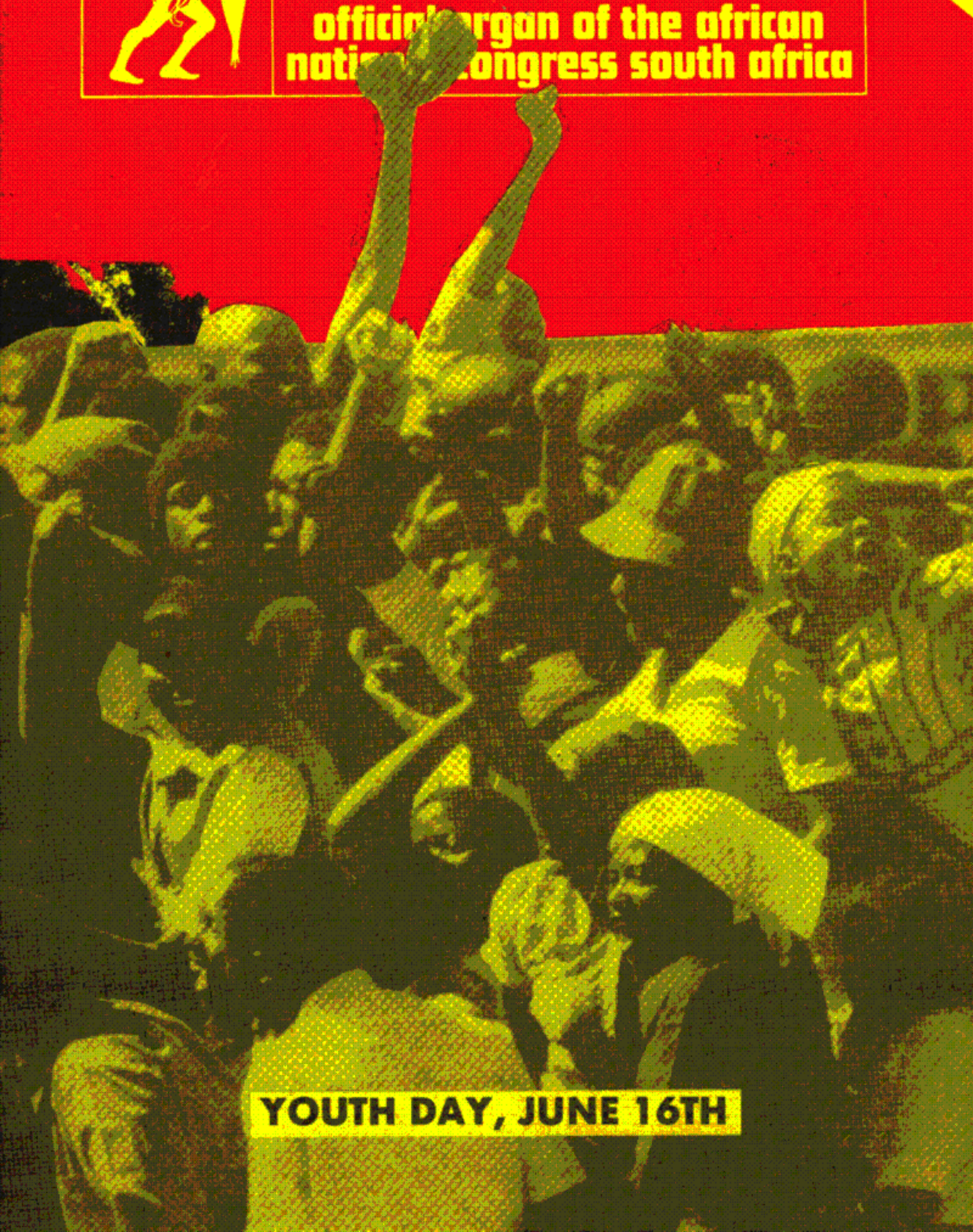


JUNE 1988



SECHABA

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national congress south africa



YOUTH DAY, JUNE 16TH

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LISTEN TO RADIO FREEDOM

Voice of the African National Congress
And Umkhonto We Sizwe, the People's Army

Radio Lusaka

Short wave 31mb, 9505 KHz
7.00 p.m. daily
10.15-10.45 p.m. Wednesday
9.30-10.00 p.m. Thursday
10.15-10.45 p.m. Friday

Short wave 25mb, 11880 KHz
8.00-8.45 a.m. Sunday

Radio Luanda

Short wave 31mb, 9535 KHz
and 25mb
7.30 p.m. Monday-Saturday
8.30 p.m. Sunday

Radio Madagascar

Short wave 49mb, 6135 KHz
7.00-9.00 p.m. Monday-Saturday
7.00-8.00 p.m. Sunday

Radio Ethiopia

Short wave 31mb, 9595 KHz
9.30-10.00 p.m. Daily

Radio Tanzania

Short wave 31mb, 9750 KHz
8.15 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Friday
6.15 a.m. Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday

The above are South African times

EDITORIAL

YOU CAN BAN US YOU CAN'T SILENCE US

With the crisis of apartheid deepening, the Botha regime has become more desperate than ever before. This regime has a tendency to shoot itself in the foot whether it be in Angola or Namibia. Inside South Africa itself, it cannot contain the situation — except through the whip. There is now the tendency to use the stick more than the carrot.

With the state of emergency still in force, the regime decided to virtually proscribe 18 organisations, including the UDF and COSATU, on February 24th. It banned 18 respected leaders of the people. As we write this, 46 people are on death row. The regime banned the Catholic-owned newspaper, *New Nation*, and then the Cape Town based weekly, *South*.

Not satisfied with its own incapacity to destroy the people's movement — the regime will have to destroy the people themselves if it wants to be 'successful' in this — the regime is now introducing a new bill, the so-called "Promotion of Orderly Internal Politics Bill," which aims at controlling the external funding of charitable organisations inside the country. We discuss the implications of the bill elsewhere in this issue. What needs to be added is that Pretoria is telling the world: "You can decide what you want, but your decisions will be implemented on our own terms." The EEC is funding most of the projects inside the country. What is the EEC doing about Pretoria's political interference in its unanimously — and therefore democratically — arrived at decisions? Is it going to abide by, and therefore condone, Pretoria's intransigence?

The refusal of the Western countries to apply sanctions highlights the unremitting failure of Western governments' foreign policy — hence the racist regime is 'defying' Western governments. The apartheid regime is not just using loopholes in

the Western strategy on South Africa — the policy of the apartheid regime influences the thinking in Western capitals.

All these measures are meant to cover up the evils of apartheid. They are meant to stop the deepening crisis. The response of our people has been characteristic: "You can ban us but you can't silence us!"

The state of emergency and the general repression are counter-productive for the regime — they tend to heighten resentment and mobilise mass opinion against the regime; something which is not only welcome, but also favourable for our activities. It is true that the state of emergency and similar actions of the regime have affected the successful organisation of public rallies and mass demonstrations, but they have not affected the plodding determination of the people to continue the struggle whatever the odds. When the apartheid regime violently stopped a peaceful demonstration of religious personalities in Cape Town, it was telling them: "We don't want your non-violence, we want you violent!"

When one considers that the racist troops are not only having setbacks in Angola but are actually retreating, and that in Namibia the puppets are 'disgruntled,' then there is every room for optimism. This is not blind optimism, but an optimism rooted in the knowledge that, despite this counter-offensive, our gradual development of internal political-military structures, our development of underground structures rooted in the masses, is making headway, is delivering the goods.

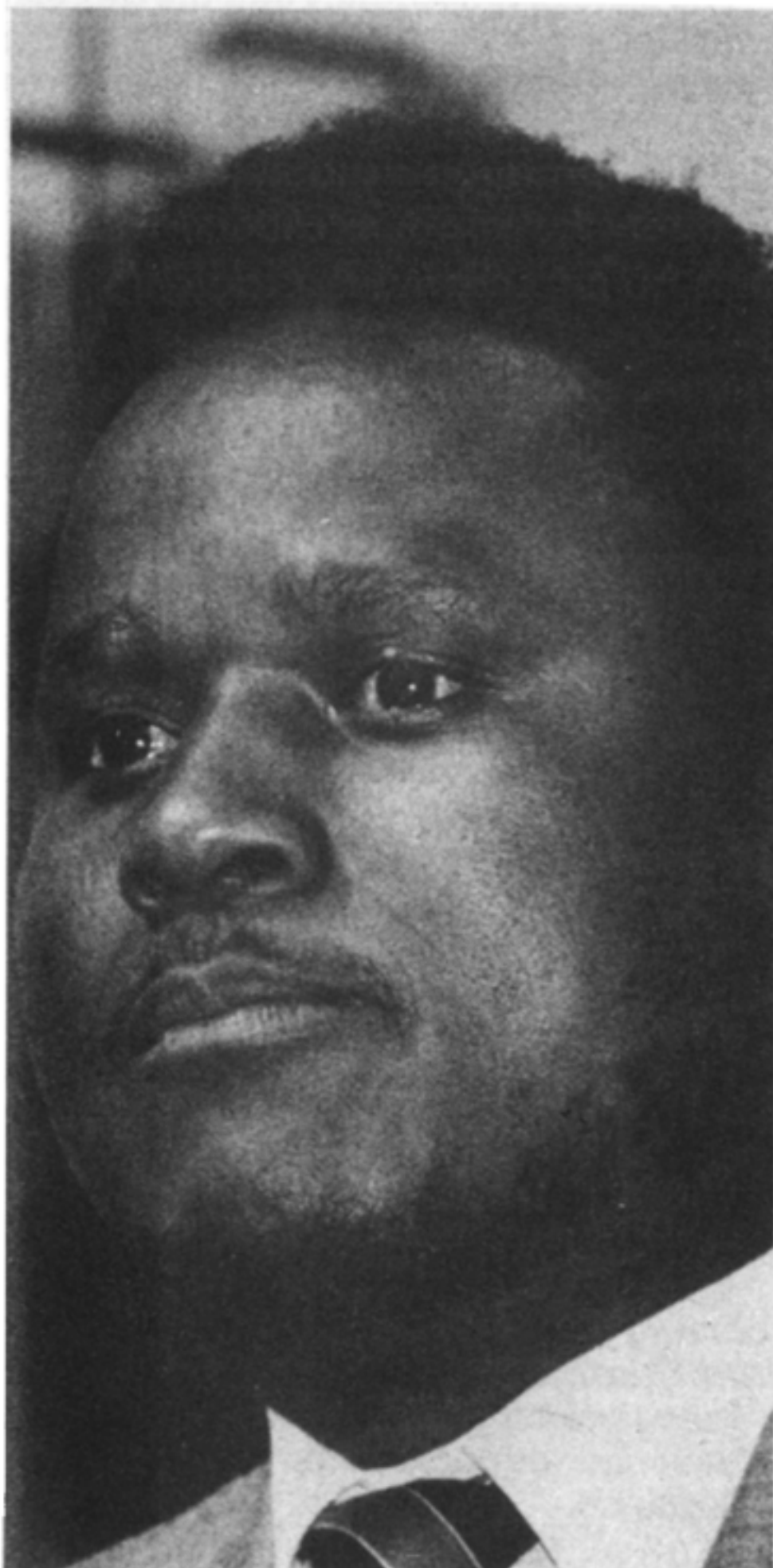
One thing is clear: the struggle in the coming years will be tough and costly, and a lot of sacrifice will be needed. The international community will, as it has always done, be expected to give us more assistance.

