catholic prejudices of the crudest sort. For an Afrikaner living in an Afrikaans *milieu* to become a Catholic involves something of the same break with his people that the conversion of a Jew does. With growing industrialization, however, and a drift of the country people to the towns, this close union of church and nationality is being broken, and conversions in the industrial towns are becoming numerous. They would be more were the number of priests able to speak Afrikaans greater, and the Catholic laity less exclusively English-speaking, and there is no doubt that an organized Afrikaans apostolate in some of the larger towns would bear immediate fruits. Up to the present the use of Afrikaans by the Church has been almost wholly confined to mission work among the Cape Coloured in the country districts. Among the Afrikaners an anti-clericalism in regard to their own Dutch Reformed clergy is very manifest, but attachment to the church as a national institution remains, in spite of growing dislike of its narrowness and intolerance. While other Protestant churches are dismissed as 'English churches' and foreign, there is a consciousness that the Catholic Church is above nationality, and this breeds both a fear of its international character on the part of nationalist narrowness, and an interest in it as a spiritual home for the deeply religious Afrikaans people. Among the younger South Africans bilingualism is becoming more and more of an accomplished fact, intermarriages between English and Afri-

kaans speaking people more frequent, and contact with the Church thus more widespread, with a consequent diminution of prejudice. The time appears to be growing ripe for a direct Afrikaans apostolate.

The majority of the clergy and sisters are foreign: Germans predominate, with smaller numbers of English, French, French-Canadians, Irish, Swiss, Italians, Hollanders, Belgians and Americans. The number of South African-born priests is growing, and the bishops have projected a regional seminary to be established in the Transvaal, while the Oblates of Mary Immaculate have a training-house at Pietermaritzburg and the Dominicans at Stellenbosch; while many other Orders and Congregations send vocations overseas for training, notably the American Paulists, who are planning an apostolate among non-Catholics for the future. In Cape Town nearly half the clergy are South African-born, but this is exceptional. On the whole the Catholic laity do not belong to the more highly educated or the richer strata of society, and consequently the proportion of Catholics in the South African universities tends to be small. The English-medium universities of Cape Town and Johannesburg, and the university colleges of Pietermaritzburg and Grahamstown have most, but their prevailing materialistic trend has a weakening effect on the faith of Catholic students. The Afrikaans-medium universities of Stellenbosch and Pretoria and the colleges of Bloemfontein, Potchefstroom and Wellington have very few Catholics, though their fundamentally Christian character would render them more suitable. At Stellenbosch the English Dominicans have established a novitiate and study-house, in principle bi-lingual, for candidates for the Order, and have many friendly relations with the professors of the university which tend to remove prejudice, while Catholic chaplains attached to Cape Town, Johannesburg and Grahamstown do similar work.

Against this is to be set the very large influence and reputation acquired by Catholic institutions in the educational and charitable field among Whites, which cater as much, or more, for non-Catholics than for Catholics, and which have rendered the priest and sisters an accepted element in South African life, even in the smallest towns where the Catholic population is a mere handful. While in the past the policy adopted has been one of extreme care in no way to thrust Catholicism under the notice of non-Catholics benefiting from these institutions and schools, the growth of indifference and decrease in prejudice, and the growing number of non-Catholics who will receive no religion except from the Church, tends to the adoption of a more catholicising policy, and the gradual exclusion of Protestants not willing to take Catholic teaching. Thus among the white population of South Africa the influence of the Church is hard to define;

it can perhaps be summed up by saying that officially the influence is less, while unofficially and indirectly it is very much greater, than its numbers warrant.

Among the Cape Coloured population the Church has of recent years made rapid progress both in the towns and in the country, though among so mixed a poverty-stricken and unstable people it is exceedingly difficult to assess either its present importance or its future prospects. An indirect effect of the presence of numbers of Catholics among these people may be an interest in the Church on the part of the white Afrikaans population, through having Catholic servants, in much the same way as the early Church penetrated into Rome through the slaves.

