

**THE ROLE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN BUREAU OF RACIAL AFFAIRS (SABRA)
IN THE FORMULATION OF APARTHEID IDEOLOGY, 1948-1961**

by

John Lazar

The shock victory of the Nationalist Party (NP) in the 1948 general election placed "apartheid" - the Party's primary mobilizing slogan - at the centre of the South African political stage. For many, 1948 has become the year in which nationalist Afrikaners, and particularly Dr H F Verwoerd, began systematically to carry out their comprehensive "Master Plan" for a racially divided South Africa. (1) One of the contentions of this paper, however, is that, while the NP had, in the period leading up to the 1948 election, formulated and sloganized the general fundamentals of apartheid, there was still much confusion and debate in Afrikaner circles as to apartheid's long-term implications and practical implementation. To treat "Afrikanerdom" as a consistently monolithic, unified ethnic entity, unaffected by the shifting constraints and contradictions of the South African political economy, and to assume that apartheid was, concomitantly, an ideological "blueprint" with exactly the same meaning for the various class factions constituting the NP's electoral alliance, is therefore an inadequate starting point for a complete understanding of the apartheid era. (2) But it is equally simplistic to argue, as certain revisionist South African theorists have done, that apartheid can be analysed in terms of the development of capitalist accumulation and class formation: that, in fact, NP policy during the 1950s merely "prepared the ground for the establishment of the hegemony of monopoly capital". (3)

An examination of developments within the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (Sabra) in the decade following the NP's 1948 election victory clearly demonstrates the problems with both of these positions. For a reconstruction of Sabra's history underlines, on the one hand, that apartheid ideology was a complex, often contradictory mix of both short-term pragmatism and general ideological thrust; but it also illustrates, on the other hand, that, while apartheid did evolve, in many ways, as a result of significant conflicts between the various factions of Afrikanerdom, those conflicts cannot always be reduced to class differences.

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Sabra was formally launched in Stellenbosch, in September 1948, as an academic institution attached to Stellenbosch University. Despite its Broederbond-inspired origins and its obvious connections with the higher echelons of the NP, Sabra insisted from the outset that it was totally independent of any other organization or political party. (4) Sabra's intellectuals began their work by attempting to make propaganda interventions in the general debate on apartheid. In the very first issue of its Journal of Racial Affairs (JRA), an article by Sabra member W E Barker starkly presented apartheid as the sole solution to South Africa's race relations problem. The alternative - the United Party's policy of "drift" - would lead to integration, which would, in turn, necessarily result in the destruction of the white race. (5) This argument was constantly repeated in the JRA and other Sabra

publications. Barker's article was closely followed, for example, by a Sabra pamphlet entitled "Separation or Integration?", which vehemently attacked the "dishonesty" and "immorality" of the integrationists' position (6), as did the "Integration or Separate Development?" pamphlet of 1952:

The integration policy is dishonest towards the Bantu population because it creates the impression that their political demands will be fully satisfied, when in fact the integration supporters are well aware that the Europeans will never allow such a development to take place, since their political leadership must of necessity be threatened by it. (7)

At the same time, Sabra did not limit itself to scathing polemics against liberal approaches to race relations. The organization also busied itself with more practical, short-term problems. Early articles of the JRA, for example, bemoaned the low productivity of African labour, planned the development of the border areas in the Union, discussed the most efficient method of building African housing, examined the utilization of land in the African areas, and formulated the "principles" of Bantu education. Suggestions such as these were not just aired in publications and at congresses. Sabra ensured that it arranged regular formal meetings with top members of the NP government. In a private meeting in March 1950, for example, a delegation from the Sabra executive discussed the resolutions of the first annual Sabra congress with Prime Minister Malan (8), while the second congress in January 1951 was also followed by a meeting between Verwoerd - by then Minister of Native Affairs - and a Sabra delegation. (9)

The findings of the 1951 Congress - the main theme of which was the role of Africans in South Africa's industries - seem to have been influential in a number of ways. The resolutions passed at the Congress included calls on the Government to set up a system of labour bureaux, to make employers responsible for part of the cost of housing urban Africans, to train black building craftsmen, to ensure that only African labour should be used in the building of African housing in the urban areas, and to refuse recognition to black trade unions in white areas. (10) Clearly, it would be simplistic to suggest that apartheid legislation and ordinances of the next few years were principally the result of Sabra's research and pressure. At the same time, however, the organization seems to have had a marked effect on the formulation of many of the basic planks of Verwoerd's departmental policy after 1950.

