

Nationalists at multi-racial meeting

QUIETLY FOR FIVE DAYS over the Easter week-end there took place in Johannesburg an inter-racial conference of far-reaching importance.

The aim of the conference was "to give Africa a unifying ideology which restores God to leadership in the affairs of men and nations and gives every race and class a part in making Africa a pattern of peace for a divided world."

Five hundred and sixty-three people took part in the conference. They were Europeans, Asians, Africans and Coloureds. They came from Kenya, the Rhodesias, Nyasaland and the Union, as well as the 14 countries from which the Moral Rearmament force traveling in the Union, are drawn. People from extremely divergent points of view participated. There were convinced Nationalists. There were Africans who had taken part in the defiance campaign.

Over 50 people spoke from the platform, yet no one made a special plea for his point of view. It was a new dimension where people resolutely sought to face the true alternatives which are not in the first place a choice between one local point of view and another.

We must win the global struggle for a God-led world or else accept materialism, hatred and chaos. The conference recognized, too, that this battle could not be won by any single group alone, but that it is a battle for our common survival.

Business men

JOHANNESBURG business men took a prominent part. The Administrator of the Transvaal, Dr. Nicol, in a message of welcome, said: "With all my love for South Africa I welcome this conference and wish it every success."

Dr. William Nkomo, first president of the revolutionary African Congress Youth League, set the keynote for the conference with these words:

"I have always regarded myself as a revolutionary. And, in fact, I was a revolutionary in the Marxist camp. Then I attended a conference such as this, hoping to air my grievances. But I saw White men change. I saw Black men change, and I changed. I found that a revolution in human nature is more far-reaching than a change in systems. I believe more and more people will clamour for the day when we shall see no hate and division, but, in spite of difficulties and racial and colour differences, a country moving towards national unity."

Mau Mau

FROM Kenya came dramatic evidence of Mau Mau. The Assembly heard how, at the Athi River Rehabilitation Camp near Nairobi, the ideology of Mau Mau was being met and replaced by a team of Europeans and Kikuyu. They were fighting to bring about a change of heart and put obedience to God in place of obedience to Mau Mau.

An official of the camp, Mr. W. Heath-Saunders, described how the conception of the camp's methods and the training of many of its personalities sprang from Moral Rearmament.

He told how they were making an impression among the hard core of Mau Mau leaders. Some had already renounced their oaths. Many more were wavering. "Before arriving at the camp I knew nothing of Moral Rearmament," said Mr. Heath-Saunders, "but the atmosphere challenged me personally. I lost my faith 12 years ago in the war, but I found it at Athi."

by

Bremer Hofmeyr

Young Afrikaner

THE conference demonstrated that when men change barriers fall. Hatred begets hatred, but equally change begets change. A young Afrikaner said: "I saw that the way I was living created hatred and disunity in my own country because I had hatred and superiority in my heart. Tonight I want to apologize for those feelings."

With him spoke Mr. G. Golding, president of the Coloured People's National Union. He said: "In Woodstock after the play 'The Real News' I heard the last speaker. He spoke in such a manner that I went home and got down on my knees and asked God to forgive me because I had seen people in the wrong light. I felt the time had arrived when there must be no hatred. That is my attitude tonight."

The conference saw, too, a new attitude to South Africa on

the part of people from other territories. Mr. Goodwin Lewanika, founder and first president of the African Congress of Northern Rhodesia, said: "I am so grateful for what I have heard in these days. Also, there is great sorrow in my heart, for I realize that South Africa has given me much, but I have not been grateful. I had my secondary education and university education in South Africa, but I was critical of the people of South Africa, ignoring my own mistakes and weaknesses. Today is my opportunity to express my sincere apology to them and to assure them of my co-operation and friendship."

Mr. James Bossopp Moyo, secretary of the Southern Rhodesia African Trade Union Congress, described his visit to the African housing scheme near Springs, conducted by Mr. Archibald, Director of Housing for Johannesburg, and Mr. Mohlala, an African leader.

"Yesterday I saw the African township Kwa Thema," he said. "I was very, very impressed. The spirit in which Mr. Archibald, Mr. Mohlala and others worked in creating that township will be an example to Africa. When I go back to Salisbury I will pray for the help to give the council in Salisbury this impression of Kwa Thema. Every city should follow this example, and much bitterness of the Africans would be removed."

Native

THE conference was at Easter, and the message of the season was indelibly inscribed on many people's minds. Old hatreds were buried and a new thinking was born. One African, a former moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the Eastern Province, said, "I have attended conferences all over the world, but for me this Easter assembly has been unique. It has brought me to the Cross. Moral Rearmament is like a cyclone which blows off the roofs and leaves places bare. When I looked in my heart I felt that to a very large extent the bitterness which I felt in the Europeans has been in me. I ask God to cast out that bitterness."

A minister of the Dutch Reformed Church responded, "I realize how much my attitudes have been governed by what my friends think, my Church thinks or my nation thinks. This has been particularly true as regards my attitude to the Black races of this country. This Easter means that I will be guided by what I know God wants of me, and apologize for my feelings of superiority, even though others may criticize me for doing this."

Men above race

SUMMARIZING the conference, the Hon. C. J. Claassen, Justice of the Supreme Court of South West Africa, said, "I have to realize that I am not only an inhabitant of South Africa, I am an inhabitant of this great continent. I have to live a philosophy that is valid for every man on this continent. Unless I live the ideology that unites men above race, class and colour, Africa is lost."

Perhaps the most striking thing about the conference was the naturalness of the atmosphere. Business men, labour leaders, ministers and dominees, journalists and teachers took part.

Not one person of any race or party was troubled about the proceedings, though an inter-racial conference was new to most of those present.

One saw a new factor at work—not domination, not sentimentality, but men meeting on a basis of absolute moral standards to restore God to leadership in the affairs of men and nations. Here was the pattern of a new Africa.

A. P. & P. Co., Ltd.