CHURCH AND STATE IN APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

By The Reverend Frank Chikane

Ambrose Reeves, Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg in the 1950s, was deported from the country after the Sharpeville massacre, the reality of which he was working to expose. In Britain, he was President of the Anti-Apartheid Movement from 1970 until his death in 1981. The first Ambrose Reeves Lecture in his memory was delivered in London on April 22nd, by the Rev Frank Chikane, Secretary of the South African Council of Churches.

Frank Chikane



Bishop Ambrose Reeves is known for his opposition to various apartheid measures of the 1950s, especially Bantu Education. He led the appeal for the treason trialists of the 1950s, resulting in the formation of the Treason Trial Defence Fund which laid the foundation for the Defence and Aid Fund. He was instrumental in arranging the agreement that ended the Alexandra bus boycott of 1957. But the most outstanding of his contributions in South Africa against the racist and violent system of apartheid was his effort to expose the truth about the cruel Sharpeville shootings. He left South Africa for six months to give world-wide publicity about it, and then got back only to be deported for his witness and protest against the evils of the apartheid system.

I would like to submit that Bishop Ambrose Reeves is part of a long tradition of church struggle in South Africa to witness and protest against the evils of the apartheid system, however peripheral or marginal this can be. Within this tradition we think of Archbishop Trevor Huddleston who believed that the function of a priest was not to be silent in the face of injustices. He exposed and opposed removals and evictions based on apartheid laws and he stood for victims of the pass laws.

Church Witness Against Apartheid

We also have people like The Rev. Michael

Scott, who founded the Campaign for Right and Justice. He was gaoled for helping to organise passive resistance against restriction of Indians in South Africa. He was arrested and convicted for breaking up the Group Areas Act, by living with Africans in a shanty-town just outside Johannesburg, in solidarity with Blacks.

Another is Father Cosmos Desmond who campaigned vigorously against forced removals, focusing the spotlight on the infamous resettlement camp of Dimbaza. For his witness he was banned and house-arrested. One would think also of Archbishop Geoffrey Clayton; the controversial Bishop John Williams Colenso; the Very Rev. Aubie Gonville French-Beytagh and many others.

This, though, was not representative of the mainstream tradition of the practices of the church in South Africa. The mainstream ecclesiastical tradition in the main played a legitimising role for the White minority racist government, assisting in concealing the seriousness of the injustice inherent in this system and also in the distortion of the reality in that country.

The Dutch Reformed Church in particular justified the apartheid system theologically, although initially it was based on what was referred to as the 'weakness of some'. Because of the 'weakness of some', it was agreed that Blacks and Whites should not share in communion together from the same table. This resolution was taken in 1857 and had disastrous effects on the life of the church and that of society in general in South Africa. Of course, there were, and there still are, dissenting prophetic voices like Dr Beyers Naude and others within this tradition.

Prophetic Voices

On the other hand, the churches which belonged mainly within the tradition represented by member-churches of the South African Churches had most of the prophetic voices, such as those referred to above, and prophetic moments like the protest against Bantu Education and the Church Clause issue in the 1950s; the Cot-

tesloe Conference in the early 1960s which rejected racism as incompatible with the Gospel or the Christian faith; the controversial 'message to all South Africans' in 1968 and the resolution on conscientious objection in the 1970s. But, in the main, they were part of the tradition of the dominant ideology which perpetrated the racist system.

There are three ways in which the church can respond to the crisis we are facing in South Africa, and this can be applied to many other situations.

■ The first one is that of support for the system. This is incompatible with the Gospel and any sense of justice in the world.

■ The second way is that of non-involvement or neutrality. I wish to submit here that it is completely impossible to remain neutral or uninvolved in the face of gross injustices and violation of human rights. Neutrality here is tantamount to support for the status quo.

■ The third way is that of a critical involvement in society where the church plays a prophetic role.

It pains me to say that since prophets like Bishop Ambrose Reeves spoke strongly against apartheid in the 1950s and 1960s, neither South Africa nor the world took seriously these isolated but clear prophetic voices. At the United Nations for instance, Bishop Reeves said that the "choice" before the world was a clear one. It was between "effective international action and the probability of bloodshed on a vast scale". Since then we have lost thousands of lives in South Africa.

Sense of Justice Dulled

Bishop Ambrose Reeves said that apartheid had "dulled" the sense of justice of the Whites in South Africa and today, more than a quarter of a century later, there are still people who think that Whites in South Africa can actually demonstrate a sense of justice along with their own privileges guaranteed by apartheid laws.

Today, we are in a worse situation than

ever before. The racist laws have now firmly been entrenched as a basis of governing that country. White domination and privileges have been secured within the new tricameral constitution whilst, on the other hand, violent means have been employed to suppress and silence the Black majority at great costs.

Obstructing Peace

Lately we have seen the banning of 17 non-violent and peaceful organisations and stringent restrictions imposed on the largest trade union federation in South Africa, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). We have seen the banings of about 18 respected leaders of the majority of South Africans. Church leaders in South Africa were particularly horrified by the government action of restricting two leaders in the persons of Mrs Albertina Sisulu and Mr Archie Gumede, co-presidents of the UDF, who were tireless workers in the cause of peace in two of the most desperate crisis areas in our land, — the KTC in Cape Town and the war in Pietermaritzburg, Natal, respectively. From this oppression of peacemakers the church leaders concluded that the authorities are 'deliberately obstructing peace in our country and encouraging violence amongst our people'.

The proclamation of February 24th 1988 prohibited organisations from "carrying on or performing any activities and acts whatsoever", closed all possible effective, non-violent and peaceful means of opposition to apartheid. It is clear from the order that the government is saying to the voiceless and disenfranchised majority, "no peaceful, non-violent, political activity and resistance against apartheid is going to be allowed. Instead, we want you on the battlefield."

The Minister of Law and Order, Mr Adriaan Vlok, confirmed this interpretation of the order when he said in parliament that these organisations which claimed to be non-violent realised that they could not succeed militarily against South Africa and thus they used non-violent methods to try and 'overthrow' the state.

The State Chooses Violence

It is this clear choice of violence by those in power which moved church leaders in South Africa to hold an emergency meeting to decide on a couple of actions in this regard. The main concern of churches was that they are the ones who encouraged the liberation movements in South Africa to use non-violent means to end apartheid. The closure therefore, of all non-violent means to change the system created a crisis for the churches. It raised moral questions as to whether those who made these statements could continue doing so without providing alternative avenues for the victims of apartheid. One of the questions was whether we can still accuse the liberation movement of violence if the government has itself openly resorted to violence.

It was because of this crisis that church leaders decided to march to parliament to deliver a petition which urged the State President to take the following immediate action for the sake of peace to avoid bloodshed and death.

■ The lifting of the restrictions of the February 24th 1988 and the end of the state of emergency.

■ The unbanning of all banned organisations, the release and removal of restrictions on political leaflets, allow exiles to return and free all political detainees.

■ Then enter into negotiations to evolve a new dispensation in which all can live together in peace, freedom and justice.

This, the church leaders believed, was the only way in which the problems of South Africa can be resolved. You all know what happened afterwards. The church leaders were summarily arrested and later accused of "choosing violence and communism above Christianity" (Adriaan Vlok) in that lamentably peaceful march. They were accused of hiding behind the "cloak of sanctimoniousness" and warned that the government would not hesitate to act against the church leaders. Like Bishop Reeves who was called a "meddling priest", the church leaders were accused of being "political prisoners."

P W Botha responded to the actions of the church leaders by attacking Archbishop Desmond Tutu and thereby the church leaders in a letter to Archbishop Tutu. This started an exchange of letters which heightened the tension between the Church and the State in South Africa.

Christian Witness A Life-And-Death Issue

The church leaders nevertheless have re-committed themselves to witness, protest and act to end apartheid, irrespective of the consequences and these attacks against them.

The consequences of the stand of the churches are very serious. The risk has become a physical one. It is a risk in the hands of the official security forces, the risk of church leaders being eliminated or murdered by sophisticated and professional death squads, right-wing units, or crazy individuals motivated by such virulent attacks against specific church leaders as the State President, Mr P W Botha has done.

News may have reached you already that, following the intensified church-state conflict in South Africa during February and March, physical threats and actual attacks on church leaders and personnel in the church have increased. Reports of attacks on the home of Dr Allan Boesak and his family have been made public, the intensified raids and summary detentions of SACC staff in various regions in the country may have been brought to your notice.

The traumatic hostage drama on April 11th 1988 by a gunman who held one of our staff members, and, threats by a White gunman after midnight this last Friday at Khotso House to force the night watchman to open the building for him; all these acts, by the forces of darkness in defence of the evil and racist apartheid system have turned our Christian witness in apartheid South Africa to a life and death issue.

To be a Christian in South Africa is no more a luxury or just a matter of tradition of 'civilisation' (as those who are victims of so-called western civilisation would call it) or something that is done because others

are doing it, or part of a given social norm. To witness to Christ honestly in an evil and racist South Africa is to put your life at risk, even the risk of a violent death.

Moral Choice

As I have said before in other places, I doubt that we have an option. It does not look like we can avoid the pain and suffering on the cross. We have to challenge the evils of the apartheid system. Here, there is no detour to avoid the cross.

Under the circumstances, witnessing to the risen Christ might turn to blood-witnessing, turning some to martyrs. That is why church leaders in South Africa said in their petition to the State President:

"We have not undertaken this action lightly. We have no desire to be martyrs. However, the gospel leaves us no choice but to seek ways of witnessing effectively and clearly to the values of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and you give us virtually no other effective and peaceful means of doing so."