Despite its agreement with the NP leadership on many of the short-term aspects of apartheid policy - and its united hostility to liberal approaches to race relations - at no stage was Sabra free of conflict. The most fundamental schism in the organisation centred on the long-term future of the African reserves. All Sabra intellectuals supported the general view - and the NP government's expressed policy - that the reserves should serve as the political home of the African population, a principle which eventually resulted, with the aid of Sabra, in the provision of the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 for the establishment of African tribal, regional and territorial authorities. Yet, from very early on in the life of Sabra, some of its members began to adopt a peculiarly "visionary" position, which seemed to reflect disquiet about the way in which apartheid was being, and would be, applied. W E Barker, for example, in the first issue of the JRA, classified "segregation" - one "version" of apartheid - as follows:

Segregation is the policy of pushing the Black man out of the way of the White man, in order that the European can preserve his own racial purity, and keep it free from the so-called impure colour of the Native. But since the cheap labour of the Native would be needed in the European industries, segregation would ensure that this labour would always be available. When the Natives had served their

purpose, however, they would be sent back to the locations and left to look after themselves. The Reserves would only exist as a source of even more of this cheap labour, and a dumping-ground for the used-up labour from the cities. (11)

For Barker, the only "moral" solution to the country's problems was total separation, of a "vertical" rather than a "horizontal" form. (12) His call for a more "positive" approach to Native policy - and for a concomitant acceleration of the rate of development of the reserves - was echoed by other influential members of Sabra. Nic Olivier, for example, speaking at the 1950 Congress, insisted that more land must be found for the reserves if they were to be viable homes for the bulk of the African population (13), and stated at the 1952 Congress that, without sufficient land, it would be a "farce" to talk of giving Africans political and state rights in the reserves. (14) In similar vein, Dr F Language used the 1951 Congress to plead for the appointment of a commission to plan the economic life and the future of the "Native areas". (15)

The demand for a more consistent "territorial" apartheid by the "visionaries" in Sabra was closely linked with a grave concern about the implications of economic integration. Language, for example, expressed the views of a number of Sabra members when he argued that political and territorial separation, on the one hand, and economic integration, on the other, were not only "unjust" but, in the long run, "untenable" (16), a point which was hammered home to Verwoerd by a Sabra delegation in the meeting following the 1951 Congress. The Sabra executive stated publicly after the meeting that it had expressed to the Minister its "concern" over the extent to which Africans were being integrated into the European economy (17), and reiterated this position in April 1951 in an editorial in the *JRA*. (18) The Sabra visionaries' attacks on economic integration were delivered with the clear understanding that, if apartheid was to succeed, large sacrifices would be required of whites. Giving evidence before the Tomlinson Commission, Olivier was brutally clear on this point:

Unless the White races of South Africa are prepared to make sacrifices to implement a policy of "apartheid" they will only have themselves to blame if a situation arises which places their survival in danger. (19)

Olivier's pronouncements were fully supported by the Sabra chairman, Professor G B A Gerdener, who, opening the 1952 congress, maintained that, under apartheid, Europeans could not expect to be provided with a free supply of African labour indefinitely. (20)

Nevertheless, notwithstanding the misgivings of its visionary faction, confusion still reigned in Sabra about the future of African labour in the white areas, and the time-scales that should be applied to the implementation of "total" apartheid. B I C Van Eeden, for example, writing on behalf of the Sabra chairman to *The Star* in January 1951, stated, extremely cautiously, that Sabra did not aim to remove all, or even the bulk of, Native labourers from European industry. (21) Certainly, Sabra intellectuals seem to have been very aware of the possible response by whites to demands for greater sacrifices. In an article in the *JRA*, P A Theron was quick to point out that South African whites would try to maintain their "way of life", which was "to a large extent based on cheap native labour". (22) Even Olivier, one of the most outspoken proponents of total apartheid, in his speech at the 1952 congress, was forced to concede that territorial segregation of "the Natives" was a "slow process", which could take three generations to accomplish. (23)

By the end of 1952, Sabra's confusion about the issue had not been resolved. This was clearly reflected in the *Integration or Separate Development?* booklet, the major policy statement of that year. On the one hand, the organization's concern with economic integration was apparent:

The sober truth is that a comparatively large part of the European population wants and makes use of Natives as labourers, but pays little attention to their welfare and future. (24)

However, while greater sacrifices were demanded from whites, the booklet was also quick to allay any fears:

It is a gross misrepresentation to allege that the introduction of a policy of separate development would mean the large-scale and hurried withdrawal of the Bantu from the European economy. (25)

Verwoerd, as chief government spokesman on racial affairs, tended to echo the latter point of view. As early as 1948 - even before his appointment as Minister of Native Affairs - he told the Senate:

We see two courses, we choose the ideal of working in the direction of eventual total segregation, but we see the impracticability of the immediate application of it. (26)

But, as repeated references to the importance of the long-term apartheid "ideal" indicate - Verwoerd was constantly on his guard, throughout the NP's first term in office, not to allow deep rifts to develop between himself and the visionary Sabra intellectuals. Sabra delegations were always courteously received (27); even the 1951 meeting between Verwoerd and the Sabra executive ended with the latter stating that the Minister had agreed in principle with all its recommendations. (28)

