

PC16/5/2/5/55



P.O. Box 71,  
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The Editor,

DN, RD 19 9 NW

Sir,

It is too early to say what the Government's, and White South Africa's, long term response to the tragedy of Soweto will be, but the immediate reactions have not been encouraging. Some of the things said by people in high places fill one with despair.

Already we are being told by too many people that there were "agitators" at work, that there was a secret "plot", that the thing could not possibly have been spontaneous. But what Black person needs an "agitator" to tell him what apartheid (or separate development, if you like it better) and Bantu Education do to him and his children? Not one that I knew.

The situation is far too serious now for the manifest failure of government policy to be blamed once again on the same old scapegoats with which we have been presented for more than 20 years. Every time Nationalist policy doesn't work, it's somebody else's fault.

The truth of the matter is, however, that apartheid's chickens are rapidly coming home to roost. The gross illusion that about 10% of the population (its Afrikaner Nationalist component) could compose a blueprint for a country as diverse as ours, without consultation or consent, and then impose it indefinitely on everyone else, is turning out to be as insubstantial as all illusions are.

Black Power is being inveighed against. It is now said to be the cause of all the trouble. And why shouldn't it be?

Is it not the legitimate offspring of exclusive White power? How else did White South Africa expect Black South Africa to react to a situation of no consultation, rejection, and no power?

There are many people, Black and White, who don't/like either kind of power, Black or White, but they are in danger of being swept aside by the tide of racial polarisation for which, whatever accusing fingers they may point at others, ~~the~~ Nationalists are primarily responsible. We heard about some of these people last week. They were Black. They risked their lives to save White lives in Sewete. There is talk that they should be rewarded. And so they should. Not with a few paltry rands, but with the reward of what they should always have had -- the right to a decent home with security of tenure in the place where they want to live; the right to do the job for which their talents fit them in the place where they want to work; the right to the education of their choice in the medium of their choice at the school of their choice; and the right to a full voice in the making and administering of the laws under which they are governed. That is what all Black South Africans want, not only the heroes of Sewete. It is called being treated like a human being.

For God's sake, let the Nationalists come to their senses before they have destroyed our country -- if indeed they have not already laid the foundations of its destruction by their 28 years of arrogance and intransigence. And we English-speaking White South Africans? What are we going to do about it all. There's not much to be proud of in our record over these 28 years.

Yours faithfully,

*Peter Brown*  
Peter Brown.