The issue facing church leaders in South Africa is the question of **obedience to God**.

In the face of the order prohibiting peaceful and non-violent anti-apartheid groups in South Africa carrying out or performing any activities or acts whatsoever, outlawing all forms of effective and peaceful, non-violent political activity and resistance to end apartheid, implying thereby that this could only happen at the battleground, at a violent level, the church leaders had no option but to act to prevent an all-out bloody war in South Africa.

As we have said already the church leaders concluded in their statement that it was the apartheid government which was 'deliberately obstructing peace in our country and encouraging violence among our people'. We have also already said that church leaders argued that the prohibited activities of the 18 organisations were in fact 'central to the proclamation of the Gospel' and thus church leaders were compelled, irrespective of the consequences, to take over these activities insofar as they believed they were mandated by the Gospel. The

church leaders said in their statement:

"Our mandate to carry out these activities comes from God, and no man and government will stop us."

The statement continues to say:

"If the State wants to act against the Church of God in this country for proclaiming the gospel, then so be it."

Positive Protest

For the church leaders in South Africa, therefore, the choice is that of obedience to God and obedience to an earthly human power. It is a choice between the proclaiming of the Gospel which demands justice, peace and righteousness and the heretic Gospel that not only justifies Botha's evil apartheid system but supports it, thereby contributing to the pain and suffering of the victims of this system. In this respect church leaders have chosen to obey "God rather than men." (Acts 5:29)

Archbishop Desmond Tutu put it succinctly after our attempted peaceful march in Cape Town, which was stopped violently. He said that:

"What we did today is not a negative action of disobeying. It is a positive one of saying (we obey God). We are witnessing for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If that action has consequences, such as being arrested, then hard luck. We are going to obey God rather than man."

He ended by saying,

"We are not defying, we are obeying God and we ought to obey God every day. This means that in our obedience to God we are forced to disobey evil and unjust laws."

One mistake that those in power, particularly the State President, made, was to threaten and warn the church leaders not to continue with their actions of witness and protest, and by launching a vicious and malicious attack on church leaders based on a deliberate distortion of the truth, hoping that by so doing this would deter the church leaders from obeying their God.

The mistake of Mr P W Botha is to assume that Archbishop Tutu's statement, that if this "witness has consequences, such as being arrested then hard luck, we are going to obey God rather than man," is just an ordinary human intellectual statement. No, this is no luxurious statement at the level of the intellect only, but it is a statement of faith, a religious statement. It is a matter of obedience to God!

The recent praxis of the church in South Africa is a call for the church of Christ in the world to rediscover the evangelical tradition of the early church. In a world where evil abounds, where there is less and less justice for the poor and powerless majority, the church is called to express its witness. And, faced with these enormous and fearful forces of evil, it might, in so doing, be changed from the church, a church of Christ.

Servants of God

It is not just a call for a rediscovery of the evangelical tradition of the early church. We have long standing traditions of servants of God throughout the history of the church who stood in obedience to God.

The "here I stand, I cannot do otherwise" is not a new tradition in the Christian church. As I have shown already we have contemporary examples of this type of witness in South Africa. In this list I would like to add the most recent and current prophets of our times.

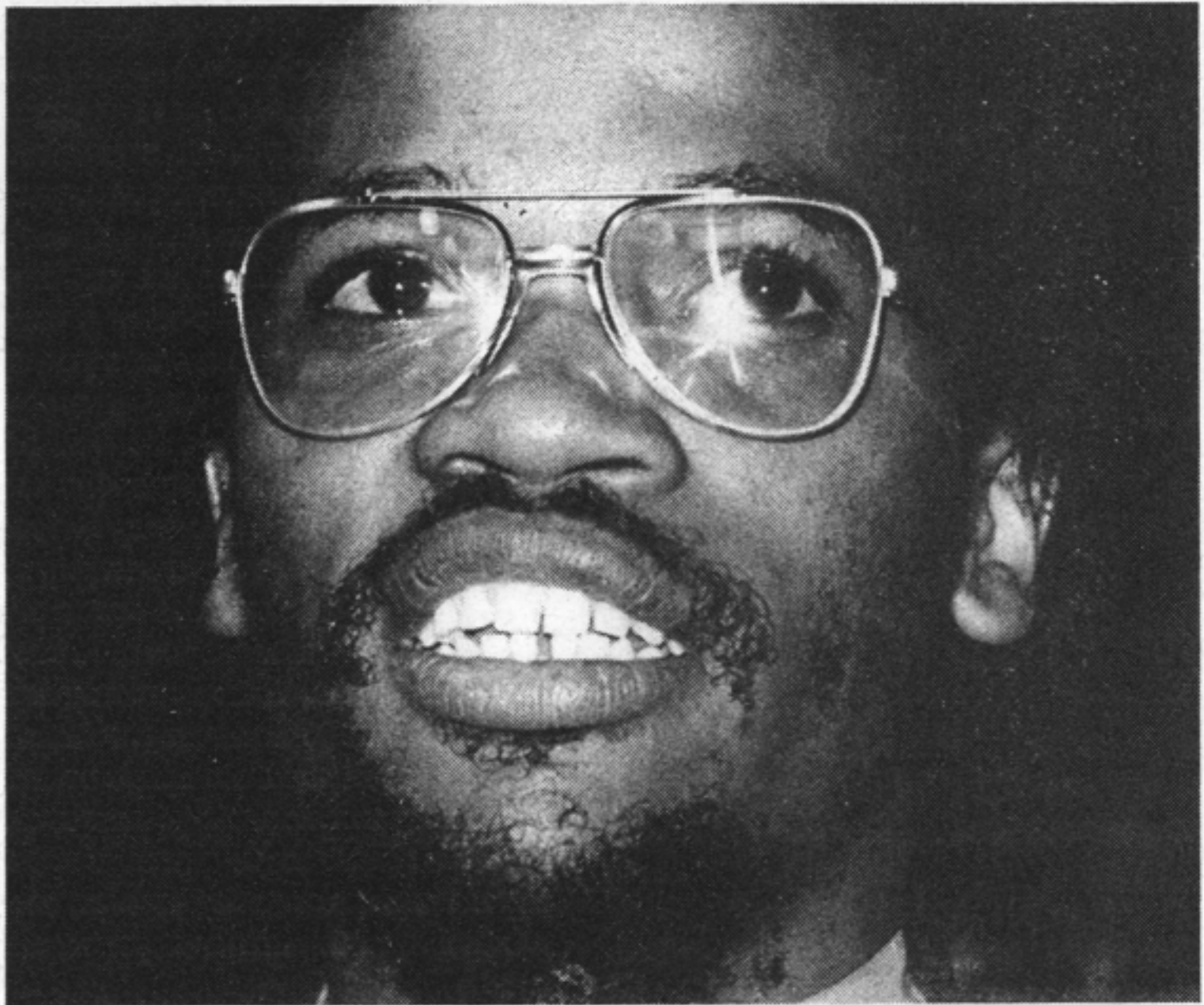
The Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Dr Beyers Naude, Dr Allan Boesak, Father Smangalis Mkhathshwa, Archbishop Denis Hurley and the Revd Dr Simon Gqubule, who is subjected to restrictions which amount to house arrest.

I would like to conclude by saying that the struggle for freedom, justice and peace continues in South Africa. The forces against us are enormous. But by faith we believe that we shall be free one day. Our hope for freedom — that our freedom is certain — is a matter of faith. It is based on our belief that goodness and righteousness **shall** prevail against evil, and that justice shall prevail, because **God is on our side, on the side of justice.**

DOES THE CHURCH LEAD THE STRUGGLE?

A CAUTION

By The Reverend John Lamola



John Lamola

In the current phase of our struggle there is an unprecedented radical involvement of organised Christianity in opposing the Botha regime. This article analyses the role of the churches in the liberation struggle at this time.

Since the clampdown on internal organisations was announced in February 1988, church leaders inside the country have emerged as runners who have grabbed the baton from the activists and are continuing the race to our liberation. The press and mass media both inside and outside South Africa have been compelled to give prominent publicity to the activities of church leaders. Even inside the liberation movement one can hear a general observation that, "the church is now the only force left for internal legal resistance."

In this article, however, we will present

a view which sounds a caution against overestimating the role that the institutional church can play in our revolution. Organised religion, like any other material force in the broad-allied and multi-strategised struggle of ours, has a definite role that needs to be analysed, defined and made known. There is a limit to what the church in South Africa can help achieve in our struggle. The church, as all religion, has a particular scope of operation which needs to be recognised, so that it can be supplemented by other revolutionary forces.

Dangers to Avoid

The lurking danger at the moment facing our struggle in this regard is two-pronged.

■ First, the activities of church leaders in the resistance movement may lead to a sense among the struggling masses that the church is going to bring about the fall of Pretoria, and that all they have to do is just to support the church. Subconsciously they may drift into a catalepsis, a paralysis of the community, that prevents it from taking responsibility for its social life.

■ On the other hand, an atmosphere is being created in which the church leaders and institutions are led to develop a false self-confidence, and come to believe that they can handle and lead a process of political change, to an extent where they will want to impose their own kind of methods of struggle and solutions which have not been subject to the general review of the liberation movement. The second danger seems most imminent when one considers the problem of communication that exists between church leaders and the leaders of the people's revolutionary movement.

Raising these issues does not, of course, in any way call for a refusal to acknowledge and commend the partnership of the church in the struggle for liberation. It is primarily inspired by a belief in the political principle that there is a need continually to engage in a critical evaluation of the process and dynamics of our revolution. Also, it comes from the author's concerns as a theologian and as one who has been working as a church leader inside South Africa.

Background: The Kairos Document

During the heat of the 1984-1985 mass uprisings, a group of theologians came together to assess the way in which the church was involved in the crisis of the day. Priests were saying, "We are tired of burying the victims of apartheid every week-end. Is there nothing more that we are called to

do?" The result was the publication of the Kairos Document.

This document was to be a historical watershed, in that not only did it expose the quasi-religious propaganda of the apartheid regime, but went further to castigate the theological model which was being used in the churches, which, until then, were acclaimed as liberal, anti-apartheid churches.

The Kairos theologians reported:

"We have analysed the statements that are made from time to time by the so-called English-speaking churches. We have looked at what church leaders tend to say in their speeches and press statements about the apartheid regime and the present crisis."