The statements and publications issued by functionaries of the Department of Native Affairs tend to be more revealing. At no stage during this period was there any mention of total territorial apartheid in the official reports of the Department. For Eiselen, Secretary of Native Affairs, and his compatriots - as well as for a substantial number of Sabra members - the Bantu Authorities Act was the crowning achievement of "positive" apartheid legislation: the Department's reports were almost exclusively concerned with questions of urban housing, township planning and effective implementation of the labour bureaux. And, in a direct repudiation of the pleas of Sabra visionaries such as Olivier, the reports also show the inability or unwillingness of the government to "consolidate" the reserves. By 1953, 2,756,668 morgen of the "quota" land designated by the 1936 Land Act were still to be purchased; and only 232,979 morgen had been acquired in the previous three years. (29)

The response of the visionaries in Sabra was to become increasingly uneasy. Opening the 1953 Congress, for example, Sabra chairman Gerdener baldly stated:

Albeit gradually, we must be willing to find a substitute for the present so-called cheap labour in the kitchens, on the farms, and in the factories. (30)

Other delegates at the congress, including Olivier and Language, argued that there was no practical use in debating the advisability of separate "Bantu states" if planless integration continued and Africans were not prevented from leaving the reserves to enter the urban areas. The Bantu Authorities Act also came in for a measure of criticism, with some Sabra members complaining that the Act had not been based on the principle of creating separate Native states: the object of legislation did not appear to be total apartheid. (31)

The visionaries' harangues continued unabated once the congress had ended. Gerdener followed his Congress appeal with a fiery speech to the Afrikaner Studentebond congress in May 1953, in which he accused even the most convinced

supporters of apartheid of a "fatal dualism" (32), while W E Barker, in an article entitled "South Africa Can Do Without Native Labour", in the JRA in July 1953, was equally forthright, arguing that the maximum time that should be allowed for the imposition of total apartheid was 50 years. (33) But Sabra members were even unable to agree about this. Dr J L Sadie, speaking to the 1954 congress, stated that total apartheid would not be achieved for a "long time", perhaps 100 years (34), and was immediately attacked by J H Boshof who said talk of a 100-year programme was "fatal": a time limit of 20 to 40 years should be set. (35) In general, however, the 1954 congress seems to have been a major disappointment for the proponents of total apartheid. Minister J J Fouche, opening the congress, immediately warned the visionaries:

I presume that you fully realise that ideals cannot always become practical national policy ... So, for example, total territorial separation of the races can be a wonderful ideal, but to embark on it immediately would, in my opinion, be as impossible and disastrous as a bicycle ride to the moon. (36)

Furthermore, with the congress focussing on the question of African labour on white farms, the visionaries had to be satisfied with predominantly pragmatic discussions about labour productivity and wage levels. This did not, however, prevent the Sabra executive from issuing a "serious warning" against economic integration as a national policy, in a press statement in April 1954. (37)

By this stage, any sympathy Verwoerd held for the visionary faction of Sabra seemed to have been tempered by the practicalities of government, and he began to be more open about his position. In May 1954, he delivered a revealing speech to a NP "stryddag" meeting in Vereeniging in which he stated:

We have set South Africa on the road to total separation but it is not necessary for us to attempt to reach that goal in our time. (38)

This was followed, a few weeks later, by an equally important speech to the Federated Chamber of Industry in Cape Town, in which he argued:

... nothing I have said, nothing in the Native policy which the government is seeking to implement, need create the fear that the economic development is not being taken into consideration or that there are going to be unreasonably timed changes or that there is an unsympathetic attitude towards the needs of industry. (39)

Then, in early 1955, Verwoerd told the House of Assembly:

Nobody ever stated that we were able or intended shortly or even within an appreciable period to remove the Natives from White South Africa, away from the farms, and the homes, and the industries. (40)

And, finally, at the Natal NP Congress in August 1955, Verwoerd pronounced that, as far as he was concerned, total apartheid could take up to 300 years to accomplish (41). For Willem Landman, one of Olivier's supporters in the visionary faction of Sabra, this was clearly unacceptable. In January 1956, he embarked on a one-man "crusade" to convert South Africa to the ideal of total apartheid. (42) But the schism between visionaries such as Landman and the mainstream of the NP was further underlined when Prime Minister Strydom told the House of Assembly in January 1956 that the government could not "in the present circumstances propagate or apply a policy of total territorial apartheid". (43)

The tone of Verwoerd and Strydom's responses becomes understandable when one takes into account the views of the overwhelming majority of NP supporters during the early apartheid years. For Sabra's visionaries, the signs were ominous. The provincial Party congresses seldom discussed total apartheid in any form; the "beskrywingspunte" raised by the local Party branches were almost exclusively concerned with issues such as the stricter application of "negative" apartheid, the eradication of "leeglopery" (loafing) amongst young Africans in both rural and urban areas, and the need to force Africans to pay more for the services that were provided for them. (44) In addition, the Party's electioneering strategy continued to revolve around nakedly racist appeals. This was graphically illustrated by one of the NP's slogans in the Wakkerstroom by-election of 1952 - "a vote for the UP is a vote for a coffee-coloured nation" (45) - as well as by the NP's campaign in the 1953 general election.

