

SOUTH AFRICA  
AT THE  
CROSSROADS

Responding to the Winds of Change

ARTHUR SUZMAN Q.C.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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The South African Institute of International Affairs  
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ARTHUR SUZMAN, who has been a member of the South African Institute of International Affairs since 1946, was born in Johannesburg in 1905. He graduated in law at the University of the Witwatersrand and continued his post-graduate legal studies at the University of Oxford and at the Harvard Law School. He was admitted to the Transvaal Bar in 1928 and called to the English Bar (Middle Temple) in 1931. In 1948 he was appointed a King's Counsel in the Union of South Africa and is presently the doyen of the South African Bar.

Mr Suzman has been a member of the Board of the Faculty of Law of the University of the Witwatersrand since 1939 and is co-founder and a member of the Editorial Board of the "Annual Survey of South African Law." He is the author of several legal works and has contributed numerous articles to legal and literary journals.

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## The Winds of Change

On 3rd February 1960 – not quite two decades ago – Harold Macmillan, the then Prime Minister of Great Britain, delivered an historic address to the Parliament of the Union of South Africa, then still a member of the British Commonwealth. In the course of his address Mr Macmillan remarked:

“The most striking of all the impressions I have formed since I left London a month ago is the strength of this African national consciousness. In different places it may take different forms. But it is happening everywhere. The wind of change is blowing through this Continent.

Whether we like it or not, this growth of national consciousness is a political fact. We must all accept it as a fact. Our national policies must take account of it.”

. . . . .

“As I have said, the growth of national consciousness in Africa is a political fact and we must accept it as such. This means, I would judge, that we must come to terms with it. I sincerely believe that, if we cannot do so, we may imperil the precarious balance between East and West on which the peace of the world depends.”

. . . . .

“As I see it, the great issue in this second half of the twentieth century is whether the uncommitted peoples of Asia and Africa will swing to the East or to the West.

Will they be drawn into the Communist camp? Or will the great experiments in self-government that are now being made in Asia and Africa, especially within the Commonwealth, prove so successful and by their example so compelling that the balance will come down in favour of freedom and order and justice?

The struggle is joined, and it is a struggle for the minds of men.

What is now on trial is much more than our military strength or our diplomatic and administrative skill. It is our way of life.”

The reaction of the South African Government, then under the premiership of the late Hendrik Verwoerd, was one of undisguised resentment and Macmillan's sombre and prophetic warnings went unheeded.

In the intervening years the “Winds of Change” have continued to blow down the Continent of Africa, but with ever increasing violence. To sound a “Gale Warning” at this juncture may perhaps be premature: to disregard the gathering storm clouds, would be folly. Behind these forces lies awakened black consciousness and the demand that ‘apartheid’ be abandoned and all forms of racial discrimination disbanded. (Whether these demands are justified, and whether even complete compliance would satisfy the extremists, are matters dealt with later.)

In assessing the ability of the present regime to resist these forces, we must realise that South Africa now stands virtually isolated and alone, and that, if there is one matter upon which East and West and indeed the whole of the Third World are united, it is in their unqualified condemnation of our racial policies.

Internally, we face not merely a “Fifth Column” but a “Four-Fifths Column.”

It is largely our response to these forces which will determine how we weather the impending storm. The challenge is theirs, the response is ours. It is our response which will determine our future. Thus far, our basic response has merely been a vast increase in military preparedness.

## The Response

Depending on one's political philosophy, there are three broad possible responses to these challenging forces.

The first, advocated by the extreme right, is to *hold on to the rope*, in the

expectation that it will never break. All demands for radical change should, it is contended, be resisted.

The second, advocated by the extreme left, is to *let go the rope* and accede forthwith to these demands.

Both these extremes – the “last ditch” stand, on the one hand, and virtual abdication, on the other, must, I believe, be summarily rejected. The former would lead to a situation similar to that which obtained in Algeria, the latter to the situation which obtained in the Congo.

Logically, therefore, if both extremes are rejected, there remains but a middle course, namely to *let out the rope*.

