

Despite the profound differences which prevailed and persisted throughout, it was possible for a communiqué to be issued. This was difficult with two inherently conflicting elements to be reconciled. First, it had become essential that a way be found for Commonwealth governments to make clear their intentions on this central question of racial relations. Second, it was desirable that this should be done without violation of the traditional practice of these meetings that the internal affairs of member countries are not the subject of formal discussion. I believe now more certainly than I did when I spoke here on April 27 that any departure from this last principle would mean the end of the Commonwealth as we know it; because, if we ever arrive at the point where we will discuss the internal affairs of other countries and determine the course by a majority, then there will be problems that will arise and it could only mean that several countries in the Commonwealth could not accept the decisions of the majority. I need not go into particulars in that regard; I think a number would come to mind immediately, including the question of migration.

Personally ... I was of those who thought it worthwhile to try to achieve the first objective of enabling the views of Prime Ministers to be expressed without sacrificing the principle of non-interference, which is one of the elements of the Commonwealth association. I took the view that notwithstanding the depth of feeling on this racial issue--my views throughout the years and now are a matter of record--I believe it would be wrong and damaging to the spirit and fabric of the Commonwealth partnership if a majority of the Commonwealth governments, finding themselves allied in condemnation of one or more of their number, were to constitute themselves as a court of judgment. I saw, as I said a moment ago, in that trend an end of the association as we know it. The seed of mutual recrimination would threaten the partnership whose essence has always been tolerance, restraint and free co-operation.

... Strong feelings were held in the informal meetings. Men like the President of Pakistan, the Prime Minister of India, of Malaya and of Ghana accepted this view as essential to the preservation and maintenance of our relationship. There was unanimous acceptance of the principle that internal affairs of free states are not to be the subject of formal discussion, and that any action in that regard would damage the strength and ultimately the preservation of the institution itself.

I cannot reveal ... in the tradition of those meetings, the substance of the talks. There were at times bilateral, at times in small groups, and at other times all the representatives took part in an informal and private exchange of views. For my part, I had two lengthy and private personal conversations with Mr. Louw; I participated in other informal