They continued:

"What we found running through all these pronouncements is a series of interrelated theological assumptions (which we) call 'church theology' ... The crisis in which we find ourselves today compels us to question this theology, to question its assumptions, its implications and its practicality."¹

The document went on to explain that how the church perceived and applied concepts such as 'reconciliation' and 'justice' and non-violence' was a transplantation of stock ideas from a Christian tradition that is totally unrelated to our revolutionary situation.

What was most significant about the Kairos Document, however, was that it was not written by the leaders and big names of the church. It was produced by a group of grassroots priests, pastors and nuns, who were daily interacting with the people and who were dodging the rubber bullets every week-end in the cemeteries of the townships. It is a fact of history that in fact some 'progressive' church leaders went on record in the public media as rejecting the Kairos Document.

The Church in Struggle

What the document revealed was that the 'church in struggle' is not a perfect and holy partner. By announcing a call to action and



Christians carry a comrade to his grave at Mphophomeni, near Howick, April 1988

pronouncing the justifiability of the right of the oppressed to defend themselves against the violence of the state, and by declaring the apartheid regime an illegitimate tyranny, the Kairos Document set the standard of revolutionary South African theology, and marked the trail that the church still has to travel before it can be a servant of the revolution.

Following the restriction of the UDF, COSATU and other organisations, as well as the banning of 18 of the people's leaders, church leaders were compelled to take it to the streets.

The inside background information to this is that the church leaders — all the leaders of major denominations and African indigenous churches — were in fact acting on incipient pressure from the

masses. Since the Kairos Document, and the Lusaka Declaration in May 1987, a serious debate has been taking place on the position of the church as regards the armed struggle. By February 1988, arguments had been closed; the ordinary people cannot be expected to go out on pickets, and even stayaways, without expecting to be met with bullets and lengthy detentions. It is only high-profile church leaders like Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the Nobel Prize Laureate, whom the state detains only after thinking many times, who still have the space to engage in non-violent action.

Also, those who still preached non-violent resistance against apartheid, Archbishop Tutu notable among them, were all along challenged by the comrades who

said that they must not only talk, they must act out their non-violent strategies against the Botha regime, and demonstrate the efficacy of peaceful protest.

The Church Challenged

Therefore, the clampdown of February 28th 1988 presented a challenge to the leadership of the church, in that the non-violent activity people had been engaged in through the UDF had been proscribed, which meant that now at last a justification for mass armed activity was indisputable.

The bishops acted swiftly to demonstrate — to show that we can still engage in non-violent action against the regime. They went more to prove a point to the masses than to confront P W Botha. Anyway, they were not naive enough not to know that they would not be allowed to demonstrate near the White houses of parliament in Cape Town.

However, there appeared in the petition addressed to Botha a very interesting fact that shows how the grassroots masses are in control of the direction of the struggle:

"Last week many of us issued a statement in which we addressed primarily the oppressed people of our land, for we believe it is they who will decide in the final analysis when apartheid is going to be abolished.

*"We urged them to intensify the struggle for justice and peace and we encouraged them not to lose hope, for victory against evil in this world is guaranteed by our Lord."*²

This section of the petition is an apt preemptive response to the criticism the church leaders knew they would face from the masses for addressing P W Botha, because it is a principle established not only in the Kairos Document that Botha has no legitimate authority to officiate over order in South Africa today and that genuine political change never comes from the privileged but from the disgruntled masses.

There is a creative tension between the thinking and methods of the church today in South Africa and the revolutionary con-

sciousness of the struggling masses. This tension, which is a healthy critical relationship, needs to be maintained. It must not be allowed to be flooded away by showers of uncritical accolades the churches give to the struggle.

What Is the Church?

According to the 1980 census, 77% of all South Africans belong to some church denomination.³ The meaning of this, and the famous fact that many leaders of the liberation movement are practising Christians, seals the fact that the church in South Africa is intrinsically an organisation that encompasses the ordinary life of the people. Therefore, one can expect a tension to exist between the community activists, students, trade unionists and peasants who fill the church pews every Sunday after a rough life of struggle during the week, and, on the other hand, the church leaders, the majority of whom are still drawn from the White upper class which is insulated from the brutalities of the reality of apartheid. From a revolutionary point of view, however, the church can be seen as either of the following:

■ A force of struggle. This is a view that inspires agitation for the conscientisation of the church leadership. The goal of this perception of the church would be the wish to see the church in South Africa as a liberated zone, and also as the embodiment of the struggle of the masses, that is, as 'the ANC at prayer.' This is exactly the thinking behind over-estimation of the role of the church in the struggle.

■ A site of struggle, in correction to the first view.

An analysis becoming increasingly popular in South Africa is that, just as the factory and the school grounds are sites of struggle, so is the church. It is an arena where people come together to form a community, and from which they get whatever inspiration and protection they can. From there, they launch out towards the enemy, either 'in the name of the church' or as individuals who have been mobilised by relevant theology.

But, just as the capitalist factory and the Bantu education school are not only sites of struggle but also targets of struggle, so is the bourgeois, sexist, authoritarian church.

We propose the latter view of the church — that is, the church as a site of struggle — as an antidote to the dangers we have looked at in this article. The view of the church as a site of struggle helps to free us to adhere, as Christians, to a belief in the social progress of history which holds a vision of the withering away of all forms of authoritarianism and unscientific self-consciousness. We can consent that the church, like all structures of society, will be expected to make appropriate social adjustments in the progress of history.

The Church a Battlefield

We therefore agree with Comrade Rev. Cedric Mayson in his comment on ideological differences within the church, that:

*"The church is not an army but a battlefield. It is one of the places where the struggle is being waged, and it is necessary to analyse the forces involved in that conflict in relation to the revolution."*⁴

In conclusion and in retrospection, let us state three other issues.

■ Christian theology is one of the most disputed among human areas of enquiry. It is a field which is strewn with historical contradictions, age-old, unresolved debates and innumerable schisms. No one today can authoritatively tell us what is good Christian theology. It will therefore be a suicidal act for our struggle to be allowed to steer into trusteeship people and institutions that derive political activity solely from Christian theological formulations. Just as Christians cannot, by the very nature of Christianity, agree on purely spiritual and theological matters, one cannot expect any particular Christian body to lead a broad movement of national unity.

■ Because ours is a broad-based and national movement which has to draw people from all religious persuasions, to attribute

supremacy to the pontification of one religion would be disastrous.

Our struggle has always been for the creation of a secular state which guarantees the freedom of religion. On this murky road towards this goal, a multi-faith approach towards adopting an alliance of the religious sector in the struggle is imperative. Christian church leaders need to be reminded that there are no plans for the creation of a Christian state, but we are all working for the creation of a state that will take into account Christian values, just as it will those of other religions. Therefore, they should know that their assertive pontification over the course and methods of the struggle is not the Alpha and Omega, not the beginning and end, of how we should achieve our liberation.

■ Church leaders in South Africa need to be assisted in taking seriously the implications of the declaration of the moral illegitimacy of the Pretoria regime. A prime implication of this is an assertion of the right of the people to achieve freedom through leaders and political structure of their choice. Therefore, when speaking 'for the people,' they must ensure that they are genuinely promoting the programme of the people.

An accountability must be expected on how the church represents the struggle. This, of course, necessitates the promotion of consultation between the religious structures and the people's political structures. This will ensure that the church is not conducting the struggle on the basis of a different agenda, and that the capabilities of the church in the struggle will be known, and appropriately supplemented, from other forces.

Footnotes:

1. *The Kairos Document*, a theological comment on the political crisis in South Africa, Skotaville Publishers, Johannesburg, 1985, p.9.

2. *Baptist Times*, March 24th 1988, Christian Aid advertisement, p.5.

3 J.de Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, Collins, London, 1986, second edition, p.242.

4. *The African Communist*, No 110, Third Quarter 1987, London, p.54.



ANC INTERNATIONAL

WORLD PEACE COUNCIL PROTESTS AT BANNINGS

In a statement issued on March 1st, the World Peace Council, based in Helsinki, made its protest against the banning of political and trade union organisations in South Africa, and the arrest of leading churchmen. The statement declared that the bannings and arrests were:

"... clearly aimed at silencing the voice of the vast liberation movement inside the country."

It went on to say that these restrictive measures:

"... further entrench the legislation in force in South Africa ... and can only be met with general condemnation that matches the outrageous regime."

The statement concluded:

"The World Peace Council calls on all forces that stand for peace, freedom and justice and on international public opinion to raise their voices and to demand the Botha regime to stop its gross violations of human rights in South Africa."

MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

On the occasion of the 76th anniversary of the ANC, the World Youth Action Against Apartheid held a solemn commemorative meeting in New Delhi. In a message to this meeting, Rajiv Gandhi,

Prime Minister of India, said:

"It is heartening that the youth of the world are being galvanised into implementing a programme of action whose objective is to secure the speedy dismantling of the abhorrent system of apartheid. The components of this struggle are clear. World public opinion must be harnessed in support of comprehensive mandatory sanctions against the Pretoria regime. We must not rest until the opposition of a recalcitrant few to such a measure is overcome ..."

Rajiv Gandhi ended his statement by saying:

"In the final analysis, the most effective weapon against apartheid in South Africa is the African National Congress. It is our joint responsibility to add to the capacity of the ANC as well as of the Front Line States to resist the pressures to which they are subjected by the South African regime."

LETTER FROM GHANA

A letter to the editor of *Sechaba* from the Agbenorhevi Library Service of Dunkwa-on-Offin, Ghana, acknowledged the receipt of the January and February 1988 issues of *Sechaba* and went on to say:

"We really appreciate your tremendous efforts towards the struggle for freedom, justice and equality in South Africa. We are always with you in the same spirit to see the elimination of apartheid and the attainment of a democratic South Africa where all the people in South Africa, irrespective of race, colour or sex, can play their role as citizens ..."

"The struggle continues. Victory is certain. Long live the ANC and other revolutionary organs."

SHARPEVILLE SIX: IOJ PROTESTS

The Presidium Bureau of the International



Footballer Ruud Gullit of Milan discusses the campaign to save the Sharpeville Six with Comrade Benny de Bruyn, ANC Chief Representative in Italy

Organisation of Journalists, based in Prague, sent the following telegram to P W Botha. Dated March 16th 1988, it read:

"The International Organisation of Journalists has learned with the greatest indignation about the intention of your government to execute the 'Sharpeville Six' who were sentenced under very dubious circumstances in December 1985.

