

(Identity, November, 1972)

Bruce McGuinness

Into the auditorium - fat with dogoodism - full with the notables of civic righteousness, smelling thickly of welfarism and fundraising, know-allism, he walked, young, bright, confident, proud, dignified and angry. For years he has heard the speeches in this square, white Bora ring, the speeches of inane nothingness pouring from the mouths of whites and white-made pseudo black leaders! The speeches continue to flow in thick syrupy gluelike innuendo. Rhetoric, pouring forth with the regularity of monotonous, computerised factory-made verbosity. "Shut up"...there is silence, the incessant flow of empty words has ceased. He stands in their midst, tall, and beautiful - not since before Cook has a black man stood so tall. He is silent, for but a moment, yet to the shopfront stooges of white hypocrisy, the moment is an eternity. Then he speaks, "I am Black Power, that is my name, Black Power, I personify 200 years of living death. I have listened to your white lies and your black compromises. I have seen you, white man praise my nobility with you follied lips then, slay my children, my brothers, and my sisters, my whole with your colourless, callous hands and YOU! my black brethren, YOU who have helped the white butcher with your mealy-mouthed apathy, are less than the animalistic white assassins you purport to aspire to. I come here today to give fair warning. The day of reckoning has arrived. I have just slayed the white myth of black subservience and docility. Be warned white butcher and black quisling, today the black Phoenix has arisen, no matter how many times you attempt to kill me, out of the fire I will arise again and again until I have defeated you. Not with guns, not with your bombs, not with your chemicals. But with time, for soon your world will crumble. At your own hands, you, white man, have been appointed your own executioner. We the blacks of the earth are rising to witness the spectacle of your self-destruction and when you have completed your destiny, I will go among the ruins, to heal and mend your victims and then it will be as it was before your rampage.

"I seek not equality, I wish not to share of your plastic play world. You will see my prophecy bear fruit, you will see me in every town, in every city, you will see me on the face of every black youth, on the face of every old man and woman, and you will feel me in your every nerve. You will see me and feel me, until your body cries out for mercy. Be warned thieves and murderers. Be warned. While time is on your side, be warned. Return to them, their heritage, before they take it. Be warned white man, black traitor...Uncle Tom is dead."

Then and only then, does the tall, black creature move... slowly, to the front of the auditorium...he pauses, then passes proudly through the doors...the doors to freedom.

The beginning.

There have been black men, trying to get other blacks to protest on the streets since the mid-'sixties. Attempting to give rise to the black upsurge and hasten the overthrow of white supremacy. The recent "black moratorium", has shown the fruits of their labour. In Melbourne, on the 14th of July, 1972, at the corner of Elizabeth and Collins Sts at 6.05 p.m., I stood at the head of the black and white mass. There were 2,000 people behind me; between the restless mass and myself, there were 100 blacks, blacks of all age groups. However the majority of these were under 25 years of age. In front of me, there was a space of about ten yards. On the periphery of that space, stood a teeming mass of blue uniforms.

The mass wanted to go ahead through the uniforms. The uniforms wanted the mass to turn left (up Collins St). I was undecided...hesitant...I had to make a decision.

Go ahead and confront the uniforms with the possibility of conflict, or turn left? The onus was too much! I kept seeing those Brisbane blacks, unarmed, being smashed by the police. I looked about me and watched the black kids, they watched back, waiting for my decision...everything seemed terribly quiet... it shouldn't have been quiet...we were in the middle of the city, at peak hour, participating in a protest. Suddenly the noise returned. I then decided not to make a decision, but to let the blacks make it instead...I turned to them, and shouted, "Where will we go? Ahead or left?" They answered almost as one, "Straight ahead," My skin went cold, but still I perspired, I said to myself, if we go ahead we will get smashed. I kept seeing the blacks in Brisbane being smashed, especially the kids...I had to think fast. They would listen to me. So I argued with them (the blacks) and talked them into turning left. But what if I hadn't been there? What would they have done? I am convinced that they would have gone ahead and forced the uniforms either to let them pass, or be dragged away. The point I am making is that I am essentially a passivist; if the uniforms had charged, I would have reacted violently. However, I was not prepared to initiate any violence. Those other blacks with me would, and will assert themselves when the next confrontation occurs. I am sure that soon we will witness the "New Black" movement, doing its thing. This is not a threat, it's a warning. Sixteen per cent of the Victorian Black population marched on Friday, the 14th of July, 1972. Aborigines constitute approximately 0.25% of the Victorian population. Now if the Black population in Victoria was as high as the white population, then 16% of 2,500,000 would be 400,000 people, and we would have seen 400,000 black people marching in the Moratorium. The 100 blacks who marched that day (some estimates state that there were 150 blacks) constitute 16% of Victoria's black population. Imagine what would happen if 16% of the Australian black people were put together in one place at the same time, and marched in protest. Anthropological research statistics claim that the black Australian population will double in 13 years. If we blacks can stop the systematic genocide of black infants (the infant mortality rate is one in six kids between birth and two years of age) then the population could well treble in 20 years' time.

