

And now the most vicious act of all. In the early hours of a morning in May, Mrs Mandela's Soweto house was surrounded by a small army of Security Policemen, her furniture and other belongings were loaded on to trucks, and she was transported into banishment in the village of Brandfort, O.F.S., where she has neither family, friends, nor work. She will live in a house without electricity, water or telephone, all of which she had in Soweto.

What do these heroes of the hours of darkness, who did this terrible thing to Mrs Mandela, hope to achieve by it?

Do they think that, by cutting her off from Soweto, they will somehow solve their problems there? Do they think that if they have half the Mandela family shut up on Robben Island and the other half in Brandfort, South Africa and the world will forget about them? Or have they reached the stage where only new outrages will satisfy their appetite for persecution of what is, and will continue to be, one of the most important families in South Africa? □

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AFTER VIENNA

While Mr Vorster announced at the end of his May visit to Vienna and Geneva that he regarded it as a definite success, and while he was welcomed back home by cheering crowds of Nationalist enthusiasts, rather as Dr Verwoerd was when he took South Africa out of the Commonwealth, to most South Africans his trip looked more like a disaster. For had he not perhaps cut our country's last life-line to survival? His and Mr Pik Botha's post-Vienna reports to Parliament make it look dangerously like that.

If "majority rule", to which Liberals look forward, frightens the life out of Nationalists, will they never see that "separate development", as an alternative, is a complete non-starter? Nor will it ever be anything else. Black South Africa and Black Africa and most of the rest of the world will not suddenly forget that separate development grew out of apartheid which grew out of baaskap. They will not forget that it confines Black South African aspirations to 13 % of the country, gives the richest 87% to the Whites, and is a policy in whose formulation, since the 1940's, blacks have had no say at all.

Black Africa, in the Lusaka Manifesto, recognised the tears of being swamped which White South Africans, particularly Afrikaners, experience. All that manifesto asked for from South Africa was a clear indication that apartheid would be abandoned and a deliberate move be started away from discrimination, towards a society in which black aspirations could be fully realised and black political thinking and power fully recognised on the basis of a policy acceptable to black people.

There is only one way in which such a situation can be reached and that, as we have said so often before, is by Mr Vorster sitting down and talking to black leaders and working out with them a solution to which they can subscribe. There is certainly no other way in which South Africa can make itself what Mr Pik Botha calls "internally invulnerable", and unless Mr Botha is prepared to face this fact it really isn't going to make much difference that he, and not the HNP man, won the Westdene by-election.

A recent speech by Dr Piet Koornhof has raised speculation that the Government may at last be preparing to give some serious thought to the position of urban Africans. There is no longer time for this kind of kite-flying. The moment has arrived for the Government to state quite openly that South Africa is now entirely on its own, its situation is desperate, a way back to international acceptability must be found, by all its people together, and that it intends starting talks, to work out our joint future, not only with the people it regards as black leaders, but also with all those others who are imprisoned or banned.

What a release of hope and energy and goodwill would follow such an announcement, and, whatever political formula came out of it, the road back to international recognition, and reconciliation at home, would have been laid. We would have escaped from the dangerous and suicidal dead-end in which we are now stuck.

A dream? Maybe. But the alternative is that nightmare too ghastly to contemplate which each day spent on our present course brings nearer. □