"In view of the fact that the only witness for the prosecution at the trial has declared in the meantime that he gave evidence under duress by the police and judiciary, the planned execution of six South African patriots can only be termed a deliberate judicial murder.

"We call upon you to listen to the worldwide protest against this execution, against the sentence, and to halt the further escalation of violations based on the policy of apartheid conducted by your government.

"We, democratic journalists from the whole world, united in the International Organisation of Journalists, demand an immediate end to the racist policy of apartheid and the establishment of democratic conditions which will finally guarantee basic human rights to the majority of people in the Republic of South Africa in accordance with international judicial standards."

SHARPEVILLE SIX: USSR AND GDR PROTEST

The mayors of Moscow and Leningrad and of the capitals of all the other 14 republics of the USSR have sent a declaration to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and also to the Mayor of Pretoria, protesting against the death sentence imposed on the Sharpeville Six. They said:

"On behalf of the residents of our cities, we urge the South African authorities to repeal the unfair sentence and facilitate their release."

Hundreds of citizens of the German Democratic Republic have sent their protests against the Sharpeville Six sentences to the ANC mission in Berlin, GDR. The protests come from units of the Socialist Unity

Party of the GDR, from theatre and other work groups, sports organisations, youth groups, secondary schools. Some are in the form of resolutions, some in the form of petitions with signatures. Some individuals have sent postcards. All the messages — including those from the schools — show a high degree of awareness about the situation in South Africa, and strong indignation at the injustice being perpetrated against the Six.

Over a hundred signatures come from the Dr Salvador Allende High School in Berlin, with a message asking that their protest be forwarded to South Africa. The tenth class of the Prenzlauer Berg General Polytechnic School in Berlin sent a message in English:

"Today, on the 21st of March 1988 — the international day for the abolition of racial discrimination — we protest against the the unjust sentence, and we demand the repeal of the death penalty of those six innocent people."

SHARPEVILLE SIX: DKP PROTESTS

Another statement in support of the Sharpeville Six has been made by the DKP, the Communist Party of the Federal Republic of Germany, who addressed its statement to its own government:

"We demand that the Federal Government should apply all its might and every means to achieve the immediate release of the 'Sharpeville Six' and the reprieve of all others sentenced to death in South Africa. At the same time, we also demand that the Federal Government should strive for the release of all political prisoners of the apartheid system, especially Nelson Mandela, who, in July, will be celebrating his 70th birthday and has already spent more than two decades in South African gaols.

"We demand that the Federal Government immediately apply sanctions against the apartheid regime, and this corresponds to the wishes of our people and the great majority of the member states of the United Nations."

AWAITING EXECUTION

Sharpeville Six:

1. Reginald Sefatsa (30)
2. Reid Malebo Mokoena (22)
3. Oupa Moses Diniso (30)
4. Theresa Ramashamola (24)
5. Duma Joshua Khumalo (26)
6. Francis Don Mokhesi (29)

Three from Oudtshoorn:

7. Dickson Madikane (26)
8. Desmond Majola (27)
9. Patrick Manginda (23)

Two from Sebokeng:

10. Daniel Maleke (19)
11. Josiah Tsawane (29)

One from Colesburg (also sentenced to two years for public violence, one year to be suspended for five years):

12. Paul Tefo Setlaba (22)

Four from Addo (members of the Addo Youth Congress):

13. Mziwoxolo Christopher Makaleni (22)
14. Makheswana Menze (40)
15. Ndumiso Silo Siphenuka (25)
16. Similo Lennox Wonci (21)

One ANC combatant, (sentenced to death three times and to 82 years):

17. Robert John McBride, (23)

Three NUM shaft stewards (from Vaal Reefs mine, sentenced to death three times):

18. Tyeluvuyo Mgedezi (28)
19. Solomon Mangaliso Nongwati (38)
20. Paulos Tsietsi Tsehlana (38)

Three from Bophuthatswana (members of the Stinkwater Youth Organisation):

21. Thomas Chauke (27)
22. Daisy Modise (25)
23. Johannes Tshabalala (18)

Six from Queenstown:

24. Mzwandile Gqeba (22)
25. Mzwandile Mninzi (27)
26. Thembinkosi Pressfeet (30)

27. Wanto Silinga (27)
28. Monde Tingwe (23)
29. Lundi Wana (20)

One from Soweto:

30. Bekisizwe Philip Ngidi (19)

One from Kwanobuhle (member of the Uitenhage Youth Congress):

31. Gilindoda Gxekwa (22)

Two from Soshanguve (Masuko already serving a 10-year sentence for participation in the ANC armed struggle):

32. Sibusiso Senele Masuko (22)
33. Oupa Josias Mbonane (21)

One from Tembisa:

34. Joseph Chidi (23)

Two from Port Elizabeth:

35. Ledube Mnyamana (31)
36. Menzi Tafane (21)

One from Port Elizabeth (member of the Port Elizabeth Youth Congress):

37. Vuyisile Goni

One from Tembisa (refused leave to appeal):

38. Johannes Moseki (23)

Three from Stutterheim:

39. Mxolisi Malgas (38)
40. Michael Mambukwe (28)
41. Lulamile Maneli (27)

One from Ciskei:

42. Thembisile Baneti (35)

One from Port Elizabeth:

43. Mtutuzeli Bottoman Ngqandu (22)

Shop steward from Commercial Catering and Allied Workers' Union:

44. William Ntombela

Two ANC combatants from Soweto:

45. Mtheleli Mncube (27)
46. Mzondeleli Nondula (24)

SAVE THEIR LIVES!

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OAU

This year Africa and the world are commemorating the 25th anniversary of the foundation of the Organisation of African Unity. In May 1963, 30 African Heads of State and Government met in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to approve the Charter of African Unity and to establish the OAU. This was a continuation of the struggles for African unity expressed during the anti-colonial struggle.

The ANC was invited to a Conference of the Pan African Freedom Movement for East and Central Africa (PAFMECA) in Addis Ababa in 1962. PAFMECA later became PAFMECSA, to include Southern Africa, and was the predecessor of the OAU.

Nelson Mandela attended this conference, and addressed it on behalf of the ANC. He made a tour of some African countries. "In all these countries we were showered with hospitality and assured of solid support for our cause," he remembered.

The struggle against colonialism, racism and apartheid in Southern Africa, and the support for the liberation struggle headed by the ANC and SWAPO are one of the priorities of the OAU.

The sentiments of African unity run deep in the history of our people. Even our national anthem, composed in 1897, is imbued with these lofty ideals and visions of continental unity.

The ANC salutes the OAU on the occasion of its 25th anniversary.



Presidents at the time the OAU was formed: Nkrumah of Ghana, Nyerere of Tanzania, Nasser of Egypt, Kaunda of Zambia. Right: Nelson Mandela in Algeria in 1962.

FURTHER REPRESSION

"ORDERLY INTERNAL POLITICS BILL"

By Sol

A new law is being hastened through by the Botha regime, which, once passed, will seriously further reduce the scope of the remains of any legal opposition. In keeping with other incongruous titles for the laws of Pretoria, this one is called the "Promotion of Orderly Internal Politics Bill" (POIP). The new measures are far-reaching and are aimed at social groups not previously catered for, closing gaps left by previous laws.

The bill seeks to amend the existing Fund-raising Act and introduces entirely new legislation regarding foreign money coming into South Africa. But this is not all. One part deals with "promoting hostility" through the displaying or wearing of flags, shirts, banners, badges or slogans. Needless to say, these items will be outlawed.

At present, the bill is with a select committee and it will then have to pass the three chambers in parliament before it becomes law. It is not clear how fast its passage is likely to be, but there are enough public utterances by spokesmen of the regime to suggest that they are in a hurry to place it on the statute book. This could mean as early as June, but it may take until the beginning of 1989.

The eagerness of the regime is emphasised by reports that at present there are some 90 organisations whose affairs are already being investigated under the powers of the Fund-raising Act. Some of the investigations have led to prosecutions. The new legislation seeks to amend this Act, to cast its powers even more widely.

Previously, the churches and the universities were exempt; the fact that they will come under the ambit of this Act is an ominous sign that the regime foresees increasing conflict with churches and univer-

sities. The churches had already given notice in February, when the 18 organisations were banned, that they would tread where those restricted had gone before. The universities, too, have shown increased opposition to the regime, and clearly Botha wants to restrict them when it comes to fund-raising.

The key element of the POIP bill is to restrict funds from abroad coming into the country, if an organisation concerns itself with "any political aim or object." An organisation is restricted from receiving any money whatever from outside, unless it is granted registration as a fund-raising organisation. The state will then have extensive powers over it, through a state-appointed registrar, who will scrutinise its work, and to whom accounts and reports will have to be submitted for approval.

Overseas Funds Hit

Also, the bill closes another loophole churches (and possibly other organisations, including trade unions) were previously exempt from, in that it will apply to funds received by an organisation from a parent organisation in another country. This would mean that the Archbishop of Canterbury would not be able to send money to the Archbishop of Cape Town, if the registrar is of the view that the money will be used for political purposes.

Another key provision of the bill is that for the first time a person has to comply, under the terms of the law, in the same way that an organisation has to. Funds received by any person whom the regime determines as falling under the terms of the law can now be restricted or penalised. To add

to the vicious terms of this legislation, a person or organisation shall be deemed guilty under it until they prove their innocence. The regime is seeking to empower the prosecuting authorities in the widest possible manner to ensure easy convictions of persons and organisations against whom they intend to act.

Yet a further provision aims to tighten up control where funds are being collected for non-political organisations, such as projects related to education, social or health care. Any progressive organisation whose aims have a bearing on the policies of the regime will have to register with the authorities if it intends to receive money from abroad. The resultant scrutiny the Director of Fund-raising will then be able to exercise is monstrous. Even when funds are to be raised by a group for a specific purpose, they will be required to obtain the Director's permission. He has the power to stipulate conditions and limit the purpose for which the funds can be collected and used. Failure to obtain such permission renders the person or organisation liable to prosecution.

Draconian Penalties

A guilty party can be fined R20 000 or twice the amount of money involved, whichever is the greater, or ten years' imprisonment, or both. It is clear how such a provision aims to get at the assets of an organisation or an individual person in order to put them out of action.

It needs to be stressed that an offence is committed by any person or organisation who brings in money to pursue or oppose a political aim or object. It is not necessary that the person or organisation is declared restricted or affected. If foreign money is declared unacceptable before it is used, the Minister may send it back to its foreign source or deal with it as he may determine.

