

# GOOD HOPE

by Edgar Brookes

At this moment many people in South Africa are frankly pessimistic. Whites see no hope for the future, thoughtful blacks see no hope of achieving liberation without civil war and the wholesale destruction of the country's assets. As against this I wish to set up the standard of Hope.

There are some things that South Africa cannot hope for. One is the continuation, but for a few modifications, of the present system. With almost all the articulate black population and with almost every State in the world against her she cannot hope to do this. White South Africans could of course die fighting if they thought it worthwhile to die for the maintenance of a system of white domination. Another thing that South Africa cannot hope for is that if liberation is achieved by head-on confrontation between white and black, the victorious blacks – for they will be victorious, the world will see to that – will win a South Africa many of whose mineral and industrial resources have remained intact for the victors. Between these two extremes there is a vast field where Hope can find a place.

To illustrate my point let me take as a parable, however unexpected, the first discovery of Southern Africa by European Imperialists.

In the year 1488 Bartholomew Diaz, under the auspices of the King of Portugal, travelled along the coast of Africa, going further and further south. He outstripped all previous explorers. Suddenly he came to the end of land. Africa took a turn to the east. He rounded the Cape (no doubt a strong south-easter was blowing), which he named "Cabo Tormentoso" or "Cape of Storms". As he left this cape behind him he found that the sun was no longer rising on his left hand but on his right. Either by himself or by the King of Portugal the Cape was renamed "The Cape of Good Hope". In spite of the fact that all his previous experiences were being reversed, he found Hope in the situation.

If Bartholomew Diaz had not been willing to turn to the left at the Cape and had proceeded to go on south, following the general tendency of Portuguese explorers, he would have had to go through the Roaring Forties and would then have found himself enmeshed in the pack ice.

I suggest that this parable has a realistic meaning for us. If we go on and find our expected way of life radically altered we may name the point of alteration "The Cape of Good Hope". If we decide to follow the same course as in the

past, we shall find ourselves frozen in. It is quite true that we are facing storms and that we are afraid of them. It is equally true that we can pass these storms, reverse our accepted arrangements and live in the land of Good Hope. Pessimism and despair are the enemies of progress and advancement. In general there is much in the situation of the world in the year 1977 to give us Hope.

We may say that the future of the world and the future of South Africa are full of Hope, provided we do not want to lay out in advance the exact programme which must be followed.

If we are to be successful in South Africa we must expect a great change of feeling in the three Afrikaans churches, particularly the NGK. Is this impossible? Is it impossible that there should be some change in the Nationalist Party? There are many indications of dissentient movements in these two important bodies. We need not despair, we must not give in.

We Liberals are committed to radical reforms in the South African situation. We shall go on even if we ourselves, our interests and our policies are overwhelmed by civil war. But no South African who truly loves his country will lightly encourage the idea of civil war. Black South Africans are no fools. They do not want to take over a devastated country. It is true that if White South Africans make no worthwhile move civil war, and with it devastation, will come. Let us consider that many responsible black leaders do not want this to happen and that co-operation between them and white leaders is something that they would welcome. The new state of affairs as the black man receives liberation will release immense treasures of goodwill, will introduce a new order in which men are respected as men irrespective of colour.

All this means that apartheid has to go. It has no part to play in the real future of the real South Africa. Unless Mr Vorster shows qualities of statesmanship which have been lacking in the past few months he also will have to go. If the Security Police are allowed to go on unchecked there will, alas, not be much to hope for. But let us hope that we pass the Cape of Storms and go on to a fruitful new era of life so that we shall be able to rename the area of our deepest fears "The Cape of Good Hope". □

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