

“WHILE THERE IS TIME”

A plea to my fellow white South Africans for a new National Convention

by Edgar Brookes

THE CRISIS IS ALREADY UPON US

We may not face revolution tomorrow but we shall face it soon unless we do something. The position of Rhodesia is most uncertain, the future of South-West Africa is impossible to predict, in Mozambique and Angola we have forces which may make for revolution close to our borders. It is incredible that there should be so much complacency among our people. We find the same spirit as that shown by an anonymous lady at the time of the Republican Referendum who was not willing to go to vote against a republic because the referendum was being held on her Bridge day. We must do something while there is time.

REFORMS, EVEN LIBERAL REFORMS, WILL NOT DO

What is called for is a fundamental change in racial concepts.

Reforms are always worth while and we must welcome them, but reforms within the present system can never solve our problems.

THE “SOLUTION” COMING FROM WHITES ONLY, EVEN IF IT IS A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION, WILL NOT DO

The time has passed when even a big and generous change of heart on the part of Europeans will be enough. All South Africans must share in the “solution” and must be seen and felt to share in it.

THE END IS RACIAL EQUALITY, in other words the removing of the concept of race as having any meaning in South Africa. Racial equality involves majority rule. This may not come at once. Even if it does, majority rule is not necessarily a government made up exclusively of one race. But we must frankly face that majority rule will have to come, and come in our time. If we show courage, goodwill and statesmanship, the majority may be a composite majority. If in our obstinacy and timidity we wait until the last moment before giving way, the majority will probably be an ardent and revolutionary black majority.

IT IS NO USE DECEIVING OURSELVES OR TRYING TO DECEIVE OTHERS

A lot of ingenuity and energy has been spent in changing names while retaining the same policy. What end is served by calling “apartheid” “separate development”? What end is served by the ingenious discovery that South Africa is made up of nations not of races and that our problem is international rather than racial? If it were not tragic it would be ludicrous to see our politicians hugging themselves for their skill, when their change of nomenclature has no effect whatever on the world outside. The worst thing of all is to deceive ourselves by these changes, and some of us do this.

IT IS TIME TO GROW UP AND TO FACE FACTS

The adolescent period is over. It is time for us to face life maturely. We have scarcely any friends in the world. We must face facts ourselves. We must ourselves put things right.

DELAY IS THE WORST DANGER

Ten years ago Mr Smith could have got a better deal than he can hope for now. By constantly refusing, he is putting power into the hands of the extremists among the blacks. Time is not on our side. The sooner we can get some conclusion the better.

SOUTH AFRICA STANDS IN A PECULIAR POSITION

We should not have forced upon us the solutions of Zambia and Kenya without modification or change. The fact that for 300 years there have been whites in South Africa, now amounting to many millions, makes a difference.

THERE ARE STILL MANY THOUSANDS OF BLACKS WILLING TO MEET THE WHITES HALF WAY

This will not always be so. The younger generation, particularly those who have been segregated in tribal universities, are not ready for compromise. If we want to use the very deep and real friendship which exists between whites and blacks of a slightly older generation we must do so at once. If we do not, sooner or later there will be armed revolt.

SUPPOSE CIVIL WAR DOES COME

We white people may think, and we should be right in thinking, that we can hold our own against black revolt. But surely if we are facing facts we must realise that thousands of black casualties will bring the United States of America and even the United Kingdom into the picture. They will not be able to stand aside. Their own public opinion will not permit it. And even in their own interests they must prevent Russia and the Russian satellites from intervening.

For these reasons it is submitted that the best thing we can do is to work for the holding of a National Convention at as early a date as possible. The National Convention must include representatives of both whites and blacks. They must not be hand-picked “moderates”. We must be prepared to include representatives of extremism. The idea of a National Convention is to get the sense of the people of South Africa as a whole. I plead for this National Convention, I plead for it most earnestly. Even though the Government would almost certainly refuse to consider the idea, we must begin **NOW** to “sell” this idea to the different organisations with which we have to do. This must become a matter of constant discussion. If this goes on long enough it will come. Let us hope that it will come while there is time. □