

S.O. 29

modern and civilized society. If we fail to act and to act immediately in ways that are substantial, tangible and measurable, not only to a generation of young blacks in South Africa but to a generation of young blacks throughout the continent of Africa, then we say to them, as untrue as it might be, that, indeed, the simple answer they perceive for the lack of our action, the obvious answer they perceive for our inability to take tangible measures, in their minds, is the right one.

Let us not in the case of South Africa, as we have so often in the world, stand and worry about whether the people who are in the streets fighting to be human beings, fighting for the basic integrity that any human being on this planet deserves, adhere to the Communist Manifesto or to the tenets of capitalism. If that is the basis on which we decide whether we are going to act, then as surely as I stand here we will drive them into the arms of a philosophy that we do not embrace. We will drive them into the streets with guns in their hands, because if any of us were in that situation and found ourselves abandoned by people who could make a difference, the western world, then I have no doubt in saying that I would embrace whatever manifesto would put a gun in my hand, I would embrace whatever philosophy would give me at least the dignity of standing on my own two feet, and I would embrace whatever individual would allow me at least the dignity of expressing myself, I am afraid, by whatever means.

It seems to me as I look at what has happened in Nicaragua, it seems to me as I look at what has happened even in Cuba, not in the last 10 years, not in the last 15 years but in the early days, not with Fidel Castro, but when the people of Cuba were crying out for change, they realized no assistance could be found in the West. I see a replay of that paralysis with respect to South Africa. Failure to act now for the right reasons, for reasons of human for reasons of respect of the basic rights of an individual, failure to act now for those reasons and no others, not geopolitical reasons, not financial reasons but for reasons of humanity, will surely send South Africa ultimately into the Soviet orbit. If the concern of some is that we hesitate now because we are not sure where they are going, then that hesitation will send South Africa in a direction and into a philosophy that we cannot support.

I say to the Government of Canada that I appreciate and support the efforts that have been made to date. I support the measures enacted to date, but I say that we have the ability to be a world leader. We have the ability to send a signal to the majority of the members of the Commonwealth that if the Commonwealth cannot respond, and respond effectively to what is happening to our fellow human beings in South Africa, then it is a Commonwealth that is not worth saving. Let the Prime Minister of Britain decide now whether on principles of humanity the Commonwealth is worth saving. Let us make our decision and announce total sanctions immediately.

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, I do not profess that I speak for my Party on this subject matter. I have never in any meaningful way participated in the process

of policy in that sphere. Mine has been more in the sphere of the primary industries of fisheries, forestry, and agriculture.

I do not think I have ever been one who was accused of not having compassion and understanding and a desire for a democratic system in this world. I do not think we can deny the fact that democracy is an evolutionary process and that its demise is in an equal sense an evolutionary process.

I suppose there was nothing intended to be more democratic than the forums in Greece, in the Senate of Rome, and public participation in debate. But yet as those forums took place, step by step Greece, followed by Rome in its democratic structure, declined because of the weakness of leadership and the will of the people, to the point that Greece and Rome were overrun in turn by hordes of outside forces.

I think we have to be very careful just what route we take as we are looking at a country in which there must be evolution. Let us pray to God that it does not have to be revolution. There must be change.

Let us recall that it was a long way from 1215 and the signing of the Magna Carta to the arrival at a constitutional monarchy in the United Kingdom which was at that point in time a very democratic Government. It takes strength, it takes understanding, and it takes desire to preserve or to create a democracy. Unfortunately, it is imperfect as a system of Government. Unfortunately we have weaknesses in our country.

We have to take a look at the evolutionary process that has taken place here. We were a nation for a long while before this country granted universal suffrage. Should we then be totally critical of another country which has not generated universal suffrage within its boundaries? That, of course, is the particular difficulty we have.

● (1710)

If we say, as the Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin) has, that because we have a disagreement within the Commonwealth it might just as well be abandoned and destroyed, we are totally ignoring the disagreement which is fostered within democratic discussion that takes place within the leadership of the Commonwealth of Nations. We should not necessarily throw stones at individuals or the beliefs of other Parties within this House, because there is a variance of opinion as to what is the best thing to do.

In the face of reality, what can we do? We have abhorred a great many things which have happened in the world, such as the submission to force of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland. What could we do about it? I wish to point out to the Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy) that at no time has there been a move by any Party in Canada to cut off wheat to Russia as an embargo because it invaded Afghanistan. We are not being consistent in our presentation of this subject matter. At no time was the embargo which was imposed by a multitude of nations as effective as it was