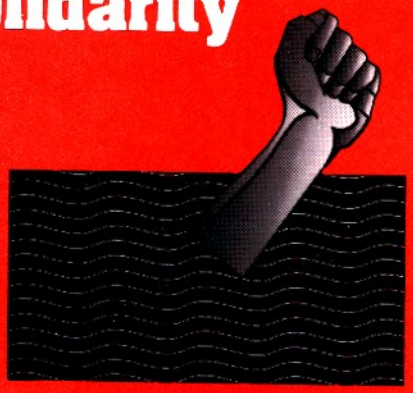
The Struggle for Liberation in South Africa and International Solidarity



Edited by

E. S. REDDY

STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION IN SOUTH AFRICA AND INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

A Selection of Papers Published by the United Nations Centre against Apartheid

Edited

by

E. S. Reddy

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STERLING PUBLISHERS PRIVATE LIMITED
NEW DELHI
1992

INTRODUCTION

One of the essential contributions of the United Nations in the international campaign against apartheid in South Africa has been the preparation and dissemination of objective information on the inhumanity of apartheid, the long struggle of the oppressed people for their legitimate rights and the development of the international campaign against apartheid.

For this purpose, the United Nations established a Unit on Apartheid in 1967, renamed Centre against Apartheid in 1976. I have had the privilege of directing the Unit and the Centre until my retirement from the United Nations Secretariat at the beginning of 1985.

The Unit on Apartheid and the Centre against Apartheid obtained papers from leaders of the liberation movement and scholars, as well as eminent public figures associated with the international anti-apartheid movements. A selection of these papers are reproduced in this volume, especially those dealing with episodes in the struggle for liberation; the role of women, students, churches and the anti-apartheid movements in the resistance to racism; and the wider significance of the struggle in South Africa.

I hope that these papers will be of value to scholars interested in the history of the liberation movement in South Africa and the evolution of United Nations as a force against racism.

The papers were prepared at various times, mostly by leaders and active participants in the struggle, and should be seen in their context. For instance, the papers on students were prepared before the Soweto massacre of 1976 and the nation-wide upsurge of the students; those on churches before they defined apartheid as heresy and defied the apartheid regime; and the paper on anti-apartheid movements before they grew into mass movements forcing reluctant governments in the West to impose sanctions against apartheid. They reflect and describe the long effort required to develop resistance and solidarity.

The struggle for freedom in South Africa was waged under enormous difficulties and assumed great significance nationally and internationally. The papers show how, under a wise leadership, the national liberation movement was able to avert a race conflict and, indeed, unite people of all racial origins in a common struggle against racist tyranny. By its sacrifice, statesmanship and commitment to non-racialism, this leadership was able to attract the sympathy and support of governments, organisations and eminent public figures around the world. World public opinion was inspired by the movement and played a crucial role in ensuring effective international action to force the racist authorities to abandon their inhuman policy and seek negotiations on the future of the country.

While we look forward to reconciliation and peaceful settlement in South Africa, and the emergence of a non-racial democratic society, we dare not forget the past - the barbarity of racism, the heroism of the freedom fighters and the spirit of human solidarity which prevailed. Or we will fail to draw the lessons and prevent a recurrence.

I am grateful to the United Nations Secretariat for giving me permission to edit and publish these papers, and the Centre against Apartheid for its co-operation.

March 1992 E. S. Reddy

CONTRIBUTORS

ASMAL, Kader. A South African by birth, he went to Britain for higher studies and was one of the founders of the British and Irish Anti-Apartheid Movements in the 1960s. He was Vice-Chairman and later Chairman of the Irish movement from 1964 to 1990, while a professor at the Trinity College, Dublin.

He was invited to many conferences of the United Nations on apartheid and represented the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union at the International Trade Union Conference against Apartheid in Geneva in June 1973. He has written extensively on the legal aspects of apartheid and the status of the South African freedom fighters.

He returned to South Africa in 1990 and was appointed Professor of Law at the University of the Western Cape. In 1991 he was elected a member of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress and chairman of its Constitutional Commission.

ASMAL, Mrs. Louise. She was honorary administrative secretary of the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement and editor of its monthly newsletter, *Amandla*. She was particularly active in promoting assistance to South African political prisoners and their families.

BENSON, Ms. Mary. A writer born in South Africa and long active in support of the struggle for freedom in South Africa, she appeared several times before United Nations bodies to testify on the situation in South Africa.

She was served with stringent banning orders by the South African regime and deported from the country in 1966.

Her writings include a history of the African National Congress, biographies of Chief Albert Luthuli and Nelson Mandela and a BBC radio play, *A Place for Martyrs*.

FLANNERY, Father Austin. Born in Tipperary, Ireland, in 1925, he entered the Dominican Order in 1943. He obtained a Doctorate in Theology from Angelicum University, Rome.

He was Chairman of the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement for many years, and editor of *Doctrine and Life*, a monthly on Christian life and teaching.

