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South Africa: an intelligent strategy

WE have been talking with men and women of both the black and the white communities of Africa.

It is crystal clear that in South Africa we are faced by a country of great economic strength, controlled by a strongly entrenched government. Basically, the white population is rugged and self-sufficient, a people conscious that they once resisted in a long and hard war the full force of the British Empire. Though defeated in the end, they were never defeated in spirit.

The issue before us in Britain is not whether the racial policies of South Africa are right or wrong. Most of us are convinced they are wrong. What matters is to throw our weight intelligently on the side of change.

Putting it bluntly, force will never do it. The more we apply our bans and our demos, the more stubborn the white man in Africa becomes. Meanwhile, the voice of the moderates gets weaker, the extremists grow stronger. This point is not an opinion of a few individuals, but is a fact of our times.

We need to face up to the situation and stop slavishly following a pattern that is leading nowhere. We need to think deeper and evolve a strategy that will bring results.

We have found that there are African leaders who are considering altering the policies of their peoples. They have in mind to encourage visits by white South Africans to their countries, so that these men can see for themselves how effective black governments can be.

This could prove to be a better way than any which we in Europe have so far offered.

There is another serious point: it is generally recognised that should economic sanctions ever have a drastic effect, it would be the black South African and not the white who would suffer. Many of those who plan economic pressure deliberately intend that the black man will suffer. They believe that only when his standard of living is drastically reduced will he be ready to support a revolution of violence.

They are choosing this path for him, irrespective of his wishes. This surely is as evil a piece of domination of man by man as the domination it seeks to destroy.