While increasing numbers may be coming round to this *via media* approach, there is certainly no unanimity on the vital questions “*How far and how fast do we let out the rope?*”

### Basic Premises

In seeking to steer a pragmatic middle course between “*too little, too late*”, on the one hand, and “*too far, too fast*” on the other, there are, I believe, certain basic premises which should determine our policy.

Firstly, we must reconcile ourselves to the fact that fundamental changes in our social, economic and political structure are inevitable. We must either ourselves voluntarily effect timeous radical changes to achieve a more just society, or else face the prospect of even more drastic changes being imposed upon us by violent means.

Secondly, we must realise that the longer reforms are delayed, the more radical the demands become; and the more radical the demands, the greater the resistance. The end result is a polarisation of opposing viewpoints and violent confrontation. If one declines to negotiate with moderates, one generally ends up shooting it out with extremists: Rhodesia is a striking example.

“Buying time” is usually illusory; it merely mortgages the future. We obtain the time, future generations do the paying, with compound interest. Indeed, each generation pays the price of the procrastination of its predecessors. Like Pharaoh, as soon as we enjoy respite, we tend to harden our hearts. Must we, like the Egyptians, await the tenth plague? Belated and grudging concessions tend to be self-defeating.

Thirdly, we must convince those who are demanding change of our sincerity of purpose, since, as Harold Macmillan observed, ultimately it is a struggle for the minds of men. In Indonesia, the Dutch, despite conspicuous concessions, failed because (as was said) “they did not have the right look in their eyes.”

### Necessity for Consensus

It is self-evident that no policy will be viable unless it is based on a broad *consensus*, not only amongst ourselves but also amongst those seeking change. In this context, the following passage from my *Minority Report*, submitted in 1960 as a member of the “Molteno Commission” (which drafted the constitution of the Progressive Party) may be pertinent:

“As one seeking to persuade the existing electorate to share its powers and privileges to a greater degree with the present unenfranchised groups, any proposed constitutional reforms must, *ex hypothesi*, be acceptable to the majority of the existing electorate. To propose reforms which are not acceptable to the existing electorate will, at best, result in a stalemate, and, at worst, in attempts by the unenfranchised groups to secure reforms by extra-constitutional means. At the same time, to ensure the co-operation and goodwill of the unenfranchised groups, the proposed reforms must be acceptable to a substantial number (not necessarily a majority) of the members of the unenfranchised groups – more particularly their leaders.

To attempt to push reforms too far or too fast will defeat our very purpose. To propose reforms which do not go far enough, or which are unrealistic, will merely arouse suspicion in the minds of the non-Whites as to our sincerity of purpose."

I then further wrote:

"I believe that between the extremes of a complete denial of the franchise to the non-Whites, on the one hand, and universal franchise on the other, a *via media* can be found. If not, the consequences are fraught with danger. When extremes, backed by a high potential of feeling, do not meet, a revolutionary situation is engendered.

. . . . .

"Indeed, future events may well overtake us and most, if not all, of the recommendations of our Commission may well become outmoded. One thing, however, is certain, the longer reforms are delayed the more rapidly will tensions develop and the more radical the inevitable changes. A start must be made."

Two decades ago, our primary concern was to seek a consensus amongst the Whites, with scant regard to whether the proposed concessions would be acceptable to the Blacks. Today, the problem is far more intractable. The problem now is to secure a consensus amongst the Blacks, now infinitely more politically conscious than two decades ago, and who now no longer seek concessions but demand rights.

Thus have we squandered our opportunities over the years. Even with the examples of Rhodesia and South West Africa on our very borders, we continue to ignore the red-light warning and cannot agree amongst ourselves even as to the necessity for radical change.

### The Basic Present Tensions

It is against this general background that I proceed to consider the basic tensions which presently prevail in each of the social, the economic and the political spheres, and to discuss what steps can and should be taken to relieve these tensions. Although the dividing line between each of these spheres is somewhat artificial – since it is the totality of the situation which must be considered – it should make for clarity to discuss each of them separately.

### The Social Sphere

As far as the social sphere is concerned, the problem, I believe, is psychological rather than political. Let me elaborate.