The current population of blacks in Australia is estimated at 140,000, three times that is 420,000. Now the white oppressors of blacks, are doing nothing for blacks regarding their rights. So the blacks are discontented - (is that an understatement!), imagine what they will be like in 20 years' time. More wise to the tricks of the white men. Better educated in the ways of the white men. Access to the white man's technology will be less difficult. More militant, better educated (on both white and black values), and more completely disenchanted with the white way. Every day, more and more blacks are realising that a backward step is a forward step, and that the white way is the wrong way.

In conclusion, just one or two other points need to be said - "Whitey, it used to be your ball-game." But today, the blacks of Australia have torn up your book of rules, and printed their own. The title of the new book is "Black is beautiful, right on brothers and sisters, and screw you whitey".

Many white (and some disillusioned blacks) believe that blacks can attain freedom, through a black and white revolutionary coalition. That is just plain R.S. Oppression is just as bitter a pill to swallow under a socialist regime, as it is under a capitalist regime. In other words, we blacks must smash racism, before we consider letting whites piggyback on our backs to aid their cause. I agree that capitalism is a pig system, but capitalism is kindergarten stuff compared to racism.

I know many Marxist, Leninist Maoists, as racist as any capitalist I know. If we can smash racist doctrines, under a capitalist system, then let's do it. I am sure that freedom from racism would be just as sweet, no matter what political set-up we exist in. We must think black, we must educate our kids black, we must reject white racist values, and above all we must reject the white education system. Black Power in Australia is real, no matter what the stooges for white power say, Black Power is here. The only way we can have powered Black Power is to "put it together".

FOOTNOTE: Bruce McGuinness can be contacted at ASCHOL, Monash University, Melbourne, Victoria.

Dennis Walker

Why is it important that black people should vote? Or rather, why are many black spokesmen becoming increasingly active in this sphere?

It is because, to date, many black spokesmen and women have been trying to convince white people in positions of power that the problems within the black communities are atrocious. However, because the only people in positions of real power throughout Australia are white and because the black community is not organised to exert any power, powerful whites refuse to confront these problems. But black spokesmen and women are now beginning to realise that they have failed to convince the powerful whites that something must be done NOW! Some of these black people, in getting close to powerful whites, have been bought off and silenced by going through bureaucratic red tape and achieve nothing.

Many of them are now saying we must unite and use the ballot box as a weapon to force the powerful whites, to do something about our plight.

I believe that encouraging black people to vote is to ask them to accept this particular system which has done nothing but heap atrocity upon atrocity on the black people: if we concede that we can and will play the game the way powerful whites wish us to play, then they can say that the black community is participating nicely in their wonderful, democratic, freedom-loving, non-racist Australian society - which would be a damned lie!

I believe it would be a grave mistake for black people to allow themselves to be sucked into a power play on the basis of money power, which this system is. Rather, we should participate in a system of people power. Before we black people can choose, we must first examine the political and economic structures which exist in this country and in all countries in the world today.

Who has the present political power, how was it set up, how does it operate, and for whose benefit?

When the various parliaments were first set up in the Australian States, the only ones who could vote were adult white males who, in many cases, had also to be landowners. Of course, the black people did not "own or occupy" any land. As a result, being black, like being female, in this present day society leaves you open to some of the most oppressive and inhuman legislation and attitudes in the world.

One thing that was obvious when the States set up the Federal Government was the absence of any participation whatsoever of the majority of people.

Then, in whose interests was all this set up? White male adult landowners.