The full implications of this sinister piece of legislation have not as yet been fully grasped by foreign donors, be they governments, non-governmental organisations, churches, welfare bodies, or even individuals who send cheques to suffering families.

Any contact from abroad with organisations such as the UDF and its courageous affiliates has already suffered greatly through the host of measures taken against them, especially through the recently imposed restrictive measures. Under this bill, many donors may find that their money is either returned, confiscated or the subject of legal wrangle. In all instances it can be used only if it is so approved by the official of apartheid.

Foreign money is therefore marshalled to serve apartheid. Scholarship agencies, welfare projects, parish projects, medical projects and even the sinking of a well in a rural district are in the main being funded by external agencies, because the apartheid state does not care, or deliberately does not want aid to reach the oppressed people. Many of these projects are therefore at loggerheads with the policy of apartheid. They may not even believe that they are political, but if the regime does not like them or what they do, all it takes is to issue a decree, which may then lead to the destruction of their work.

The USA, the EEC And Sanctions

Countries like the United States and those in the European Economic Community, which apparently have difficulties in coming to terms with sanctions and other measures against apartheid, had better think again. They thought that instead of 'punitive' measures they should engage in so-called 'positive' measures by making large sums of money available for the so-called 'victims of apartheid.' Well, Mr Botha does not like them doing that. The intention of the new law is aimed at their funding and that of a large number of agencies, most of whom have, over many years, made a useful contribution.

Before this law is in place, the demand for comprehensive sanctions has to be renewed. The illusion of western governments that 'positive' measures can replace the imperative of 'punitive' measures stands exposed through the actions of the Botha regime itself.

THE SOWETO UPRISING WHAT IT REALLY MEANT

By Ben Magubane

Anniversaries require stock-taking, and this month, June 1988, marks the 12th anniversary of the Soweto uprising of June 16th 1976.



School children demonstrate in Soweto, June 16th 1976

The Soweto uprising was significant for a number of reasons. First, it was living proof that the struggle of the oppressed cannot be vanquished for ever. It only suffers setbacks. Second, the rebellion, as it escalated and spread through the length and breadth of the country, is an example of how an event like the imposition of

Afrikaans as a medium of instruction became a spark that started what became a prairie fire of resistance, an inferno, challenging every aspect of White minority rule. Third, the Soweto uprising is yet another proof that the White minority is a giant standing on clay feet.

The question is how and why? The

uprising dramatised the maturing of socio-political contradictions that had been gestating since the extra-parliamentary struggles of the late 1950s and early 1960s had been contained. In the years following the Sharpeville massacre, and especially in the discovery at Rivonia of the High Command of the Congress Alliance, the White minority regime seemed to have achieved final victory over the ANC and other organisations. But by the late 1960s there was renewal of political ferment. The Black Consciousness movement was born, and the 'spontaneous' labour strikes that began in Durban in 1973 were a demonstration that the Black working class had reached a qualitatively new stage.

1980s a Watershed

Several developments marked the 10th anniversary of Soweto as a watershed. June 16th 1986 found South Africa under a state of siege, and every African township under military and police occupation. Before that, major community uprisings had occurred in 1980, 1984 and early 1986.

A new element that made these struggles menacing to Pretoria was a wave of strikes, stayaways and boycotts. As the tenth anniversary approached, the regime took steps to change the balance of political forces at community and factory level by arresting an estimated 40 000 community and union leaders and activists, who were held without charge. There were also increased attacks against opponents of the regime, organised and directed by armed thugs under the control of local authorities or bantustans — the so-called vigilantes, who served the purpose of diverting the Black struggle from fighting the oppressor to fighting each other. The clamp-down imposed on the media concealed much of the day-to-day resistance.

The ANC Reaches a New Stage

The upsurge had a number of features showing that a qualitatively new situation had been reached by the forces of resistance. The ANC, after being forced out of

Swaziland, Mozambique and Lesotho, continued to escalate its military activity within the country. The number of armed actions by Umkhonto We Sizwe rose. Steven Mufson, who spent two years covering South Africa for the *Wall Street Journal*, wrote:

"The transformation of the ANC from political taboo to a principal preoccupation among both Whites and Blacks is the most astonishing development in South Africa in the past two years ... Now Black trade union organisers, parent groups and Black businessmen under the banner of the United Democratic Front look to the ANC for political direction, sometimes even travelling to ANC headquarters in Lusaka for consultation."

The ability of the ANC to integrate particular struggles into the general framework of broader national and social struggles developed and deepened. Organisations whose representatives met the ANC included the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the United Democratic Front, the National Union of South African Students, the National African Federation of Chambers of Commerce, the Parents' Education Committee, and the Inyandza National Movement of the KaNgwane bantustan. The call for the unbanning of the ANC was heard throughout the length and breadth of the country, just as the preoccupation of the regime with the ANC became almost an obsession. The demand grew for the unconditional release of Mandela. By its activities, the ANC compelled the western powers to acknowledge its premier role, by meeting with its President, Oliver Tambo.

Another feature characterising both the mid-70s and the mid-80s was the acute economic recession. The aggravation of the general crisis of capitalism exacerbated the difficulties of the regime, encouraging the flight of capital from the country. Pretoria found itself facing unprecedented pressure from local and foreign capitalists to effect credible reforms. In response to these pressures, P W Botha made his ill-calculated and ill-fated Durban speech in

August of 1985. He acknowledged that after 333 years the White minority, no longer capable of maintaining its supremacy unaided, had begun to look for acceptable collaborators from among the oppressed.

Tenth Anniversary: General Strike

To commemorate the tenth anniversary of Soweto, June 16th was declared a national holiday. A nation-wide general strike was called, and observed by millions of Black workers and students. The Labour Monitoring Group, an independent research organisation inside South Africa, reported that the strike was about 90% effective in the Witwatersrand industrial heartland, 100% effective in the Eastern Cape, 60-80% observed in the Durban-Pinetown industrial area. Similar results were reported from other industrial areas in the country.

This strike was more than a symbolic gesture. It marked and advanced the struggle for liberation more than any event. It reflected a degree of organisation, political consciousness and long-range political strategy that had been a possibility since 1976. These rebellions and working class strikes are the most advanced expression of class struggle. They are seen by the White rulers as a serious threat to White minority rule. After Sharpeville in 1960 and the Soweto uprising in 1976, the regime prepared a massive effort to prevent future rebellions.

Thousands of Lives Sacrificed

For nearly four years now, since 1984, the Black people of South Africa have been fighting an unprecedented, courageous and self-sacrificing struggle against the Botha regime. Thousands of lives have been sacrificed. Thousands, including thousands of children, have been in prison, suffering all the horrors that a thoroughly inhuman system can dream up. Nonetheless, the number of those willing to struggle is increasing. What lies at the core of events in South Africa?

Lenin paid special attention to the crisis of a social formation that leads to the development of a revolutionary situation. He emphasised that such situations are characterised by sharp breaks in the routine of daily life and flow of events. Dos Santos wrote (1970:177):

"In a concrete society, the development of the means of production and its contradictions gives rise to historically specific social situations (for example) at the end of the nineteenth century the capitalist mode of production takes on an imperialist form and today this form assumes a character integrated on a world-wide scale."

The integration of the Black workers into the South African political economy and the trade unions they have formed has put on the agenda the question of the democratic rights of the entire Black population. The demand to organise trade unions, and for their recognition, is not merely an economic demand; in South Africa these are political acts which defy the White minority regimes that have tried to reduce Black labour to units of labour power. Conceding to Black workers the right to organise themselves acknowledges indirectly their status as 'political animals' equal to other 'political animals.'

The organisation of Black trade unions focuses attention on the core of the contradiction — that Black labour cannot be divorced from the African as a political and social outcast. It is true that the dialectic of national and class oppression and exploitation became more complex as secondary industry developed, but the continued underpinning of the system of national exclusion and racism only served to increase the alienation, the bitterness and political explosiveness of Blacks in South African society.

Causes General and Specific

What happened in Soweto in 1976 can be usefully conceptualised along four dimensions.



Armed vehicles come into Soweto to crush the children's uprising, June 1976

First there is the underlying structural dislocation in the political economy of South Africa, including its mode of integration into the imperialist world economy. Second are the social classes that characterise South African society as they have evolved ever since South Africa was constituted as an independent political entity in 1910. Thirdly, South Africa's 'active past,' more specifically the class alignments that have combined in active struggles, have shaped its political terrain. Fourth are the specific triggering events that shatter social stability or at least begin to strain the social order in such a way as to call its permanence into question. The history of South Africa has shown not only that a convulsive chain of events can occur

virtually overnight, but also that precipitating conflicts can occur over the least expected of developments.

Finally is the unfolding of the crisis. This involves the ebb and flow of struggles in a situation that now threatens to transform the basic power relations. Of defining importance is the response of the power bloc, especially the splits that occur as the various factions in the ruling class scramble to secure their interests.

The events leading up to the explosion in Soweto in 1976, therefore, were the rise of the Black Consciousness movement, strikes that wrecked South Africa's major industrial areas in 1972-73 and the inability of the White minority regime to develop a strategy adequate to the crisis.



Demonstration, June 1976

Contradictions In the Ruling Class

Conflicts and contradictions grew within ruling class circles, including a disenchantment among sections of the bourgeoisie with the restrictions apartheid imposed on the exploitation of Black labour.

The structural crisis was precipitated by what the economic boom of the 1960s had wrought: the economy had outgrown the extreme rigidity and labour repressive methods of the 1950s and 1960s. The reserves, the pass laws, the migrant labour system, the influx control laws which had worked so well to create a docile labour force, which made the country a heaven for transnational capital, had now become constraints. The labour strikes that began in Durban in 1973 were a concrete expression that the Black working class had reached a qualitatively new stage. This fact was not lost on the regime. It concluded that repression alone could not control the new militancy of the working class.

The changing regional context made worse the dilemma of the regime.

The Trigger for Revolt

The potential for a major break in the system was already evident when the regime decided to impose Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in African schools, where students under the leadership of the South African Students' Organisation (SASO) were already restless. 20 000 students came out of class on June 16th to protest against this new requirement. Hector Peterson was killed by a policeman's bullet. The schools were closed, but the revolt spread across the Transvaal, and by August, Cape Town townships were in flames. When the bullets and tear gas flew into the ranks of the students, a decade of repressed calm abruptly ended.