I recall that some twelve years ago, in June 1966, while in Washington, I was privileged to have a lengthy discussion with Earl Warren, the then Chief Justice of the United States. In the course of our talk, I observed that in the United States they were then busy debating whether Blacks should be permitted to use *swimming pools* hitherto confined to Whites, while we in South Africa had recently introduced legislation prohibiting Blacks from using so-called white *bathing beaches*. This difference, I mentioned, was an index of the gap between our respective "points of intimacy reaction."

To illustrate: some Whites will shake hands with a Black and think nothing of it; others will do so but feel self-conscious; yet others will refrain from doing so. Some Whites will decline to sit next to a Black in a bus. In an aeroplane, where options are narrowed, they may willy-nilly find themselves seated next to a black man: some will think nothing more about it; others will remain where they are but feel discomfited, while others will seek a seat elsewhere. Many Whites in South Africa would resent occupying a room in an hotel just vacated by Blacks; others would object to using the same toilet facilities.

In other words, each of us has *acquired*, and I advisedly say acquired, an emotive

reaction towards colour. Reaction towards colour is by no means uniform in the same individual towards all non-Whites. For a variety of complex reasons, one's reactions towards Blacks, Asiatics, Chinese or Japanese usually differ. One's reactions, moreover, are not limited to colour alone, for they extend in some degree to all group differences such as language, religion or nationality.

What then determines this "point of intimacy reaction" in relation to colour? As I have already mentioned, it is not inborn but is acquired. One has only to observe a white child snuggling against the bosom of a black nanny, to realise that the infant has no instinctive reaction towards colour.

How then is this reaction acquired? The answer is simple. In this country every white child grows up in an environment where the white man is the master and the black man the servant. The Whites live inside the house, the Blacks in the backyard. The white child soon comes to realise that, though a child, he can give orders to a black adult. Inevitably a sense of superiority is engendered in the mind of the white child and a feeling of inferiority is imposed on the black man. The white child soon comes to learn that the black man is governed by a host of restrictive laws and customs which emphasise his lower social status. Thus is the "Herrenvolk" or "Baasskap" idea implanted and, once implanted, it becomes difficult to eradicate.

Our acquired prejudices lead to discriminatory laws, and our discriminatory laws in turn reinforce our prejudices. We have yet to learn that colour does not necessarily taint nor rub off. Those who have experienced social discrimination will appreciate the intense bitterness it engenders.

Happily, there are signs that the "point of intimacy reaction" in South Africa is gradually receding. It is but a few years ago that virtually all hotels, theatres, cinemas, concert halls and other public amenities were closed to blacks. The recent healthy public reaction to the restriction of the "Breytenbach Theatre" to Whites only, is an indication that we are moving in the right direction and are slowly, but far too slowly, shedding our colour prejudices.

In assessing the ill effects of unjust discrimination in the social sphere, it must be remembered that an affront to one's dignity not only persists for years but is cumulative. The pain of yesterday's toothache is no longer felt to-day; an indignity suffered years ago is seldom forgotten. The innumerable indignities thoughtlessly or deliberately inflicted on non-Whites in their daily lives is a deep source of bitterness and resentment. Though we may be unable to efface the scars of the past, there is much we can do to diminish this unnecessary and unwarranted source of resentment.

### **Group Areas and Home Ownership**

The confinement, under the Group Areas Act, of non-Whites residing in urban areas to demarcated areas, coupled with the denial of the right to freehold title in these very areas, has imposed on them the worst of both worlds.

The denial of home ownership to those confined in these demarcated urban areas has been the height of folly. The recent unrest in Soweto and other black areas must be attributed largely to the sense of insecurity engendered by the ever-present threat of eviction, an insecurity which has further exacerbated the appalling disruption of their family life. The settled home-owner is seldom a revolutionary. Incidentally, if the streets of Soweto had been paved there would have been no stones to throw in the recent riots. Improvement in the living conditions and transport facilities of the urban Blacks is a prime and urgent necessity.

The belated and grudging approval, during the last session of Parliament, of ninety-nine year leasehold tenure in Soweto and other urban areas (but excluding the Western Cape) has been the sole significant governmental response to black demands. Even here, doctrinaire considerations dictated the refusal to permit unrestricted freehold title.

