

Need For An Answer To Racial Tension

SIR,—As racial tension in Africa grows daily more acute, the need for an answer becomes increasingly urgent. There are many Europeans and Africans who desire peace and friendship but what has been lacking is how to make this a reality. There are Europeans, for instance, who have the best interests of the Africans at heart, but because they do not believe that the African can make serious judgments on national affairs they tend to disregard his opinion on any subject. This gives the impression that they intend to dominate the Africans indefinitely.

There is another group of Europeans who believe that the Africans must always be right and the Government and settler community must always be wrong. They also have the best interests of the Africans at heart, but they are blind to the faults of the Africans and therefore cannot be of any permanent help to them.

Sometimes members of both these groups of well-wishers act the way they do for political motives of their own, and this only aggravates the racial divisions that already exist in Africa.

The true friends of the Africans are those who will show them their mistakes whenever they are wrong and who are prepared to support them whenever they are right, and study their point of view with an open mind. They fight for "what is right" rather than "who is right" in both African and European.

A European who shows by deeds rather than by words that he is a true friend of the African people will be accepted in their country even though he is in a minority, and he will have nothing to fear.

The African, on his part, can also build for friendship. Even though he is a poor man with no special skill, if he shows that he can appreciate the education and facilities provided by others, he will prove to be a true friend. Then all the avenues leading to political, social and economic advancement will be open to him, for mutual trust always results in mutual betterment.

Another disruptive force in Africa is the misuse of political power by people of all races. A man in power is tempted to say and do things which he knows to be wrong for the purpose of furthering his own influence and popularity. Such a leadership is always short-lived and it brings no lasting benefit to his followers. For example, a European who supports discriminatory measures is more popular among a certain class of Europeans than one who advocates true partnership between the races. In the same

way, an African who is most vocal in giving vain promises is regarded by his followers as their "Moses."

A sincere man may be misunderstood at first and may even be branded as a "traitor." If, however, he is not seeking anything for himself, but puts only the interests of his people first, a day will come when they will realise he has been right, even after he has gone. This kind of courage and clarity can only come when a leader accepts the absolute moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love.

Before I met Moral Re-Armament, although I was a Christian, I did a number of things which were wrong simply to please my followers, and I refrained from opposing certain things for fear of persecution. But now I realise that to do so is more dangerous than to risk one's own life for a good cause. I now dedicate myself to fight for what I know to be right, regardless of the consequences. My own conviction is that, whether we like it or not, Africans and Europeans must find a way of living together harmoniously, for neither of us can live independently of the other.

Evidence that it was possible for races to find unity was demonstrated at the World Assembly for Moral Re-Armament at Caux, Switzerland, when Africans, Europeans and Asians from Kenya spoke together from the same platform, and presented to the Assembly joint gifts of food grown in Kenya from representatives of all races in their country. Another instance was when Hindus and Muslims from India and Pakistan flew on the same plane and spoke from the same platform at Caux, dedicating themselves to work for the unity of their two countries. They even went further, to invite the British to join them on the same platform, and apologised publicly to them for their past bitterness. The British, in turn, apologised for their attitude of superiority and distrust. They are now giving their time travelling in Europe to

pass on the secret of unity which they have found.

The other thing which convinced me completely that nations and races could work together were demonstrations by Frenchmen and Germans who apologised to one another and pledged themselves to unite Germany and France. Their action was endorsed by Mr. Robert Schuman, the father of European unity, in the following words: "I am accustomed, to international meetings, but they are very different from this Assembly. They normally end with great disappointments. Here we find nothing but satisfaction and hope." A message was also received from Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, of Germany, pledging his support for the move Moral Re-Armament has made to bring unity between their two countries.

Evidence was given at Caux of how racial unity was producing far-reaching social and economic results in the South African mining town of Springs. There, the City Engineer and the African chairman of the Native Advisory Board, by applying the spirit of Moral Re-Armament, have between them developed a basis of teamwork which made it possible to use African skilled labour for the first time in South Africa to build a model township at the rate of eight houses a day. Nearly 2,000 houses have already been completed. This example is now being followed in the largest cities of South Africa and it is helping to cure one of the worst social ills of that country.

Most of the bitterness in Africa dates back to the wars that have divided her people. If the colour war should ever become a shooting war throughout Africa, it may take a hundred years to recover from the bitterness that would result from it. This must be prevented at all costs. There is still time in Africa, although the sands are fast running out. There is, in spite of everything, an immense number of men of goodwill, at present bewildered and without a plan, just waiting to be enlisted behind a great idea. The examples I have given of racial unity being built can be repeated hundreds of times. They are the living proof that Africa can solve her race problems and that Africa united could set a pattern of unity for the whole world.

Yours, etc.,

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