In early 1956 the Tomlinson Commission, set up to conduct an enquiry into the state of the reserves, released the abridged version of its mammoth report. The Commission included a number of prominent members of Sabra, and its report was expected to clarify many of the issues of the apartheid debate. The Commission argued that an amount of £104,000,000, over a period of ten years, should be poured into the reserves, to develop the "fully diversified economy" - comprising primary, secondary and tertiary activities - needed to support such a large population. (46) A Development Corporation should also be created, and white industry allowed into the African areas for a short period of time, in order to stimulate secondary industrial development. In addition, consolidation of the reserves was essential and should be embarked on immediately. (47)

Significantly, however, in his White Paper and subsequent speech in the House of Assembly, Verwoerd proceeded - despite accepting the Report "in principle" - to reject most of the substantive conclusions of the Commission. He refused, firstly, to commit the government to the figure of £104,000,000 set by the Commission. In fact, Verwoerd claimed, the £104,000,000 could be reduced in a number of ways. To begin with, the government rejected the suggestion that white industrialists be allowed into the reserves. (48) Since the industrial Development Corporation proposed by the Commission was "presumably based upon the principle ... of the admission of large European privately owned industries into the Bantu areas", Verwoerd argued that the £25,000,000 earmarked for the use of this Corporation could be excluded from any calculation. (49) In addition, Verwoerd maintained that the £34,000,000 estimated by the Commission to be necessary for agricultural development in the reserves was based on the assumptions of the "spoonfeeding" pre-Nationalist system of development, and could be reduced substantially. Finally, there was no need to spend as much as the Commission's suggested £12,000,000 on urban development in the African areas: "experience" had shown that this could be done far more inexpensively. (50) As far as consolidation was concerned, Verwoerd was equally dismissive of the Commission's findings, stating firmly that the "possibilities" of the existing African reserves should not be "underestimated". (51)

Verwoerd's response to the Tomlinson Report clearly indicated that the government was determined to push ahead with separate development; but also that it would carry out the policy without significant consolidation of the fragmented African areas or a long-term economic programme extensive enough to stimulate meaningful development. This was a severe dent to the hopes and expectations of the proponents of "total apartheid" in Sabra. So, too, was the attitude of the grassroots of the NP: an attitude illustrated at the Cape NP congress of October 1956, when a motion was tabled expressing support in principle for the Tomlinson Report, but calling on the Government to ensure that Africans also bore the costs of their own development. (52)

Sabra's reaction to the Tomlinson Report and the subsequent government White Paper was to organize a "Volkskongres" (People's Congress), in collaboration with the FAK and the Afrikaner churches, to discuss "the future of the Bantu in South Africa". The voices of the visionaries in Sabra remained surprisingly muted

during the course of the congress, held in Bloemfontein in June 1956. Nic Olivier, for example, presented his obligatory defence of territorial separation, but refrained from attacking Verwoerd openly, preferring to reserve his criticisms for the "opponents of the separate development school". (53) Furthermore, the only congress resolution that expressed any dissatisfaction with Verwoerd's policy was a short motion on consolidation, in which the government was asked to take into account the recommendations of the Tomlinson Commission on the matter. (54) In other forums, however, Sabra visionaries were less diplomatic. In an article written for the South African Institute of Race Relations in January 1957, Stellenbosch University's Dr J L Sadie, who had been directly involved in the Tomlinson Commission, was quite open in expressing his problems with Verwoerd's White Paper (55), and his warning about the speed of development of the homelands was echoed by, amongst others, H J J Reynders of Pretoria University in the JRA in January 1958. (56)

Yet, it is an indication of the conflict within Afrikaner ranks as to the necessity, methods and speed of homeland development that Verwoerd and the Department of Native Affairs were even experiencing difficulty selling the notion of "border industries" to the Party rank-and-file. This was clearly illustrated by the extraordinary incident in April 1958 when, after a tour to the "border" areas of Natal, Anna Scheepers and other leaders of the white Garment Workers Union asked the Minister of Labour, Jan de Klerk, to refuse registration to clothing factories in Natal and the OFS that employed cheap black labour. (57) According to the Union, nearly 2,000 white workers in the Transvaal were either unemployed or on short time because factories had moved to "decontrolled" border areas. (58) De Klerk duly closed down a number of the offending factories. There were other signs, too, that many of the NP's traditional supporters were refusing to accept any notion of sacrifice for the sake of homeland development. In 1957, a series of articles by Fritz Smit - later to lead an anti-Verwoerd "Back to Strydom" baaskap movement (59) - accused the supporters of total apartheid of ignoring the fact that the "whole economic system" was "built on White initiative and Native labour". (60) Significantly, for the local Party branches, sacrifice was not even on the agenda. The Party congresses of the late 1950s witnessed a spate of motions advocating "petty" apartheid: from bus apartheid and blood transfusion apartheid, to apartheid amongst nurses, apartheid on aeroplanes, and apartheid in dry cleaning businesses.