### The Economic Sphere

In the economic sphere the issues are relatively clear cut. It would not be wide of the mark to say that the average white worker earns as much per hour, as the average black worker earns per day. This enormous wage-gap must be attributed largely to the immoral and pernicious system of "job reservation". Although, through the force of economic pressures, "job reservation" is now more honoured in the breach than in the observance, this blot on our Statute Book should forthwith be erased.

Though we may take pride in our capitalist free enterprise system, there are, I imagine, but relatively few Blacks who during their life-time succeed in amassing capital assets of any consequence. To the majority of Blacks, our capitalist free-enterprise system must seem a hollow mockery.

The solution is not merely the indiscriminate raising of wages. Wage levels must be related to productivity, otherwise we will merely hasten the inflationary spiral. Apart from increased productivity, through improved educational and technological facilities, far greater professional and business opportunities must be provided for all races.

### The Political Sphere

It is in the political sphere that there is the least consensus as to precisely what changes should be effected. The whole matter has become bedevilled by the concept of "majority rule" and the cry for "one man, one vote."

The application of the concept of majority rule to a multi-racial, non-homogeneous, society is mischievous and misleading. The doctrine impliedly predicates that political power should be vested in a particular *racial group*, merely because that group happens to be in the majority; concomitantly, it predicates the existence of one or more minority groups, which inevitably would become subject to domination by the majority group. In other words, majority rule, in a racially heterogeneous society, necessarily implies *group domination*.

To substitute domination by a majority group for domination by a minority group (which may well be better fitted to govern) provides no answer to group conflict. In his play "*Man and Superman*", George Bernard Shaw cynically observed that democracy substitutes "election by the incompetent many," for "appointment by the corrupt few". In a racially diversified society, neither majority rule nor elitist rule affords any guarantee of a just or democratic government.

Group conflict arises out of the oppression by one group (be it a minority or a majority) of another group (be it a majority or a minority). It is the *abuse of power* (whether by a dictator, a minority group or a majority group) which must be checked. The problem, accordingly, is not whether political power should be vested in any one particular *group*, but how to avoid the abuse of power by whomsoever governs.

The removal of unjust discrimination (based on membership or non-membership of a particular group), coupled with adequate safeguards against the abuse of power by whomsoever exercised, is the key to the avoidance of group conflict. If, as the Bible enjoins, there were but one law for thyself and the stranger within thy gates, the stranger would cease to be a stranger and one would have the makings of a unified society.

In his recent book, *Enemies of Society* (1977), Paul Johnson (one-time editor of *The New Statesman*) writes:

"... the essence of democracy is not one man one vote . . . The exaltation of majority rule on the basis of universal suffrage is the most strident political fallacy of the twentieth century. True democracy means the ability to remove a government without violence, to punish political failure or misjudgment by votes alone."

The Assembly of the United Nations, where the principle "One State, One Vote" obtains, affords a striking instance of how majority rule may be abused. Opinions should be weighed, not counted. Democracy is more than a mere matter of arithmetic.

### **The Essentials of a Democratic Society**

The essence of a free and democratic society presupposes three fundamentals:

The first fundamental is the *legal right* of every citizen to *criticize and call to account* those in authority.

The second fundamental is the *readiness and willingness* to do so. In South Africa, detention without trial, banning orders and similar extra-judicial sanctions under our security legislation, operate in large measure to stultify the willingness to protest.

The third fundamental is *responsiveness* by those in authority to informed criticism and justifiable protest. This necessarily presupposes the ability of the majority of citizens to replace, by peaceful means, unresponsive rulers. As rulers become more firmly entrenched, the less responsive they become, such is the corrupting nature of power.

These fundamentals, incidentally, provide a valuable "litmus paper" by which to measure whether and to what extent any particular society or association is democratically governed. In South Africa, it is the third fundamental, rather than the first and second, which is so sadly deficient. It is the almost utter lack of meaningful response by those in power to the legitimate demands of the unenfranchised groups which occasions their sense of frustration and hopelessness and consequent demand for majority rule.

If there is one lesson of history, it is that when legitimate grievances remain unredressed and peaceful protest is unavailing, those who have no lawful means of replacing unresponsive rulers, turn to violence. Under authoritarian systems, violence becomes repressed with greater violence and a pernicious circle of yet more violence and counter-violence results, ending inevitably in open revolt or civil war.