This system has not changed very much since then. It still serves a very privileged class. The difference is that it is far more subtle yet just as oppressive. The people have no real control. The main aim of the political set up, then, was to preserve law and order while allowing the "white, adult, male landowner" to

“civilise” our country with a bible and a gun. I ask you, “Has it really changed that much?”

We have a number of political parties. These political parties have their figures heads. The ones most blacks know are McMahon, Whitlam, Calwell, Bjelke-Petersen, and Bonner. In the forthcoming elections we have the choice between McMahon and Whitlam. In the last State election in Queensland, we had a choice between Bjelke-Petersen and Houston. It was really only a matter of choosing between a wolf or a fox. Calwell is an embarrassment because he is far too blatant in his racism. Bonner is on a fine line. The Liberal Party is at present deciding whether Bonner is stupid enough to stay or whether he is too much of an embarrassment because he loves his master even more than the master does himself.

The politicians do not even know what is going on in the community. Their only concern for the rest of society is to keep them as ignorant as possible so that they can be controlled. People can be controlled far more easily if they are fighting, competing, effectively divided against themselves, and always on the move to earn enough to survive.

Politicians deceive by telling your children lies in the education system, e.g., “Australia was discovered by Captain Cook and therefore the blacks don’t own this land.” They are also thieves (armed robbery of the blacks’ land) and they are also murderers (infant mortality rate of black children and Vietnam).

Now why should our politicians be lying, thieving, and murdering puppets? Surely the people who elect them do not do so for that reason? Of course not. What, then, gets into our politicians to make them to that? The big fat businessman!

The mass media, i.e., television, newspapers, radio, etc., are all controlled by big fat businessmen. You know the advertisements? That’s right, who pays for the ads? The big fat businessman. Where does all the money come from for investments, etc., in this country? The big fat businessman. What would that big fat businessman do to a politician if he gave land rights to the black people and so cut down on his profits from mining, cattle, etc.? Why, he’d smash the politician’s image with his mass media, that’s what he would do. And what if the Minister for Education told the truth about the education system: that, in fact, it was there to teach the kids racism and male chauvinism and that blacks do not really have any right to land? Why that big fat businessman would smash the Education Minister with his mass media. The big fat businessman needs the education system to churn out a certain number of skilled people, a certain number of academics, a certain number of semi-skilled people and a whole lot of labourers to make more money for him. And, if they start working together to get some for themselves, then that’s bad for him.

So blacks can really get power and control through the ballot box? Not when the big fat businessman can get it more easily through money!

Vote with your feet in the streets and give peace and power to the people.

Reg Saunders

During one of my trips to Central Australia, I paid a visit to Hermannsburg Lutheran Mission; it is about 84 miles west of Alice Springs. It is also the real Namatjira Country in the land of the Arunta people.

The Mission was founded by Lutheran missionaries in the early 1890s. The Arunta people have been in constant contact with white Australians ever since then. They have been photographed, prodded and poked; they have been researched and categorised. Their privacy has been invaded a thousand or more times. All this

because Hermannsburg settlement is the oldest in the Northern Territory. The Arunta people are a gentle, handsome people, quite used to living off the harsh land that is their natural element. During this particular visit, I had the honour of sitting with the Council of Elders; all of them are wise men and talking with them was a sheer delight, because as well as being a gentle people they are also a kind and considerate people. During our talk the points I raised were discussed by them in the Arunta language. I noticed that in their discussions there never appeared to be any argument. There was no gesticulating or raising of voices; when a decision was reached they all sat quietly and one man would rise and, in English, explain the decision to me. From his demeanour and quiet assurance I would realise it was the final decision or answer and in no way would it be changed. I knew in my heart that I could back a thousand times and ask the same questions and I would get the same answer. I would say from my observations that these men spoke for the Council and they truly represented their people. After the Council meeting was concluded I talked for some time with Edwin Parajoulja who was one of the Councillors. Edwin said to me, and I quote, "I am pleased to see that we have our people in Canberra to talk for us. If you say what you believe to be right then say it; some of us may not agree with you, because you won't always be right for all of us; I don't think you will mind if we look over your shoulder to help you," unquote. Since then I've talked to thousands of my people, and in one way or the other they have looked over my shoulder and helped me. Wise old Parajoulja with those few words has given me a lot of strength and has given me the courage to face up to my convictions in what I believe to be right for the betterment of my people. I know that all Aboriginal communities do not have the wisdom of the Arunta Council to advise them. There was a time though when this was the case. In most instances, it was a long time ago. Today the situation has changed. The whole Aboriginal social structure is changed. The management of their own affairs has been taken from them; in many cases they have been treated like wayward children. I know in my own heart that we cannot go back to the old ways, because there is no road back, only forward. This, of course, does not stop us from forming strong councils that can speak for all of us and indeed air our needs. To be able to say to the white lords and masters: to hell with your paternalism and apathy. We are a people and our needs are great. Ask them how their values are so inconsistent when an Aboriginal before acceptance has to prove something and if he has the audacity to raise his voice in protest he is condemned as a stirrer or an advocate of Black Power. Many non-Aborigines are just not aware of the great cultural difference between the Aboriginal and Island people and themselves.