What stands out in this period, 1976 to 1986, is that despite the massive scale of state repression, resistance continued unabated, developing a momentum entirely new. By 1980, mass resistance reached new heights. This development

gave rise to political dilemmas for the regime which the Wiehahn and Rieckert Commissions attempted to grapple with. In fact, the two commissions came to the reluctant conclusion that the continued denial of trade union rights to Black workers had become counter-productive, since the workers had developed extra-legal forms of politics to advance their own interests and community demands.

Powerful, Broad Coalition

Until the UDF was formed in 1983, these factory and locally based efforts had no national direction. The UDF was a powerful manifestation of the use of extra-legal forms of resistance. Not since the massive civil disobedience campaigns of the 1950s had South Africa seen such a broad, nationwide coalition of the extra-legal forces as that which coalesced in the UDF. Public protest and resistance reached unprecedented levels, and the Black trade union movement more and more linked trade union struggles to political stands and flexed its muscle in political strikes that proved able to bring the country to a standstill.

The launching of COSATU at the end of November 1985 further complicated the position of the regime. COSATU represented the welding together of the most militant, conscious and revolutionary sectors of the oppressed communities. The combative mood of the Black working class immediately made itself felt.

In the first quarter of 1986, a wave of industrial action took place. The number of working days lost almost equalled the whole figure of 1985, itself double the whole figure of 1984. By mid-March, 100 000 mine workers alone had gone on strike. The growth of revolutionary feeling among Black workers expressed itself in the development of pro-socialist and anti-capitalist sentiments. This frightened not only the South African ruling classes, but also their allies in imperialist countries. Alan Cowell wrote in the *New York Times* of June 15th 1986:

"... the challenge now posed by the Black unions is profound, holding the possibility of a large-scale withdrawal of



Resistance, June 1976

labour from the modern economy, that is increasingly dependent on Black skills."

The rise of the UDF and COSATU grew out of the common conditions of Blacks as workers and members of the oppressed ethnic formations, and they cohere around concrete demands to change White minority rule. The UDF and COSATU symbolised the dialectical interconnection between community-based struggles and those based on the factory floor.

Breakthrough For the Oppressed

What all this means is that the formation of the UDF and COSATU represent the most important moments in the history of the liberation struggle in South Africa. But if the rise of these two organisations represent a quantitative breakthrough for the oppressed, they also represent a qualitative shift in the orientation of the liberation movement, which is not lost on the oppressor and his allies. In April 1985, Botha accused the UDF of becoming the internal extension of the banned ANC and the South African Communist Party.

Twelve years after the regime brutally crushed the Soweto rebellion, the mass movement in South Africa is much more alive than at any time since the decade of the 1950s. In the volcanic eruptions that South Africa has experienced from 1976 till today, we can see the outlines of the coming revolution. Massive township unrest and demonstrations, complemented by general strike action, increasing guerrilla actions and massacres by the army and police, lead to further fury of revolt. At times, in many townships insurrectionary situations have existed, with no-go areas for the police and army, except in large convoys. The Black council system has collapsed, with many Black collaborators forced to flee the townships, and business sharks and policemen also forced to abandon their homes.

So the battle lines are drawn, and the fundamental problem defines itself again and again in militant action by the masses of Black people, complemented by the

people's army, Umkhonto We Sizwe. The battle for the townships has become increasingly warlike. MK, which previously carried out armed propaganda by sabotaging installations up and down the country, is now smuggling its armoury into the townships — automatic rifles, hand grenades and limpet mines. According to the *Durban Sunday Tribune* of June 4th 1986:

"The ANC's urban guerrilla campaign has entered an ominous new phase with gunmen clashing with security forces in township streets. Shoot-outs between police and ANC members have in the past been restricted to surprise security force attacks on insurgents or in follow-up operations. But recent incidents in townships around Cape Town indicate an increased willingness to fire directly on security forces, even in broad daylight. An ANC spokesman in Lusaka this week said the incidents were part of the organisation's policy and strategy."

These were prophetic words. The recent news about policemen shot in Transvaal townships shows that this form of struggle still goes on, and is spreading.

The Question of Political Power

The incorporation of the masses into the struggles and the timely use of arms by the ANC has raised the sights and broadened the vision of the masses beyond the perspective of mere reforms, to conceive of their struggle not merely as a way of ameliorating oppressive conditions but as ultimately a question of political power. The use of arms by the ANC results from the system of domination that has been described by the ANC and its allies as colonialism of a special kind, which, as is stated in the ANC document, *Strategy and Tactics*, ultimately rests on force.

Because of the armed struggle, the Botha regime is facing a growing problem of young men who refuse to do military service. In January 1985 about 40% of those conscripted failed to turn up, and later figures are thought to be higher. Philip

Wilkinson, a draftee who refused conscription, explained to the draft board that as a Roman Catholic he would not:

"... fight in the townships against people I have grown to know and trust."

The End Conscription Campaign (ECC) which took up his case and is taking up many others, estimates that since 1982 at least 10 000 young White men have left South Africa after school or university to avoid military service. Figures of men serving gaol sentences for refusing military service on political or religious grounds are not easy to come by, but in February 1986 127 conscripts were in military prison for being absent without leave, and Ivan Thoms is at present appealing against a 21-month sentence. Of those who went into the army, 484 attempted suicide in 1987, and 24 succeeded.

Motives for Revolt

The motives that prompt a whole people to rise in revolt will exercise the minds of social scientists for years. But there is no secret — the revolt is rooted deep in the conditions of people's lives, in their collective historical memory and in the evolution of society, especially of its economy. Economic dispossession of the oppressed people was necessarily accompanied by their disfranchisement; and every attempt of the dispossessed to attain their citizenship, to emerge from their state of outlawry, represented a tentative step to re-plant Africans and dispossess the settlers.

There have been other splits among the ruling minority. In a few dramatic moments on February 14th 1986, the sleek rhetoric with which the White minority projected itself as having outgrown the 'outdated and unnecessary laws' enforcing colonial structures, suffered a traumatic shock. First, P W Botha repudiated P K Botha, his Foreign Minister, for placing a liberal interpretation on National Party policy. Then, Dr Frederick Van Zyl Slabbert, leader of the Progressive Federal Party, resigned from parliament in a gesture of frustration at what he described as the

duplicity of the regime in its professed commitment to end apartheid. The *Weekly Mail* of February 14th 1986 commented:

"For this respected figure to pronounce the Botha reforms as a fraud, and the debates of parliament 'a grotesque ritual of irrelevancy' in the face of the continuing unrest in the country was a devastating judgment."

The regime and its followers have other problems, too. In the last week of November 1985, a series of landmine explosions on farm roads in the northern Transvaal shook the country. In quick succession, the blasts wounded and killed soldiers and civilians. The landmines are tactical weapons of guerrilla warfare. Until then, there had been limpet mines used on strategic installations such as Sasol; bombs had been placed outside army headquarters and inside the offices that administer the apartheid infrastructure. Landmines are another matter altogether, as was demonstrated by the destruction of a vehicle on the road to Mamelodi near Pretoria.

Danger on the Border

From now on, no soldier patrolling the long borders and vast stretches will ever feel safe. Every bush is suspicious, every cow-patch on a grass path a hidden danger — snipers can hide in trees and high grass, mines can be disguised on dust roads. As in the war inside Zimbabwe, so in the northern Transvaal, farmhouses have become fortified bases. The tug-of-war between the need for Black labour and distrust of its loyalty has begun to hamper relationships between farmers and their labourers. In the northern Transvaal, however, relations between Black farm workers and their bosses can never be called 'normal.' It is on farms that 'old' apartheid is seen at its worst, with abuse of human rights and exploitation of labour, including that of children.

For the White youths who are expected to die in Namibia and other operational areas, the future is bleak indeed. Starved of foreign capital and credit, bereft of

financial reserves and weakened by the outflow of private capital, the economic cost of maintaining apartheid and the war in Namibia, already intolerable, is becoming impossible. The capitalist class has been crying in the wilderness, arguing a faster pace in the dismantling of apartheid. But for many, the game has been lost; the rate of corporate bankruptcies is now consistently over 100% up on 1984 figures. Clearly, there is a limit to the ability of conglomerates to withstand the erosion of their profits.

At first, it was the small to mid-size companies that couldn't withstand the deteriorating economic climate in South Africa. But in 1986, General Electric and USG Corporation, which together employed more than 2 500 workers in South Africa, pulled out. Alison Cooper, co-author of a report made in 1984 by the Investor Responsibility Research Centre in Washington, says that now:

"We are seeing some larger companies who are saying it's not worth it to them to stay."

Events within South Africa and related events outside the country have made the terminal nature of the crisis of apartheid clearer than ever before, even as they exacerbated it. Afrikaners, above all the 20% of those who still live on the farms, fear a return of the poverty of the 1930s. The three years of drought wreaked havoc on many small farms, forcing many farmers off the land. In the cities and on the farms, reports of Afrikaner suicide, sometimes of husbands who shoot their families first, occur in the press. According to *Africa Confidential* of October 30th 1985:

"Whether in the family or the government, Afrikanerdom is sailing perilously close to the apocryphal story of the scorpion which asks a frog for a ride across the river. The scorpion, to convince the frog of the reasonableness of the request, says that it would obviously not sting the frog because they would both perish if it did. Half way across the river, the scorpion stings. The dying frog asks, 'Why?' The drowning scorpion's reply: 'Because I am like that.'"

All these are symptoms of the collapse of White minority rule. The recent rise of the right wing in Afrikaner politics is also a symptom; a desperate struggle against the inevitable. The crumbling and disintegration of ruling class consensus, the deepening economic, political and social crisis, are sapping the confidence of the ranks of Whites, causing confusion and divisions and weakening the resolve to fight. The powerless White electorate has been reduced by the so-called President's Council to a consenting mass instead of being a participating citizenry.

Critical Deadlock

The declaration of successive states of emergency since 1985, one of them declared four days before the anniversary of the Soweto uprising, summed up the depth of crisis in the country. A critical deadlock has been reached.

Since the Vaal uprisings in September 1984 unleashed the current phase of the struggle in the townships, villages, farms, factories and schools nation-wide, the authority of the regime has collapsed or been challenged. Not even the army of occupation sent to patrol the streets and occupy the schools was able to restore apartheid law and order.

