

Powellism has proved at least one thing: that the government's new Race Relations Bill is timely and imperative as a first and educative measure. It is now no longer possible to escape the fact that the actual racial discrimination documented by P.E.P. is merely the expression of widespread uncertainties and prejudices among the people of this country. And this is why statements of principle are necessary. We have now to decide, individually and nationally, whether we are whole-heartedly, tepidly or not at all for a multi-racial society.

This is not to say that we should through a new form of dominative intolerance deride those who complain—often with justification—that such statements of principle come easily enough from the long-haired and well-heeled who do not have to live with the consequences. Such complaints are very much to the point, but the question is what the real point is.

On the one hand, it is always necessary for some people to voice the conscience of a people on matters of moral importance. And for Christians the essential question can be stated quite simply: the question is again whether or not we are to allow our self-interest, our secret insecurities and our shared preconceptions to yield before the gentle but unremitting call of Jesus Christ to break down the walls of division and to work towards collaborative brotherhood. And if this is the essential question, then it cannot be brotherhood to discriminate on the basis of colour or race.

On the other hand, the difficulties and risks now before us are very real; sheer numbers alone do in certain parts of the country threaten the livelihood, the living conditions and the schooling of many. We must indeed bring all our resources of knowledge, skill, forbearance and application to bear. But the point is that we must meet such difficulties and use such resources within a perspective set by right principle. This is the whole difference between a situationist type of ethic and an objective type of ethic such as has traditionally been expressed in the concept of the natural law: often excruciating problems remain and must be dealt with individually as well as possible within either perspective. But whereas a situationist will be content merely to palliate the immediate situation, an objectivist must logically go on to seek to alter the structures that have conspired to produce the situation and to thwart right principle.

Those who proclaim principle and those who feel the pinch

therefore need each other. And they need each other precisely because the shape and direction of our society are now willy-nilly in question. This is the basic issue now before us, the shape of social relations to come, what role we should expect and allow each other to play. And, of course, legislation is not enough in itself. It is only the tip of the iceberg, one effort among many of social reconstruction. It is equally obvious that not all can express a commitment to the implications of a multi-racial society in the same way. But minimally such a commitment means acceptance of the truth already discovered by Joseph Ashby of Tysoe in the fight for the farm labourers in the nineteenth century: 'Labourers, any set of people, must find their own way out of the difficulties. They must never trust another class to do justice without having to. But after all, wasn't that right enough? Resistance could be a debt you owed. (*Joseph Ashby of Tysoe, 1858-1919*, by M. K. Ashby, (C.U.P. 1961, at p. 73.) This is the spirit of Martin Luther King, of Black Power, of the Arusha declaration of Julius Nyerere, and increasingly of the masses of South America and the poor nations generally. Those of us who are not generous enough or who do not have the opportunity—or make it—to work actively and directly for racial reconciliation must at least be ready to recognize justice when it is claimed.

And the positive possibility beyond this is that it may only be a genuinely multi-racial Britain that will have the sympathy and vision necessary to co-operate substantially with the developing peoples of the world.

P.L.

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*Erratum.* The article 'Metaphilosophy' by Mr Timothy Potts in the May issue of *New Blackfriars* contained three errors, which should be corrected as follows: p. 425, line 6: for 'the word' put 'a word'.

And two omissions are here indicated by italics: p. 426, after line 27: 'The position with regard to this example *is much more obscure than the mathematical one, because we still lack an analysis of causality which would allow us to exhibit its logical form*'.

P. 427, after line 38: 'we are not doing *natural science; nor yet natural history—since we can also invent fictitious natural history for our purposes*'.