Since it is of the essence of a democratic and free society that those who are governed should be entitled to select and replace those who govern, this presupposes the right of all *responsible and reasonably informed citizens* to choose and replace those who make and administer the laws by which they are governed.

In a heterogeneous society, comprising various racial groups with diverse cultures and widely different educational and living standards, universal suffrage (the so-called "one man one vote") may place undue power in one particular racial group, mainly by reason of its weight of numbers, and regardless of its ability or competence to govern. By the same token, an elite electorate, which automatically excludes many who are well qualified to exercise the vote, is equally objectionable.

It is fundamental, therefore, that the grant or denial of the franchise must be based on grounds which are neither irrelevant nor irrational and we must now accept that colour, creed, religion and sex are no longer relevant in the context of the grant or withholding of the franchise. The basic criterion for the grant of the franchise must be *capability and responsibility*.

### **Abuse of Power and non-Accountability**

In May 1974, in the course of an address, I had occasion to observe that the significance of "Watergate" lay not in the scandal itself but rather in the public response to the scandal. The fact that the President himself, the highest officer in the land, was publicly called to account, was the response of a healthy and not a sick society. In the course of that address I further observed that where persons in authority became too firmly entrenched there is no longer any meaningful response to abuse of power.

The following further remarks, which are peculiarly pertinent to recent happenings in our country, perhaps bear repetition:

"Even in the democracies, there is the ever-present danger of the now defunct "Divine Right of Kings" being supplanted by a more modern version, a "*Divine Right of Ministers*."

In times of threatened crises, ministers and others almost invariably become vested with wide discretionary powers, in the fond belief that these powers will never be abused.

If democracy is to function effectively no one in authority, however exalted, may remain unaccountable for the exercise of his powers. If wide discretionary powers must be granted, built-in safeguards to ensure that they are not abused are essential.

Non-accountability is the hall-mark of the totalitarian state; accountability, that of the democracies."

The recent exposures of the misuse of public funds and other irregularities by the Department of Information and other semi-public bodies serve to emphasise the insidious danger of non-accountability, which can so readily erode the basic principles of any democratic society.

### **The Sharing of Political Power**

Recent public pronouncements by Mr Vorster, the former Prime Minister, would indicate that any form of common franchise or any sharing of political power is completely unacceptable to the present regime. Other avenues, therefore, must be explored. As a bare minimum, the urban blacks must urgently be accorded a more meaningful share in decision making relating to their own internal affairs and a more responsible role in self-administration.

Although the sharing of political power may be in the forefront of present demands (and cannot be ignored), it is my belief that as wrongs are redressed and living conditions improved, the demand for political power tends to wane. The vast majority of people are content to leave the conduct of civic affairs to others as long as they act honestly and competently. It is when affairs are mismanaged that the franchise assumes importance. Thus, in large corporations, it is only when the directors have mismanaged affairs that the average shareholder even bothers to exercise his voting power.

It is only when the unenfranchised come to realise their utter inability to persuade those in power to effect changes necessary to ameliorate the harsh conditions of their daily lives, that they become conscious of their lack of political power. The first priority, therefore, is not an extension of the franchise, but the redress of legitimate grievances and the removal of unwarranted discriminatory laws and practices which affect their daily lives - even though the extension of political rights to the unenfranchised must eventually follow.

### **Implementation of the Apartheid Laws**

Our present-day racial laws are exclusively statutory in character. The Roman-Dutch law, the basis of our Common Law, was colour-blind, since it had no regard to race in determining legal rights and duties. It must be appreciated that many of these statutory enactments long ante-date the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910. Thus, the Constitution or *Grondwet* of the South African Republic of 1858 declared that the people would countenance no equality between Whites and Coloureds, either in Church or in State. However, the vast bulk of our modern racial laws have been enacted in the last two decades.

There is to-day barely a single area of activity where the daily lives of the non-Whites are not governed by some law or regulation peculiar to themselves. These all-pervasive restrictions are in many respects mirrored by the Nuremberg laws of

the Third Reich, though admittedly they may be less harsh in their consequences.