By this stage, too, the splits within Sabra, and between some Sabra intellectuals and the mainstream of the NP, were being complicated by the government's policy towards "Coloured" people. While the majority of Sabra's members had supported the Separate Representation of Voters Act, and Eiselen's recommendation that apartheid be fully applied to Coloureds in the Western Cape (61), a group of Stellenbosch intellectuals, in particular, continued to argue that Coloureds should be treated as "brown Afrikaners". (62) Sabra's confusion about the issue was reflected in the conflicting report presented by the organization to the Commission of Inquiry into the Separate Representation of Voters Act (63), and was openly acknowledged by Nic Olivier at the 1955 Sabra congress. (64) While some Sabra members, especially in the Transvaal, called for the principle of territorial apartheid to be extended to the Coloured community - a view rejected by academics such as Erika Theron because of the "close ties between the European and Coloured people" (65) - others openly questioned the removal of the Coloureds from the Common Voters Roll. (66) When the extended battle over the Coloured vote was finally resolved in 1956, the Sabra executive formally announced itself "in favour of separate group representation for the white and Coloured groups in the Cape Province", but also referred to the Coloured people as "an irremovable adjunct of the White population" in view of "self-evident historical, biological, cultural and economic considerations". (67) With the rank-and-file of the NP - in the Cape as well as the Transvaal - demanding stricter control of Coloureds, Sabra's ambiguity over the issue led to growing tensions.

The 1958 Sabra congress proved to be important in a number of ways. To begin with, the impatience of the Sabra visionaries with the government's attitude to total apartheid began to turn into direct defiance. Analysing the memoranda and discussions, for example, Olivier stated:

We do not have unlimited time. Those who think we can wait 50 or 100 years for a solution are living in a dream world. When politicians say we have 100 years ahead of us in which to find the answer, it fills me with the utmost frustration that sincere people can continue to believe this. (68)

Equally problematical - as far as the government was concerned - was the decision by the Congress to appoint a committee, with Olivier as chairman, to arrange a conference with black leaders. (69) While some Afrikaners welcomed the move, Verwoerd, in particular, was completely opposed to any negotiations between blacks and non-government deputations. (70) Despite a public statement by the Sabra executive reaffirming its support of apartheid policy (71), Verwoerd resigned from Sabra, and refused to meet any Sabra delegations that included Olivier as a member. (72) The Sabra leadership was forced to postpone the proposed conference, and eventually abandon the idea altogether, although informal tours to homeland areas still took place the following year.

The schism between the Sabra visionaries and Verwoerd proved to be irrevocable. The 1959 Congress witnessed an unsuccessful attempt by Verwoerd's supporters in Sabra to remove the visionaries from the Sabra executive (73), and Olivier and his compatriots were further alienated when their evidence to the University Apartheid Commission - rejecting the suggestion that black university councils and senates be controlled by government-appointed whites - was ignored in the formulation of the Extension of University Education Act. (74) With the introduction of the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959 - Verwoerd's final declaration about the future of apartheid policy, and a measure that fell short of the expectations of the supporters of total separation - it became clear how far Sabra's visionaries had drifted from the policy core of the Party.

This trend was confirmed by the events of 1960. Sabra's response to the Sharpeville massacre, after condemning the actions of the world press and "irresponsible elements" amongst the black population, was to call on the government to consolidate Bantu areas and effect a "balanced economic development" of the Bantu areas as soon as possible. In addition, Sabra argued, a "thorough investigation" of the position of urban Africans must be carried out, to pinpoint the aspects of policy - particularly those dealing with the movement of Africans, and their share in the management of their townships - which caused "unnecessary friction and discontent". (75) But a consideration of these issues was nowhere to be found in the responses of government officials to the crisis posed by the uprisings, despite further appeals, at Sabra's annual congress, by members W A Joubert and A L Geyer. (76)

