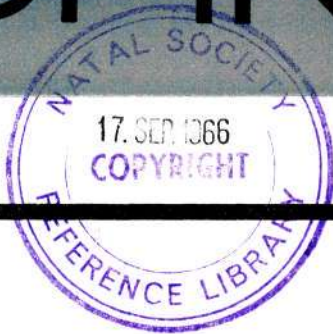


LIBERAL OPINION



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IN THIS ISSUE:

- 1 OPENING OF NATIONAL
CONFERENCE, JULY 1966
 - 2 POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT
IN RHODESIA
 - 3 ON LEAVING SOUTH AFRICA
-

OPENING OF NATIONAL CONFERENCE, JULY 1966

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

I AM HAPPY to be speaking again from the same platform as Dr. Brookes. We all owe a debt to Dr. Brookes, who assumed the National Chairmanship at a most critical time, and, if I might say so, at a time of life when most men are thinking of shedding old responsibilities rather than assuming new ones. Dr. Brookes has had no easy passage. He assumed the Chairmanship when Peter Brown was banned. Since then the Party has been through many vicissitudes, some of which I can only describe as disasters. One can imagine Dr. Brookes saying of one of these events: "Ladies and gentlemen, this is the greatest calamity that has befallen the Party since I became its National Chairman in 1964." (Laughter.)

Let us remember for a moment these members of the Party who have been banned since the banning of Peter Brown, whose absence on occasions such as these is something never far from our minds, whose courage and whose clear-sightedness are the attributes we need most now.

Harold Head	David Craighead
Walter Hain	Eddie Roux
Dempsey Noel	Samuel Dick
Ann Tobias	John Aitchison
Eric Harber	Chris Shabalala
Joe Tsele	Sam Polotho
David Rathswaffo	Michael Francis
Saul Bastomsky	Enoch Mnguni
Max Thomas	Michael Ndlovu
Selby Msimang	Jean Hill
Barney Zackon	Ken Hill
Alban Thumbrin	Heather Morkill
Fred Prager	Ruth Hayman

Our greetings are sent to them all, and to others, too — Adelaine Hain and the Hain family, Maritz van den Berg, Ann Harris, and Barney Zackon — who have left South Africa.

Banning has by no means been confined to us. The banning of Ian Robertson came as a great shock, partly because he was president of NUSAS, partly because of his age. There were also two bannings of a particularly contemptible kind. Mr. Abe Hurzuk and Mr. Abdul Kay of Cape Town, both members of the committee formed to save District Six, were banned, and one cannot but conclude that this was done to discourage any opposition to this particularly merciless application of the Group Areas Act.

THOROUGHLY BAD

The way in which this law is framed is thoroughly bad. Some of the objects of Communism would be the same as some of the objects of any Government imaginable, including our own. It would appear to me that the Minister of Justice would be able to ban almost any person who took any interest in politics or social welfare. It is because the law is so thoroughly bad that the Courts are prevented from passing any judgement as to whether the Minister was justified or not in the action he had taken. It is a fine situation, is it not, when the law of the land is used to silence the Courts of the land?

The Minister was also of the opinion that it would be detrimental to public policy to disclose his information. Surely the very opposite is true. If this information were of any substance it would do much to lessen the profound public suspicion that Mr. Robertson was banned purely and simply because he was the president of a society that had invited Senator Kennedy to visit South Africa. We are therefore entitled to be sceptical about the Minister's

alleged information — I think one must describe it thus, because it has no legal validity until it has been proved in a court of law.

I think NUSAS deserve both thanks and admiration for the way in which they conducted their protest, which was both dignified and courageous. And these young students deserve to be thanked and admired, too, and especially by people like ourselves, because they showed their sure grasp of those things that are fundamental to the life of any civilised society, at a time, I regret to say, when many older people are beginning to forget them, or should I say, when many older people are beginning to be afraid to remember them?

SENATOR KENNEDY

Our National Chairman has already dealt with the visit of Senator Kennedy, and has likened it to a breath of fresh air from the wider world. This reminds me of that brilliant parable of Reginald Reynolds, who compared South Africa with a room full of people, with all the doors and windows closed, and all the people smoking and drinking and talking. And a stranger from outside opens the door and exclaims: "Phew! What a fug in here." And they shout at him: "How can you know? You've only just come in."