It is the implementation and administration of these laws, which, more than any other single factor, arouses resentment and a sense of injustice amongst the non-Whites. Thus, under the so-called "pass laws" – designed to control influx into the urban areas – there are more than half a million prosecutions a year! Is it any wonder that we enjoy the dubious distinction of having one of the largest *per capita* jail populations in the world? When fines (as an alternative to imprisonment) are imposed, they are by and large out of all proportion to the earning capacity of the offenders.

It is these hardships and humiliations in their daily lives and not the denial of the franchise which, I firmly believe, is the prime cause of the growing hostility of the Blacks. The demand for the franchise and indeed the sporadic outbreaks of violence are, I believe, the outcome of the growing view amongst the Blacks that these discriminatory laws will never be voluntarily ameliorated or repealed otherwise than through the securing of political power, either by violent measures or the grant of the franchise. It is the unresponsiveness by the Government to these demands which produces the counter-response of violence and the demand for a sharing of political power.

As long as these laws remain on our Statute Book, they will be enforced. Their more humane administration should at least be a prelude to their abolition. Their ultimate repeal is a pre-requisite to the lessening of racial tension. The recent repeal, at one stroke, in South West Africa of virtually all their discriminatory laws (save the franchise) has not resulted in chaos. The amendment of the discriminatory liquor laws in the Republic, (which previously accounted for probably as many convictions as the pass laws) had no cataclysmic effects and removed a widespread area of discontent.

I do not here deal with the serious encroachments, through our security legislation, on the "Rule of Law", since these encroachments apply irrespective of race. For a variety of reasons, however, they, too, tend to bear more harshly on the non-Whites.

When the voice of legitimate protest is silenced, experience has shown that bombs will eventually be heard.

### **Constitutional Safeguards**

The question whether specific constitutional safeguards are effective, or indeed necessary, to prevent the abuse of political power, is debatable. Thus, in Great Britain, on the one hand, there is no written constitution and no specific Bill of Rights. In the Soviet Union, on the other hand, the written constitution contains a number of grandiloquent provisions purporting to protect fundamental human rights. Thus, for example, Article 125 provides that citizens are guaranteed by law freedom of speech and freedom of the press; Article 127 provides that citizens are guaranteed inviolability of person; while Article 128 provides that the inviolability of the homes of citizens and secrecy of correspondence are protected by law!

The problem is not merely the protection of *minority* rights. In South Africa, it is the unfranchised non-white *majority* which no longer enjoys any constitutional safeguards. It will be recalled that in 1955 the present regime in effect circumvented the entrenched provisions of the Constitution by the simple expedient of enlarging the Senate, so as to secure the requisite two-thirds majority to remove the Coloureds from the voters' roll. This and the earlier unsuccessful shoddy devices, such as the establishment of the High Court of Parliament, demonstrate how fragile is the protection of the written word where good faith is lacking.

In the final analysis, it is good faith rather than the written word which counts. It is not ingenuity in framing constitutional safeguards which is called for. In any event, a constitution should be the end-result and not the starting-point of any

political system, There is much to be said for Napoleon's maxim that constitutions should be short and obscure!

### The Prospects of Peaceful Change

The present government has now been in power for thirty years and would appear to be more firmly entrenched than ever. Its future policy as regards the blacks appears to be still dictated by the *apartheid* blueprint of Verwoerd and his successors. The government has become ever more authoritarian and its policy is "order at all costs", even at the price of injustice. It has yet to learn that the surest road to order is through justice.

Despite pronouncements by the former Prime Minister and other senior members of the Cabinet regarding the proposed dismantling of some at least of our discriminatory laws, deeds have not matched their words and the credibility of the government in this respect is at stake. Our rulers appear to be oblivious of the danger of frustrating rising expectations.

In the last session of Parliament, no fewer than 111 Statutes were enacted. Of these, but one, – the *Bantu (Urban Areas) Amendment Act No. 97 of 1978*, providing for the grant of ninety-nine year leasehold tenure in Bantu villages and locations – served in any significant measure to meet the aspirations of the unenfranchised blacks.