Nevertheless, it was the issue of government policy with respect to the Coloured population that finally brought Sabra's conflicts to a head. Dissatisfaction with Verwoerd's attitude towards Coloureds was certainly not only confined to Sabra: Dawie, the political columnist of Die Burger, claimed in July 1960 that there was strong pressure in the Party for a "forward movement" in Coloured policy. (77) But it was Sabra's visionaries who continued to be most outspoken in their opinions. Olivier, for example, told the Cape Times in October 1960 that the Coloured population should be accepted as an "integral" part of South African society. (78) In November 1960, however, Verwoerd finally insisted on "parallel development" for the Coloured population; in particular, Coloureds would not be allowed to represent their people in Parliament. (79) His firm ruling and its subsequent ratification by the NP hierarchy stifled dissent within the Party. But controversy continued to rage within Sabra. Early in 1961, Verwoerd's supporters in the organization contrived to postpone the annual congress, due to

have taken place in Bloemfontein in April with the theme "The Coloured Man in the Political, Economic and Social Life of South Africa". (80) Eventually, the executive decided to reschedule the congress for September; on this occasion, the topic for discussion was to be "Relations between English- and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans". Between June and August, Verwoerd's followers moved quickly to consolidate their position. When the election for executive positions finally took place, almost all of the visionaries - including Olivier, Sadie, S P Cilliers, W A Joubert and J H Coetzee - were defeated by supporters of Verwoerd. (81) In addition the new executive refused to discuss a confidential report - compiled by a Sabra commission which had made an extensive tour of the African rural and urban areas, and had been refused permission to meet Verwoerd on its return (82) - in which poverty and lack of consultation by the government were isolated as two of the main reasons for grievances amongst the African population. (83) In a final blow to the aspirations of Sabra's visionary intellectuals, the new editorial board of the JRA - for so long a vehicle for the views of the visionaries - announced that it was changing the format of the publication: henceforth, no critical in-depth analyses of government policy were to be published. (84)

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The picture of Verwoerd that emerges from this examination of Sabra's history is not one of the possessed ideological visionary, committed to the total implementation of "grand" apartheid. On the other hand, his role was also not simply that of the crude "baaskapper", treading firmly in the footsteps of Strydom. For, while Verwoerd, certainly by the end of the 1950s, openly opposed the interpretation of apartheid propounded by the more "liberal" visionaries in Sabra and the Afrikaner churches, he just as clearly realised the importance of ideologically reinterpreting the "baaskap" sloganizing of the early apartheid years.

The more sophisticated mutation of apartheid that emerged by 1961 seems to have been shaped by a number of factors. It developed, firstly, hand-in-hand with the rapid urbanization that affected Afrikaners between 1948 and 1960. (85) By 1960, a powerful, economically ambitious, politically assertive and altogether more worldly, urbanized grouping - spearheaded by Afrikaner intellectuals, teachers, professionals and bureaucrats - had thrown its weight behind Verwoerd. With access to improved educational opportunities, as well as state patronage and employment - and with a resurgent Broederbond as a vehicle for its demands - this grouping assumed a central decision-making role within the NP, and in the overall reshaping of apartheid ideology.

But Verwoerdian apartheid also developed as a result of more general political and economic trends. When the NP government took power in 1948, not only was the anti-colonialist movement quickly gaining ground all over Africa; the rhetoric of nationalism had begun to influence a black political opposition in South Africa that was already radicalized by the rapid dislocations of the 1940s. Throughout the 1950s, black nationalists in Africa continued to win victories against colonialism, spurring on a militant black resistance movement in South Africa. The homelands policy that developed by 1960 seems, therefore, to have been prompted by a realization on the part of Verwoerd, and the leadership of the NPO, that black resistance somehow needed to be channelled if the rigid control that guaranteed white economic and political privilege was to be maintained. (86)

For the more reactionary elements of the NP's electoral alliance - particularly some farmers and white workers - this "new" version of apartheid was clearly rather threatening. On a number of occasions, Verwoerd was forced to defend himself against allegations that he was a "kaffirboetie" who spoonfed the natives; his concern about the possibility of a right-wing backlash was illustrated by his introduction of the 1959 Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Bill without consultation with the NP caucus. (87) Although Verwoerd's leadership was never

threatened by old-style "baaskappers", by 1962 a number of splinter right-wing movements had begun to hive off in protest against the government's granting of independence to the Transkei. (88)

Yet, as we have seen, for the visionaries in Sabra, Verwoerd's version of apartheid did not go nearly far enough. At the same time, it would be a mistake to suggest that Sabra's visionaries were irrelevant, that Verwoerdian apartheid bore absolutely no resemblance to their dream. Sabra was an important organization precisely because it contributed towards the formulation of the ideological framework within which Verwoerd and his compatriots were able to shape the homeland policy. Acutely aware of the turbulence of post-war Africa, and the rumblings of black opposition in South Africa, Sabra's visionaries wove the new terminology of equality and self-determination into their language and symbols. Verwoerd and the NP leadership, while rejecting most of the visionaries' demands, still managed to appropriate the ideological paraphernalia in terms of which those demands were phrased, in an attempt to bolster white exploitation, domination and control.