Many white people claim that Australians are not racists, yet when one talks to the very same people and asks pertinent questions, one finds out that they really are. I know of white men that sleep with black women whenever the opportunity occurs, yet the same men will not invite a black man to their clubs for a game of snooker or a friendly beer. Again, the same person will condemn a white woman if she has an affair with a black man. As I see it, the whites can have as many values as they please, whereas the blacks are criticised if they exhibit more than one.

Many young Aborigines like Dennis Walker and Paul Coe are militants, because they see what is going on. (I am not always in complete agreement with the young Black Militants. On the other hand, though, they never upset me as they do some people.) I believe that if I were 30 years younger I would be one of them.

The youngsters are striving for Aboriginal independence and freedom to control their own affairs. I for one support them in this. They don't deny that they

need white Australian assistance; all they are asking is that the forthcoming assistance be genuine and sincere.

I am an Aborigine and I'm proud to be one; because I happen to be articulate and I'm not in the habit of wearing untidy clothes, most Australians take me for any dark skinned person other than Aborigine. I don't need to wear a badge on my clothes or band on my head to denote my sympathy with the Aboriginal cause and its people.

I believe that if Aboriginal culture is abandoned by the Aboriginal people, not only would we be the losers, but the whole Australian nation would be the losers. We are the real Australians and therefore possess the only true Australian culture. I believe that the needs of the Aboriginal people are great and many. All Black Australians have a need; housing, health, employment and education are common to us all. We need more than that; we need parliamentary representation; we need recognition of land rights; we need the lifting of all legislation that discriminates against us. Because our problems are different to those of other underprivileged Australians, we need special assistance in all the social service and educational fields. We need special assistance because when our ancestors were rounded up and shot or herded like cattle from their tribal and ancestral lands, they were not given the opportunity to develop with a new and foreign culture in a new and foreign environment. Instead they were put in little better than concentration camps and expected to become black white men. That's only one of the reasons why today we need a special kind of assistance. I have travelled over a lot of Australia and I can assure you our needs are urgent - if only for one fact alone: the birthrate is nearly three times that of other Australians. The infant mortality rate is also high; if we look at the figures for Alice Springs over a 31/2 year period, for example, in 1968 18 Aboriginal children under 1 year died, for the same period 5 white children - 1969 - 18 and 4; 1970 - 38 and 13; to 30.6.71 - 39 and 2.

There are still too many whites telling the Aborigines what is good for them and how to run their own affairs. This not only applies in private organisations, but also on the Government level. I believe that there is a need for more Aboriginal Liaison Officers, Welfare Officers, Social Workers and Health Officers. I think a few bold decisions by Government can give us these very important people. They, of course, must be Aboriginal or Island people, and I think they must wherever possible be local people.

There is a need for much more finance to be made available for disbursement to Aboriginal organisations and for general Aboriginal Welfare.

Aborigines all over Australia should be encouraged to take an interest in State and Federal politics and to exercise their rights and express their opinions through the polling booths. Other Australians exercise these rights automatically and compulsory voting should also apply to Aborigines. They should be enrolled on the rolls as soon as they attain voting age. Through the polling booths Aboriginal Australians can exert some influence in some State Parliaments and most certainly in the Federal House of Representatives. The problems confronting Aborigines vary from district to district and State to State. Our needs, though, are basically the same all over Australia.

Unity therefore becomes the key and "Our voice shall be one voice" our motto.