On the other side of the coin, is the undoubted rapidly increasing number of "disaffected intellectuals", (to borrow Craine Brinton's phrase), particularly amongst Afrikaner academics.

Amongst the grass roots of the ruling class, however, complacency or, at any rate, an absence of a sense of urgency, would seem to prevail. What is lacking is a catalyst in the form of an authoritative pronouncement by the government that it intends introducing meaningful changes to satisfy at least some of the justifiable aspirations of the unenfranchised, followed by matching deeds.

The government must be well aware of the danger of inaction. One can but assume that powerful latent counter-pressures, emanating presumably from the right wing, have induced this present cataleptic state. Recent changes in the leadership of the National party would appear to confirm this view. A revival of the slowly fading Verwoerdian blueprint – particularly in so far as it failed to grapple with the urban blacks – would, it is believed, prove calamitous.

### The Outside World

Thus far, I have dealt almost exclusively with internal pressures. The ever-mounting pressures from the outside world should, one would have thought, have had a profound effect on our internal policy. That these pressures have thus far proved relatively ineffectual, is, I believe, due largely to a mistaken approach. The emphasis throughout has been an attack on the major premise, the doctrine of *apartheid*. This doctrine covers a multitude of sins and perhaps even some minor virtues. It is as if one were to attack, say, Christianity or Communism. It would be more effectual to direct criticism at the minor premises, or more specifically at concrete instances of the evils comprised in the doctrine (such as job reservation, group areas, the wage gap, the pass-laws and a host of other evils). It is easier to fragment granite with a well-directed drill than with a sledge-hammer.

### The African Continent

The relatively recent intrusion of Soviet Russia and China into the African Continent has added a new and alarming dimension to the problems of Southern Africa. Hitherto, Africa has remained the preserve of Western European nations. During the past century or so, the British, the Dutch, the French, the Belgians, the Germans, the Italians, the Portuguese and the Spanish have all participated in the

scramble for Africa. Is there any logical reason why Soviet Russia and China should not now enter the fray?

These new forces may well serve to cause the Western European Nations and the United States to reassess their present attitude towards the Republic of South Africa. Their policy will ultimately be determined by what they consider to be their own material interests, namely geo-political strategic advantages, the securing of the vast mineral resources of Africa and the preservation of their markets. In weighing up all these advantages, they may be well induced to throw in their lot with the black African States rather than with our Republic, as being the sounder bet.

However unwarranted certain of their criticisms and however extravagant certain of their demands, we simply cannot afford to turn our backs on the West.

### Conclusion

The present situation in South Africa is basically not dissimilar to that which prevailed in France and Russia on the eve of their respective revolutions. In both countries power and privilege were the virtual monopoly of a minute minority. The masses sought their rightful share in these privileges. The ruling class responded: "If you offer a finger, they will take your whole hand." In the mistaken belief that to concede something is to surrender everything, all demands were resisted.

The masses then sought, by violent means, to wrest political power from the ruling minority. In the ensuing torrent of terror and bloodshed, the ruling minority eventually lost not only their privileges, their property and their political power, but many, alas, lost their noble heads. Had the dominant ruling class foreseen the inevitable outcome, they surely would have extended not merely a finger but both hands. History, however, seldom affords the tardy a second chance. It would seem that those whom the gods would destroy, they first make supine.

Let us not write our own epitaph with those comforting but illusory last words "It can't happen here."

## INSTITUTE PUBLICATIONS

A full list of publications may be obtained from the Administrative Secretary, SAIIA, P.O. Box 31596, Braamfontein 2017, Transvaal, South Africa. Listed below are a few examples of recent available publications.

### BOOKS AND SPECIAL STUDIES

- *Namibia Old and New*, by Gerhard Töttemeyer. C. Hurst & Co., London, 1978. Published in co-operation with the Institute. Limited number of copies available from the Institute at a special reduced price of R15,00 for members.
- *Strategy for Development*, Macmillan, London, 1976. Edited by John Barratt, David Collier, Kurt Glaser and Herman Mönnig. (Based on the proceedings of a conference at Jan Smuts House. The third in a series on population growth and development, published for the Institute by Macmillan.) Price: R15,00 if ordered from the Institute.

### PERIODICALS

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