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EDITORIALS

1 TALK NOW!

We make no apology for returning to a theme which features in almost every issue of REALITY now – the need for South Africans of all political persuasions to start talking to each other **now** about how they are going to share their future together. We are prompted to come back to the subject by several pronouncements which people in high places in the Nationalist hierarchy have recently made.

It is now some months since Dr Piet Koornhof, the Minister of Sport, suggested that a solution to South Africa's political problems might be found in the Swiss canton system. Dr Koornhof's proposal has since been rejected by people ranging from his fellow Cabinet Minister, Dr Connie Mulder, on the Right, to Chief Gatsha Buthelezi on the Left. This criticism has not silenced Dr Koornhof and he has now made another speech in which he is reported to have said "representative structures composed of all race groups had to be developed to take a full part in decision-making processes on local, provincial and national levels". Even Dr Mulder has been moved to tell the annual conference of the Afrikaanse Studentebond that a new agreement with black, brown and yellow people

(whoever they are) might be pending that was so different from the present dispensation that "it would take getting used to by the nation".

These statements by Ministers to predominantly Nationalist audiences are interesting indications of long-overdue soul-searching amongst Cabinet members, and of some movement in their thinking. Unfortunately, in a very real sense, this movement is irrelevant to the solution of our problems, because it propounds theories which White Nationalists may find very good but which people of other groups have had no part in formulating at all. Surely it must be obvious to anyone that no self-respecting leader of any community in South Africa will ever accept a policy worked out for him by somebody else? Dr Koornhof, and even Dr Mulder, may be starting to move a little but they still insist that they will only do so within the framework of separate development. If they were prepared to take the only step that will ever count, one to discuss our future with the representatives of *all* South Africans, and to talk with them about how power is to be shared, they would probably be surprised to find

that, although a solution within the framework of separate development was unacceptable, a solution guaranteeing the survival and prosperity of the Afrikaner people was perfectly acceptable. Should anyone expect more than that?

While it is good to see these stirrings in the minds of leading Nationalists it would be highly dangerous if they were allowed to divert us from the realisation that it is not from them, but only from the kind of gathering that we have been discussing that a real 'solution' to our problems will come. That talks on real power-sharing should not be delayed a moment longer has surely been highlighted by

the incident in Johannesburg in June when three young Black men opened fire on a group of white men drinking tea, killing two of them. If this was indeed South Africa's first demonstration of organised urban terrorist activity, then we are entering on a phase in our national life which, if it is not halted in its tracks, will make the prospects for racial reconciliation and the building of a free, open and non-racial society extremely remote. Nor will it be halted by police counter-measures. It will only be stopped by taking away the sense of injustice and frustration in which it is founded and putting in its place the promise of a new and satisfying future for those who have concluded that only violence will bring real change. □

2 TRUWORTHS

While Drs Koornhof and Mulder may be having a few new thoughts, their Cabinet colleague, Mr M. C. Botha, Minister of Bantu Development, is not.

Truworths is an outfitting business with branches throughout South Africa. It runs a chain of stores, called "Top Centre", which are situated in the "White areas", but whose customers are nearly all black. Truworths would like to appoint black managers to run these stores. Mr M. C. Botha has refused them permission to do so. He says if black people want to manage stores they can go and do it in the black areas. He says this is not discrimination because white people may not manage stores in black areas.

Mr M. C. Botha was Dr Verwoerd's deputy for years. He hasn't moved an inch since then. He still worships at the altar of Verwoerdian apartheid, along with an undisclosed number of other Ministers, and probably a majority of Nationalist supporters. Verwoerdian apartheid could be sold to Nationalist voters as the only sure way to national survival because, in those days, the power of the State to go on imposing its wishes on our society seemed unchallengeable. Black aspirations could be ignored because public black political expression had largely been silenced. The world was far away, and it seemed that Dr Salazar would live for ever.

Those days are gone now. The uninhibited expression of black demands, from homeland to township, is an almost daily event. Dr Salazar is dead and buried. The world is no longer far away, it is knocking loudly on the door. Change is coming, but there is no sign that the Nationalist Government has any idea of how to help it come in a reasonable manner. What easier way to start than to let Truworths, and anyone else for that matter, appoint black people of ability to well-paid jobs within the present economy? You could be sure that, once they were there,

they wouldn't start a revolution — but if they are kept out . . . ?

Blind as is the official reaction to the Truworth's application, blinder still is the stricter enforcement, in the face of growing unemployment, of the policy of squeezing Africans out of jobs in the Western Cape, and of giving what jobs are going to coloured and white workers. Not only has there been a reported clamp-down on migrant workers coming to the area, most of whom are Transkeians, but Africans who lose their jobs, even if they were born in the area, and have worked hard there all their lives, face permanent unemployment. If there is a job available it is Department of Labour policy not to give it to them. More fuel for the revolution. Foreign Minister, Mr Pik Botha may indeed want to move away from race discrimination, he may even be frantic to start, but while he is surrounded by people who are stuck in the bog of Verwoerdian dogma, he has no chance. These people may rationalise their actions with talk of "separate freedoms", but to their victims they are pure race discrimination. How else can the prospective black managers of Truworths see them? Or the man who was born and grew up in Cape Town and who may not now get a job because the apostles of "separate freedoms" are trying to turn him into a Transkeian?

It is not only the black victims of these recent government moves who will see them as a simple extension of race discrimination, so too will those few remaining UN friends of South Africa to whom Mr Pik Botha gave that dramatic undertaking to move away from discrimination all those many months ago.

Has the Foreign Minister not realised yet that you cannot get rid of race discrimination in any significant way until you have decided to get rid of apartheid? □