The conflicts within Sabra, and between Sabra and the NP leadership, therefore did have a significant effect on changes in apartheid ideology. While accepting, then, that an analysis of the process of capitalist accumulation and class conflict provides a vitally important and primary framework for the understanding of South African history, I would argue that it is inadequate to dismiss Sabra's schisms over the definition of apartheid as unimportant, on the pretext that the ultimate overriding effect of apartheid ideology was to guarantee capitalist development. Nor would it be entirely correct to attempt to locate Sabra's splits - and the differing conceptions of apartheid held by its various factions - purely and simply in terms of the demands and situations of differing class groupings. Sabra's membership remained, throughout the 1950s, relatively homogeneous: mainly petty bourgeois and intellectual. On the other hand, the prevalent, rule-of-thumb view that ascribes all schisms in Afrikaner organizations to regional differences between the "liberal" Cape and the "hardline" North is also far too simplistic. Although it was based at Stellenbosch, the visionary faction of Sabra found adherents in branches all over the country (89), and clearly could not claim the overall support of the supposedly more moderate Cape NP. Finally, while the assumptions of the Sabra visionaries were informed by the same mix of racism and paternalism as their adversaries - and the same desire to maintain and rationalize white "guardianship" - their criticisms of Verwoerd and his supporters were not just differences about the most pragmatic, secure way of securing white privilege. When the visionaries were finally purged in 1961 it was also because they had attempted to infuse an exploitative and oppressive ideology with a consistent moral framework, but had failed.

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Notes

- (1) See, for example, A Hepple, Verwoerd (Penguin Books: Harmondsworth, 1967), p 110.
- (2) For a full criticism of liberal and nationalist interpretations of Afrikaner nationalism, see D O'Meara, Volkskapitalisme: class, capital and ideology in the development of Afrikaner nationalism, 1934-1948 (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1983), pp 1-9.
- (3) R Davies, D Kaplan, M Morris and D O'Meara, "Class Struggle and the Periodisation of the State in South Africa", Review of African Political Economy, 7 (1976), p 28.

- (4) Editorial, Journal of Racial Affairs (JRA), 1, 1 (September 1949), p 1.
- (5) W E Barker, "Apartheid - the Only Solution", JRA, 1, 1, pp 24-38.
- (6) South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (Sabra), "Separation or Integration?", JRA, 3, 2 (January 1952), p 47. Reprinted from the original pamphlet, published in Stellenbosch in 1950.
- (7) Sabra, Integration or Separate Development?, pamphlet (Stellenbosch, 1952), p 9.
- (8) Cape Times, 28/3/50.
- (9) The Friend, 26/3/51. See also Die Vaderland, 26/3/51.
- (10) The Star, 13/1/51. See also "Resolutions of the Second Annual Congress of Sabra", JRA, 2, 4 (July 1951)
- (11) Barker, op. cit., p 27.
- (12) Ibid., p 29.
- (13) Cape Argus, 11/2/50.
- (14) Die Burger, 11/1/52.
- (15) The Star, 10/1/51.
- (16) Ibid.
- (17) Die Vaderland, 26/3/51. See also The Friend, 26/3/51.
- (18) Editorial, JRA, 2, 3 (April 1951), p 1.
- (19) The Star, 14/5/52.
- (20) Natal Daily News, 8/1/52. See also Die Transvaler, 9/1/52.
- (21) The Star, 23/1/51.
- (22) P A Theron, "A Psychological Approach to Separate Development", JRA, 4, 1 (October 1952), pp 16-18.
- (23) Natal Mercury, 11/1/52.
- (24) Sabra, Integration or Separate Development, p 14.
- (25) Ibid., p 27.
- (26) A N Pelzer, Verwoerd Speaks (APB Publishers: Johannesburg, 1966), p 14.
- (27) N J J Olivier, interview, 13/9/85.
- (28) Editorial, JRA, 2, 3 (April 1951), p 1.
- (29) Report of the Department of Native Affairs, 1952-53, UG 48/1955, p 39.
- (30) Die Transvaler, 14/1/53, my translation.
- (31) Pretoria News, 16/1/53.
- (32) Die Volksblad, 6/5/53. See also Rand Daily Mail, 8/5/53.
- (33) W E Barker, "South Africa Can Do Without Native Labour", JRA, 4, 4 (July 1953), p 34.

