

LIBERALISM AND THE CHANGING SCENE

by Edgar Brookes

The scene in South Africa is changing rapidly, and sometimes unpredictably. On Monday one reads of really enlightened views being propounded at Stellenbosch or in the Cape Provincial Council. On Tuesday comes the news of night raids by the Security Police on law-abiding and respected Bishops and ministers of religion. It is not always easy to know where we stand. But there are two consistently maintained points which conscientious men of liberal views are driven to consider with special care. They are the increasing strength of the black power movement and the strident voices, especially in overseas countries, of those who appeal to force. These are points which men of liberal ideas have to consider.

(1) We must keep our heads about the black power movement, despite the contemptuous and wounding references made by its upholders to "white liberals." We have more important things to do than to feel hurt or to defend ourselves. And one of these important duties is to *understand the black power movement*. It arises out of long-continued disappointment, at our own ineffectiveness which while sometimes inevitable in our circumstances is sometimes due to our own weakness and insensitiveness, and at the apathy of the country at large. The essence of black power is the black man's determination to "do it ourselves", to demand instead of to wheedle, to win acceptance not *although* he is a black man but *because* he is a black man, to refuse those concessions which merely make him an "honorary European." Mistakes and inconsistencies there may be in the intellectual presentation of the "black power" doctrine, but it is easily intelligible to the open and generous heart.

(2) It is our duty to be willing to work with the upholders of "black power" on matters held in common in so far as they will let us. The decision of Nusas to keep in touch with Saso is statesmanlike and wholly admirable.

(3) It would however, be, less than honest, less than prudent, not to see the practical dangers of the "black power" movement. At times it plays right into the hands of those who uphold apartheid, as, for example, the writer heard black students in Los Angeles pleading for separate hostels for black students. It is not without significance that, while Nusas has long been banned from Fort Hare, Saso has been made welcome there. Racism always has its dangers and can never be unequivocally accepted by liberals, whether it be white racism or black racism, racism inspired by offensive superiority or by defensive revolt. Moreover it is easy to divide but difficult to reunite. As Virgil put it :

*"Facilis descensus averno;
Noctes atque dies stat atri ianua Ditis,
Sed revocare gradus, supersaque evaders ad auras,
Hic est labor, hoc opus."*

("Easy is the descent into hell, Night and day the gates of gloomy Dis stand open. But to retrace one's steps and to emerge into the outer air, this is the task, this the toil.")

It is easier to inculcate dislike than to recapture affection. In 1912 (the parallel is very close) General Hertzog in his "two-stream" policy wanted to preserve the Afrikaner from anglicisation, not in order that he might remain separate, but that he might reunite with the English-speaking South African not as an inferior but on equal terms. He succeeded in dividing, but when he tried to reunite his own Free State National Party drove him out. History may well repeat itself.

(4) One thing that is undoubtedly right, whatever may be wrong, is to *keep up our friendships across the colour line*. Friendship is never wrong. We need not meet expressly to discuss "black power", but meet we must, even if it is only to discuss photography or the July Handicap. A network of personal friendships may in the long run be the salvation of South Africa.

FORCE

(1) When we come to the question of the use of force, the first point to be maintained is the *right to discuss it*. The Government and the Security Police often seem to consider that to discuss force is to advocate it, that to warn of impending disaster is to desire it. The prophet Jeremiah had just this experience. It is the work of a man to face problems openly and bravely, the attitude of a timid paranoiac to hide away from them.

(2) *We must consider well before we say that the use of force is immoral*, for this must be a consistent view. A Quaker may consistently condemn "freedom fighters" since he condemns *all* war, and even tends to look askance at policemen. We who are not pacifists must remember that our present regime is based on the use of constant force by the minority to maintain its supremacy over the majority. "Freedom fighters" use force to impose the rule of the majority over the

minority. We must either support both views or reject both views if we are to be consistent. Most liberals will reject both.

(3) *We must abstain from force.* When there was a Liberal Party this was its express view, and the impatient members who broke their Party rule were expelled from the Party. We cannot make the best of both worlds. If we wish to convince by argument we cannot threaten force. It is against the interests of our cause to do so. We may indeed understand and respect those who feel otherwise, who are often brave men even if mistaken ones; but we must be firm on this attitude of non-violence ourselves.

(4) *We must not advise force.* I cannot myself admire those who remaining in safety themselves, encourage others to use the dangerous methods of force. Here as throughout we must have clear and honest minds and not be led away by any adolescent desires to be above all in the avante-

garde. Liberals, like the Whigs of the Cambridge poet's epigram,

"Admit no force but argument."

THE FORCE OF ARGUMENT

But everything which leads us to oppose physical force combines to place on our shoulders the inescapable duty to *speak out courageously*, and protest against the regime maintained by force in our own country. This is not treason, it is the highest patriotism. That the actions of the Government and the Security Police make it dangerous is undoubtedly true. *We are called, as South Africans who love their country, to face those dangers. Non-violence does not mean apathy, dumb acquiescence or fear. Let us remember and apply the words of the old hymn:*

"Where duty calls or danger, Be never wanting there."

SOUTH AFRICA'S EXPANSION POLICY

by Robert Molteno

(The last in a series of three articles)

The danger to the developing countries of close trade ties with South Africa only becomes fully manifest when it is realised that South Africa's goal is not just trade, but the creation of a huge free trade area and Customs Union in Central and East Africa.

In recent years her balance of payments has been dramatically deteriorating. In the first half of the 1960's — 1960 to 1964, the average annual trade gap was R242 million.¹ In the second half of the 1960's — 1965 to 1969, this gap widened to an annual average of R535 million. Figures for the early months of 1970 indicate a further deterioration. The average monthly adverse trade balance rose from R31.3 million in 1968 to R51.1 million in 1969 and to R92.2 million in January 1970. The only factor which saved her from crisis was the huge and growing export of gold. In 1960, gold valued at R530 million was exported. This figure rose to R811 million in 1969. But gold production has reached its peak. 1969 output was only 0.5% greater than 1968. In the face of rising costs and the absence of any major new ore-bodies, it is expected that gold production will begin to fall from the mid 1970's² The consequences for South Africa's balance of payments are likely to be



Four international boundaries meet at one point. South Africa claimed that a point did not constitute an area, and that Botswana could not establish a road and ferry link through to.

serious. Mr. Harry Oppenheimer, leading mineowner and industrialist, stated in November 1969 that the replacement of gold as a generator of foreign exchange was the main economic problem facing the country.³ And the 1968 — 1973 Economic Development Plan has called for a 41% increase in merchandise exports.⁴ Yet agricultural exports cannot possibly compensate for the gap caused by falling gold production. Indeed agriculture has failed to maintain its share either of the Gross National Product or of exports.

This means that the increasing balance of payments deficit can only be remedied by a huge increase in exports of manufactured goods. But this South Africa has found very hard to achieve. Distance, higher unit costs and technological lag have all prevented her manufactured goods from penetrating the major markets of Europe and North America. In the first six months of 1969, only