

engagement from South Africa. The fourth meeting of SADCC was held in Maputo, Mozambique in late November 1980. A number of specific proposals to some 30 industrialized countries and international organizations were made during that week.

Although not directly related to the problems of regional interdependence and closer union in southern Africa, last year's Brandt Commission report on North-South development concluded:

None of the important problems between industrialized and developing countries can effectively be solved by confrontation. This demands a new perception of mutual dependence of states and people. Development means interdependence, and both are pre-conditions of human survival.

From this, it would seem to follow that regional groupings in southern Africa are an indispensable prerequisite for the economic progress of individual states because, taken in isolation, their economies offer too narrow and weak a basis for vigorous economic development.

There can be no question that the countries of southern Africa recognize the desirability of closer regional union. There is no doubt that serious efforts are being made to provide meaningful channels for its realistic expression. This movement must be sustained and gather momentum to ensure movement towards a new order in southern Africa. In general terms, this can be done by relying more on marketplace forces. The reason for this is plain enough: by reducing the range of issues that must be decided by politicians and bureaucrats, a free enterprise system promotes the separation of economic power from political power and in this way enables the one to offset the other. Thus, in practice, an impersonal market separates economic activities from political ideologies and protects people from being discriminated against in their economic activities for reasons that are irrelevant to their productivity — whether these reasons are associated with their opinions, religion, colour or ethnic background. Put another way, in a free market economy, the individual citizen finds his own place in society, his own moral, ethical and cultural values and can gain personal progress for personal effort.

A distinguished South African industrialist, Harry F. Oppenheimer, has gone so far as to argue that racial discrimination and free enterprise are basically incompatible, and that failure to eradicate the one will ultimately result in the destruction of the other. As already mentioned, South Africa has broken new ground in this connection; now she must move ahead.

Unconvincing venture

Despite the long-term goal of 'economic liberation' and reduced dependence on South Africa, the SADCC does not present a threat for the RSA. Quite the contrary. It is better, after all, to have prosperous neighbours

than poverty-stricken ones. However, it is difficult to foresee success for this economically unconvincing venture which envisages the spending of several billions of dollars in infrastructures alone over the next decade.

To place matters in perspective, the nine Black southern African states have five times the land mass of South Africa and twice the population of the Republic, but their combined Gross National Product is less than half of South Africa's and their per-capita incomes hover around one-third to one-quarter of the RSA's per-capita income. Only two of these states, Malawi and Zimbabwe, have consistently managed to feed themselves. Of the nine, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique and the BLS countries are interconnected with the South African economy to a far greater extent that they are with each other's economies. Not surprisingly, one delegate at the first SADCC conference concluded: "This plan limits natural and regional development, weakens the independent southern African states and provides the RSA with economic leverage against them." An expert on Africa, Dr. Michael Clough, warned the delegates at the Salisbury conference that states breaking economic ties with South Africa could seek the not very viable alternatives of getting outside countries to pay for their losses. Nevertheless, as had been proved in Zambia and Mozambique, this would fall far short of the losses incurred by economic separation.

What the impact of these remarks means is that without South Africa's expertise and capital it would take the 'group of nine' decades to achieve the economic freedom they desire. This seems to imply that closer formal links between a restructured South Africa and its Black neighbours should come about relatively easily once all sections of South African society have shown themselves capable of creating a socio-political order in which the various races and ethnic groups enjoy maximum scope for their well-grounded hopes while sharing responsibility over matters of mutual interest.

'The winds of change' are blowing with increasing intensity in southern Africa. White South Africa has recognized that a strategy of survival entails far closer involvement with all races both within and outside the Republic. Economic facts are beginning to compel Black African politicians to reassess their priorities. Thus, the possibility of a new and broader alliance between all the neighbouring countries in southern Africa is not altogether far-fetched. What is needed, however, is a degree of mutual respect and a willingness to share opportunities equally among the diverse racial and ethnic groups within the region as a whole. In any event, it is no exaggeration to say that current efforts to create closer regional ties in southern Africa are far and away the most hopeful signs of change on the sub-continent since the introduction of South Africa's "separate development" policy in the 1948 general election.