Mr. Con Botha of Natal, in speaking of Senator Kennedy's speeches, showed a pride in things South African which pleased me immensely. For he said, in perhaps not quite these words: "Senator Kennedy uttered a number of cliches, which I have heard Alan Paton, Helen Suzman and Chief Luthuli utter much better." It would have pleased me even more if Mr. Botha had said "our own Alan Paton and our own Helen Suzman and our own Albert Luthuli", but I must admit he didn't say that. And I could say to Mr. Botha: "Look, if you don't like our own South African cliché-makers, why don't you go and live in some other country?" You all know the big difference between Liberalism and Nationalism, don't you? If the Liberal doesn't like Nationalism, then the Liberal should get out of the country. And if the Nationalist doesn't like Liberalism, then the Liberal should get out of the country.

You all know what those cliches were which were uttered by Senator Kennedy. That man, individual man, is the touchstone of value, and

that all society, all organisations, even the State, exist for his well-being and self-realisation. That Government, even by the consent of the people, must be limited in its power to act against the people? That in no civilised society may there be any restriction on the freedom of men to seek education and work and opportunity of any kind?

ENCOURAGEMENT

What an encouragement it has been to us all to hear these principles reaffirmed by a new voice, and not only a new voice but a powerful voice, that may one day be one of the most powerful in the world. Many of us, who in this country are embattled and beleaguered and punished without trial and banned without reason, suddenly felt that we were again part of a wider and freer world, and a safer world, too. You and I well know that the unrest of the wider world is often compared with the peace and order of South Africa, which enjoys a peace very much like the peace of Spain and Portugal.

But nowhere in the world, not even in Spain and Portugal, is the whole aim of government to keep apart for ever the various groups of the race of man, often by methods both cruel and unjust. It is claimed that those are the traditional policies of the country, but, if they had been, two of the most important groups in the country, the Afrikaners and the Coloured people, would never have come into existence at all. It is said that it is God's will that these racial identities should be for ever preserved. How anyone who knows anything at all of the history of man can believe such nonsense is beyond my wit to understand.

What made all these thousands of people, young and old, clamour to hear Kennedy and stretch out their hands to touch him, and wait long hours to hear him? Weren't they hungry to hear again what it has become so dangerous to speak and so dangerous to listen to? Didn't they want some reassurance that the things in which they believed and which some of them were growing afraid to believe, were believed elsewhere, too, by other students, other peoples, other countries of the world?

PRICE TOO HIGH

We often ask ourselves, those of us who have been so bludgeoned and beaten, whether the price hasn't come too high, in terms of careers and happiness and children's happiness, and all the ordinary things that make up a person's life?

This is a question I cannot answer for you. I cannot ask you to choose the hero's lament. I never thought that the river of my life, in its latter stretches, would proceed with such turbulence. One could have expected that it should broaden out into reaches of tranquillity before it entered the sea. Would I have had it otherwise? Well, of course I would have had it otherwise, but not at the price of ceasing to believe what I believe in, or by pretending to cease to believe. Life might have been easier, but it wouldn't have been my life but the life of some other fellow that I had allowed to get the better of me. So, all things said and done, I wouldn't have had it otherwise.

Sometimes we are inclined to judge and condemn white South Africa for its obsession with security and its willingness to make security its supreme value, so preparing the way for the moral corruption that must follow. When we are so tempted, let us remember the tens of thousands who went to hear Kennedy, to hear something of those other values which, at the very least, are as important as security, and indeed are essential to security of another kind. Bludgeoned and beaten as we are, we stand for those same values.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN RHODESIA

An address given to the Durban Branch of the Liberal Party by Dr. Stafford Glass, lecturer in History at the University of Natal.

WE HAVE ALL SEEN in recent years — months even — the swing to the right that has shown itself in the political life of Rhodesia. How does one define a swing to the right? In South African or African politics it is any move or policy that tends to reduce the rights of the black man or to deny him his aspirations; any move or policy that is based on race discrimination, or that