The organs of people's power that have grown up in the communities have been a subject of debate for some time now, in *Sechaba*, in the ranks of our movement, and outside it. These conditions of dual power are posing the most serious threat ever known to the system of exploitation and oppression constructed so laboriously by the regime over 40 years. A state of class warfare exists everywhere. And in declaring states of emergency, the regime believed that there now existed a real threat from below; it finally realised that the world that provided the best milieu for capital accumulation and for their privileges, was being undermined. Such a situation required unorthodox methods of counter-revolution — hence the organising and unleashing of vigilantes throughout South Africa, to destroy the people's power. In November 1986, the South

African Students' Press Union (SASPU) summed up the crisis as follows:

"For the rulers as much as the ruled, the battle is one of survival. The oppressed and exploited have decided that their only hope of survival and a decent life lies in fundamentally changing the power of the bosses and the government. This power defends massive wealth and privilege, and its owners and controllers will not let go easily.

"So there is a deadlock — the people want democratic power to govern themselves and to control the wealth they produce. The bosses and the government want power to keep control and wealth for themselves. There will be no compromise on this — and so no end to the conflict — for the time being."

In South Africa today an unprecedented, historic leap forward has taken place in the consciousness of the popular masses. It has moved from permanent and frustrated outrage to commitment to struggle and win. This determination has penetrated so deeply that the likelihood of its being contained looks more and more remote. Harnessing the surging energy of the masses and turning it into an unstoppable revolutionary force is the task now faced by the ANC. Having made "apartheid unworkable and the country ungovernable," the ANC is now moving to the second phase of the struggle, to turn the retreat of apartheid into a rout, the rout into a collapse, and the collapse into surrender.

No Settlement Without the ANC

Today, no organisation, Black or White, can afford to distance itself entirely from the principles and traditions embodied in the ANC — hence the attempt Inkatha once made to wrap itself in ANC colours. No political settlement in South Africa would be viable without ANC assent — hence the pilgrimage of business leaders, the Progressive Federal Party to Lusaka to confer with the ANC; hence the Dakar 'talks.'

History was made when the first book

ever to be published in Afrikaans about the ANC appeared on the market. It was entitled, *Praat met die ANC* (Talk to the ANC), and included the Freedom Charter of 1955. As far as can be established, this was the first time the Freedom Charter has appeared inside the country in an Afrikaans book, and not as a clandestine document. The main theme that came out very strongly in the booklet, especially in interviews with students, is that they no longer believe in the 'selective information' provided by the regime, and its propaganda about the ANC.

The intention of many of these actions seems to be to ask the ANC to forgo the armed struggle, so that 'talks' can begin about the political future of South Africa. The attempt to make Nelson Mandela's release from prison conditional on his 'renouncing violence' is part of the same scenario.

The last illusion the ANC can afford is the one that the bourgeoisie will gently transfer power to those they have exploited and treated with such contempt. The ANC has stated that it cannot at this stage negotiate with the Botha regime, unless the purpose is to work out the modalities for the transfer of power. That is, the ANC does not view political negotiations as an open-ended bargaining process. The power equation in South Africa still favours the White minority regime. Until a strategic stalemate has developed, any negotiations would be illusory.

On the 74th anniversary of the founding of the ANC, President O R Tambo called for "a rapid escalation of our military offensive." His call has been answered. Today, the Black offensive is not intimidated by brute force and police murder; the popular groundswell continues its momentum and initiative, galvanising increased solidarity worldwide. Today, the minority rulers find themselves facing a serious second military front at home. This limits what they can throw against Angola, Mozambique and other Front Line States, just as the war against Angola, in its turn, limits military activity within South Africa. Indeed, the Black rebellion is helping the fight of all the people of Southern Africa, who are trying to free themselves from imperialism.

BOOK REVIEWS

Tenderness of Blood, Mandla Langa, Zimbabwe Publishing House, Harare 1987.

Someone once said that if one reads one novel by a Black South African writer, one has read Black South African literature. The reason for this, he said, was because in most novels by Black writers in that country one is sure to read about shebeens, the church, street violence, drunkenness, etc. These are there in *Tenderness of Blood* by Mandla Langa. Another person said that White writers in South Africa seem to write cerebrally. It becomes worse when they write about township life or create Black characters. In *Tenderness of Blood*, there are White characters. It seems the same issue about White writers creating Black characters arises when a Black writer creates White characters — stereotypes emerge.

The White characters by Black writers and Black characters by White writers in South African literature talk at each other, play at being friends, even at being enemies; they are insulated as people within the colours of their skins, and know only how to point this out to each other. They are unable to deal with life. The Whites take the Blacks to wealth and the Blacks take the Whites to poverty; a scene is set for the gouging of eyes and the breaking of limbs.

When Mkhonto, the main character in *Tenderness of Blood*, meets Ras, a White security chief, in court towards the end of the novel, Mkhonto has been tortured almost to pulp but emerges as a fighter, and Ras also emerges unchanged, ready to lie in court to ensure that Mkhonto is convicted. The reality of the South African struggle has prepared us for this; we expect it to be so. While it is true that we are even used to the wonderment as to where Ras' family is and how he relates to them, given that he is the man who he is (as the writer says) we know nothing about them,

about his friends. We know about Mkhonto's friends, but then, they are woven into what has become part of the South African literature landmarks: the shebeen, drunkenness, etc.

Max, Ntombi, Sidumo, Mlungisi, all of them participants and creators of moments of struggle for liberation, tell us by what they say and do who they are, where they belong and what the future holds. They do so against the background of the country's beautiful scenery, social landmarks, violence and the making and breaking of relationships. The men in the novel, like the women, are caught up in the characteristic lives of Black people in South Africa: drinking, love and lovemaking, street violence, police harassment, brutal memory and death. The men, in the likes of Duke, Sidumo, Mlungisi and Max, it seems, will break out of the vicious cycle; they are members of the Movement. The women, on the other hand, seem to whirl in the cycle, with no respite in sight.

What is going to change the social landmarks of South African literature, the shebeens, etc? What is going to tear the insulation of Whites and the suspiciousness of Blacks? There is Ruth, who comes and goes very quickly in the novel, as does Van Niekerk, another security chief, in the same manner as it is with Makhubu. They are a glimpse of rocks which will either crack and crush with time, or grow tall and taller, as change thrusts South Africa into a new era, some crushing under the feet of the oppressed, others keeping pace with the masses.

The journey of the novel, as it unfolds, is the journey of the unfolding fight for liberation. We meet Mkhonto coming out of prison at the beginning of the novel, we go through the experience of community, student and workers' struggles, and we experience how the underground works, how the armed struggle is implemented.

When Mkhonto comes back from drunken stupors, broken loves and marriage, ex-

ile, an MK military training camp, detention, torture, gaol, and he emerges saying, "We will train our people inside the enemy lines, near the enemy base," it is credible. We know about the Movement, the organised masses; Mandla has told us about all that. We have seen how personal struggles evolved into mass struggle; we are not surprised by the presence of the underground; when Mkhonto meets his veteran comrade, the vegetable vendor, we are not surprised that they are preparing for a people's war, that they have arms and have people waiting to be trained.

The broadest anti-apartheid mass movement, linked to the underground and to the armed struggle, will change the character of the shebeens, the church, street violence and relationship between Black and White. The strongly progressive politics of the Movement; the discipline required to be a member and to participate in the demands of the underground and the armed struggle, where the operative words are discipline and sacrifice; these will change the quality of the individuals participating, and, since it will be a people's war being fought, the quality of the social life will also change. Mandla has promised us this through *Tenderness of Blood*.

— Wally Serote

Escape from Pretoria, Tim Jenkin, Kliptown Books, International Defence and Aid Fund, London, 1987.

All prisoners dream of escaping; some get as far as planning it; not many succeed in doing it. In 1963, Arthur Goldreich, Abdulhay Jassat, Moosa Moolla and Harold Wolpe escaped from police cells in Johannesburg, where they were being held in detention; later, Eleanor Anderson escaped from detention in a hospital in Pietermaritzburg; in 1986, Gordon Webster, who was being held under armed guard in Edendale Hospital, was rescued by the resourceful and courageous Robert McBride. But Tim Jenkin, Stephen Lee and Alex Moumbaris must be

the only South African political prisoners who have escaped from a top security gaol where they were serving sentences.

They had been imprisoned for underground political work. Jenkin had 11 years more to serve; Lee had seven, Moumbaris had six, and they were determined not to waste more time in gaol. They wanted to return to the struggle. On December 11th 1979, they got out of Pretoria Central Prison.

They were not recaptured. They got out of South Africa, too, and arrived in Europe early in 1980. Moumbaris returned to his wife and home in Paris; Jenkin and Lee went to London.

In April 1980, *Sechaba* published an article by Tim Jenkin, entitled, *How We Escaped*. A prison warder in Pretoria had been charged with assisting them, but Jenkin made the scathing comment that the prison authorities had done this "to fulfil their need for a scapegoat." He stated clearly that they had got out of the gaol, passing through ten doors, with no assistance at all, but he did not at that time give away the secret of how they had done it.

With the publication of this book, the story is told, and this truth is stranger than fiction. They went through the ten doors with wooden keys, copies of those carried by the warders, and made by themselves in the woodwork shop of the prison. There was always the risk of a search when they left the woodwork shop, and so they made the keys in sections which, in themselves, looked innocent, and which they later pieced together.

This original and daring plan required determination, patience, tenacity, planning, a study of locks, a great deal of ingenuity and manual dexterity. Jenkin describes in detail every step of the operation, and gives diagrams. As they planned, they had, of course, to base their movements on positions of the warders on night duty, the times when the warders went on their rounds. Above all, they needed — and got — the loyalty and silence of their comrades in the neighbouring cells, though it is clear from the book that not all these comrades believed in the wisdom of the escape plan, and there were sharp differences of opinion on the matter.

The keys had to be tested in trial runs,

when they unlocked all the doors except the final one, and then retraced their steps, locking themselves in again, door by door. This was a dangerous operation, for should a key stick in its lock, or if any key unlocked its door and then failed to lock it again, the plan would be blown. All went well, and they were ready to set the date. From then on, it was almost a clear run, and Tim Jenkin achieved his aim of rejoining the struggle.

It is very difficult to write honestly about

oneself, and here Tim Jenkin founders, as more skilled writers have foundered before him. When he writes about his personal history, his political development and commitment, he is conquered by his own inhibitions, and does not appear as the politically aware and committed person he has shown himself to be. This is perhaps the chief weakness of his book. Its strength is the astonishing, cliffhanging story of the escape.

— JM



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