For the future of the Church in Africa its position, of course, among the ten million Bantu is the most important. Here progress is rapid, though for the most part recent. The nucleus is Basutoland, where the Paramount Chief is Catholic, and which promises to become a mainly Catholic country in the near future. It is here, at Roma, that the South African bishops have commenced a university college for Africans. There are seminaries at Roma, at Ixopo in Natal, and at Chishawasha in Southern Rhodesia, all of which have only recently reached the stage of ordaining priests annually, so that the number of African clergy is as yet small. There are several congregations of African sisters, also in the early stages of development. Thus the Church is much less firmly established than in the rest of Africa. On the other hand, at this time of universal social, economic and political development of African life as a whole, and possible increasing contacts with Catholicism farther north, the leeway may soon be made up. The scene is at present one of confusion: Catholic Africans speaking a multitude of tongues and trained in a great variety of missionary traditions, are streaming into the sub-continent to share in its industrial development; the indigenous Africans are migrating all over the country, and establishing themselves and their families in towns. All these displaced persons often find their religious wants poorly catered for by priests with little experience of such work and unable to deal with such a variety of languages, and it will take many years before a satisfactory adjustment is made. With the appointment of a new Apostolic Delegate of the famous missionary Society of the Divine Word, and a well-organised meeting of all the Vicars-Apostolic held in March of this year, we can expect large and far-reaching developments in the work of the Church in Southern Africa.

Among the non-Europeans the Church is exceedingly poor in Southern Africa, and what exists is the result more of the personal work and sacrifices of the clergy and sisters, and money earned by

them through educational and other work among Whites, than of assistance from the Church at large, the government or local white Catholics. Governmental assistance for education is far more satisfactory than might be expected, but the interest of white Catholics in local mission-work is very limited. The contrast between the white schools and churches and the miserable mission buildings is usually striking. Nevertheless an increase on the part of white Catholics has been noticeable, and there are signs that the time may be ripe to try to enlist more of the laity in charitable and religious work among their African brethren, and that the reduction, and in some cases the abolition of any traces of colour-bar in the Church might produce more favourable reactions than would be anticipated.

Thus all that we can safely say is that the Church is well-established in Southern Africa, and that the prospects, though uncertain and unpredictable, are bright enough. The foundation is widely laid, but has so far rested mainly on foreign clergy and sisters and on the less African-conscious English-speaking population. What is now needed is a growth in the awareness of white Catholics that they, too, are Africans, and an increasing part taken by the laity in the apostolate, coupled with the development of non-European clergy and sisters.

The Church holds a unique position in Africa. The continent is taking what it can of a crumbling European civilization, and will in time develop its own out of what it receives. It is evident that the nature and success of such development will depend far more on the moral and religious training of the people than on their material culture. The Protestant churches have succumbed to the temptation to purvey rather material benefits than solid religious teaching and practice, and to that extent have gained a march on Catholicism. But it becomes increasingly evident that the Catholic Church is the only institution that promises to survive the imminent changes in Africa. It, too, will be changed, and become something specifically African, and there is no doubt that the days of the white missionary are already, though distantly, numbered. The task arises of handing over as much of the Catholic tradition that Europe has built up as the Africans are able to receive. Catholic Europe does not yet realise that its cultural tradition is rapidly becoming a minority tradition in the Church; very soon a majority of priests, bishops and faithful will belong to other races and cultures. It is necessary to give them Catholicism so that they can assimilate it themselves, and to help them in the first steps of that assimilation. Whether we wish it or not, whether we think it wise and safe or not, the management of the Church will pass from our hands. To resist the process is to provoke disastrous reactions from the non-

European clergy and people, and these reactions are already manifest in many parts. Troubles there will be, the growing-pains of a new church; heresies and schism will come, as in the early Church in Europe; we can only seek to forestall them and minimise them. It is urgent to distinguish between the accretions of the faith from our European heritage and the essentials of that faith. The new Latin psalter is not a bad example. A cry has gone up in many quarters that it is an abandonment of all previous Catholic tradition. But if we envisage the fact that soon the majority of the clergy using that psalter will be quite strangers to our European tradition, we can see a profound wisdom in putting into their hands as pure a version of the word of God as is possible, upon which they can graft their own traditions.

At Rome the Holy See realizes what is happening, but this understanding has yet to spread to the body of Catholic clergy and laity, and to the missionary priests and sisters. It would seem almost as if Africa had now received the sum total of all the elements of value, both material and spiritual, that Europe has to give, and that in future they will grow and develop independently in a specifically African manner. And in this development South Africa will play a decisive part.

OSWIN MAGRATH, O.P.