- (34) The Star, 20/1/54.
- (35) The Star, 22/1/54.
- (36) "The Native in South African Agriculture", Papers delivered at the Fifth Annual Congress of Sabra, January 1954, p 3.
- (37) Cape Times, 1/4/54.
- (38) Rand Daily Mail, 11/5/54.
- (39) Pelzer, op.cit., p 63.
- (40) House of Assembly Debates (HAD), 1955, cols 1315-1316.
- (41) The Star, 25/8/55.
- (42) Cape Times, 16/1/56. See also Cape Times, 28/1/56, 6/2/56, 17/1/56; Die Burger, 14/2/56.
- (43) HAD, 1956, col 43.
- (44) Comprehensive reports of the motions and proceedings of the NP's provincial congresses can be found in all the Afrikaans newspapers, especially Die Burger and Die Transvaler. Formal agendas can also be found in a number of collections in South African archives.
- (45) The Star, 21/6/52.
- (46) Report of the Commission for the Socio-Economic Development of the Bantu Areas within the Union of South Africa (Government Printers: Pretoria, 1955), p 207.
- (47) Ibid., p 208.
- (48) HAD, 1956, col 5305.
- (49) White Paper, Government decisions on the recommendations of the Commission for the socio-economic development of the Bantu areas within the Union of South Africa, pp 9-10.
- (50) HAD, 1956, col 5300.
- (51) HAD, 1956, col 5310.
- (52) Die Burger, 4/10/56.
- (53) Cape Times, 29/6/56.
- (54) "Besluite Geneem op die Volkskongres oor die Toekoms van die Bantoe in Suid-Afrika, Bloemfontein, 28-30 June 1956", p 2, in File 1/4/3/2/2, FAK Collection, Institute of Contemporary History, University of the Orange Free State.
- (55) J L Sadie, "The Industrialisation of the Bantu Areas", JRA, 11, 2 (January 1960), pp 58-81.
- (56) H J J Reynders, "Bepalende Faktore by die Tempo van Nywerheidsontwikkeling binne die Bantoegebiede van Suid-Afrika", JRA, 9, 2 (January 1958), p 60.
- (57) Rand Daily Mail, 2/4/58.

- (58) The Star, 24/6/58.
- (59) Sunday Times, 23/3/63.
- (60) The Star, 17/4/57. See also Cape Argus, 11/6/57 and 20/6/57.
- (61) See, for example, Die Burger, 2/13/53.
- (62) I Goldin, "Coloured Preference Policies and the Making of Coloured Political Identity in the Western Cape Region of South Africa with Particular Reference to the Period 1948 to 1984", DPhil Thesis, Oxford, 1984, p 167.
- (63) Ibid., p 166.
- (64) The Star, 14/1/55.
- (65) The Star, 13/1/55. See also Die Burger, 25/1/55.
- (66) See, for example, A C Cillier's speech to the congress. Die Transvaler, 15/1/55.
- (67) Cape Times, 26/11/56.
- (68) Cape Times, 3/5/58. See also Die Burger, 3/5/58.
- (69) Rand Daily Mail, 3/5/58.
- (70) N J J Olivier, interview, 13/9/85.
- (71) Die Burger, 1/7/58.
- (72) N J J Olivier, interview, 13/9/85.
- (73) The Star, 28/9/61.
- (74) N J J Olivier, interview, 13/9/85. See also Natal Mercury, 1/9/58.
- (75) Statement by the Council of Sabra in connection with the Eleventh Annual Congress, 19-22 April 1960, in F J van Wyk Collection, University of the Witwatersrand.
- (76) W A Joubert, "Die Staatkundige Ontwikkeling van die Bantoegebiede", JRA, 12, 1 (October 1960); A L Geyer, "Voorsittersrede", JRA, 11, 4 (July 1960).
- (77) Die Burger, 23/7/60, my translation.
- (78) Cape Times, 11/10/60.
- (79) HAD, 1960, col 4191.
- (80) N J J Olivier, interview, 13/9/85.
- (81) Sunday Times, 28/9/61.
- (82) N J J Olivier, interview, 13/9/85.
- (83) Verslag van die Projek vir Skakeling met Bantoe, JRA, 12, 4 (July 1961). See also Cape Argus, 11/10/61.
- (84) Editorial, JRA, 13, 3 (June 1962).
- (85) By 1960, just under 17 per cent of white South Africans lived in the rural areas of the country (Bureau of Statistics, Urban and Rural Population of South Africa 1904 to 1960, Report No 02-02-01 (Pretoria, 1968), p 1). Only 16 per cent of Afrikaners were employed in agricultural occupations compared to

- over 30 per cent in 1946 (H Giliomee, "The Afrikaner Economic Advance", in H Adam and H Giliomee, Ethnic Power Mobilised (Yale University Press: New Haven, 1979), p 169.
- (86) This was basically admitted by Verwoerd in the House of Assembly in 1956. Referring to the Mau-Mau Rebellion in Kenya, he stated that "tribal authority is the natural ally of the Government of the country against such rebellious movements" (HAD, 1956, col 6617).
- (87) B Schoeman, Van Malan Tot Verwoerd (Human and Rousseau: Cape Town, 1973), p 173. Confirmed by N J J Olivier, interview, 13/9/85.
- (88) See, for example, Sunday Times, 15/7/62, 17/2/63, 24/2/63, 24/3/63; The Star, 28/3/63.
- (89) N J J Olivier, interview, 13/9/85.