HOUSER, George. He had been involved in non-violent resistance to racism in the United States as Executive Secretary of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) from 1944 to 1952. From 1952 to 1981, he was Executive Director of the American Committee on Africa.

He now directs a programme on southern Africa at the State University of New York.

He is the author of *No One Can Stop the Rain: Glimpses of Africa's Liberation Struggle*, 1989.

La GUMA, Alex. Author, journalist and member of the National Executive of the Coloured People's Congress of South Africa. He was one of the accused in the Treason Trial of 1956-61. He was served with banning orders in 1961 and placed under 24-hour house arrest in 1962. He went into exile in the 1960s, and was appointed representative of the African National Congress in Havana. He died in exile.

MEER, Mrs. Fatima. A former professor of sociology at the University of Natal in Durban, and now director of the Institute for Black Research. Author of *Higher than Hope*, a biography of Nelson Mandela, and numerous books and papers on South Africa.

She has been active in the freedom movement since her student days, suffering imprisonment and restriction on several occasions.

NAICKER, M.P. He was Joint Secretary of the Natal Action Committee of the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress. He went into exile in 1966 and became Director of Publicity and Information of the African National Congress of South Africa and editor of *Sechaba*, its monthly organ.

He died in exile in 1977.

REEVES, The Right Reverend Ambrose (1899-1980). He went to South Africa in 1949 and was bishop of the Anglican diocese in Johannesburg until 1961.

He was highly respected by the freedom movement for his courageous opposition to apartheid. In 1950 he publicly opposed the Suppression of Communism Act. In 1953 when the Government took over African education from the Churches and sought to provide Africans with what it termed "Bantu education", he refused to hire out Church buildings to the Government. In 1956 he became chairman of a committee which collected funds for the defence of 156 South African leaders who were charged with treason for their opposition to apartheid.

After the Sharpeville massacre of March 21, 1960, he visited the wounded at their hospital beds and collected affidavits on the basis of which he charged that the shootings were entirely unprovoked. The South African Government deported him in 1961.

He was President of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement from 1965 to 1980.

The African National Congress honoured him in 1980 with its highest award, *Isitwalandwe*.

SCHMIDT, Ms. Elizabeth. A graduate of the University of Wisconsin, she has been active in the anti-apartheid movement in the United States and has written several papers

on southern Africa. The paper published in this collection was from the M. A. dissertation she submitted to the University of Wisconsin.

SIBEKO, David. A journalist and political leader, he was director of Foreign Affairs of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania and its representative at the United Nations for several years. He was assassinated in Dar es Salaam in 1979.

VERKUYL, Dr. J. He was Professor of Missionary Theology at the Free University of Amsterdam and general secretary of the Missionary Council for the Netherlands.

He denounced apartheid as a total contradiction of the Christian message, at the 1968 Reformed Ecumenical Synod in Lunteren (Netherlands) and during a tour of South Africa in March-April 1970.

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THE STRUGGLE IN SOUTH AFRICA HAS UNITED ALL RACES[1]

by

Mary Benson

In southern Africa, deaths in detention and the assassination of political activists have provided grim evidence that the struggle for liberation is not being fought only by black Africans, but that men and women of all races have made the supreme sacrifice. Babla Saloojee, Ahmed Timol, Imam Haroun and Dr. Neil Aggett all died in detention, while Ruth First - an academic, writer and revolutionary - was killed by a letter bomb at the University of Maputo.

The deaths in London in 1983 of Dr. Yusuf Dadoo, leader of the South African Indian Congress since the 1940s, and of the Rev. Michael Scott, who first petitioned the United Nations on behalf of the people of South West Africa (now Namibia) in 1947, are a reminder of how long and complex the struggle has been.

Variously described as a struggle for liberation, a class struggle, or a struggle for Africans' birthright, it consists of all these elements, yet at its heart lies a fierce determination to combat and demolish racism. The colour bar that was enshrined in the South African constitution when the United Kingdom handed power to the white minority in 1910 and the discriminatory laws which have proliferated with each succeeding year have repeatedly been challenged by men and women of all races. The struggle goes beyond nationality, ideology, class or religion.

Such challenges, such attempts by members of different races to co-operate with each other, have never been easy. Africans, dispossessed of land and of all human rights by the European invaders, had every reason to be hostile and suspicious. The Coloured people - those of mixed race - trapped between white and black, were loath to relinquish an assigned status that was superior to that of the Africans. The Asians, often more prosperous than other blacks and clinging to their own culture, tended to see their plight as that of a separate community, particularly since specific laws were directed against them. Whites, dominating politically and economically, were intent on consolidating their privileges and increasing their wealth. It took great courage, dedication, imagination and generosity to bridge the gulf created between the races by history, culture, and the law.

Successive Governments made use of fear to unite the whites: *die swart gevaar* - black danger - was a potent slogan in the 1930s, and by the 1980s, the bogey had become the threat of "total onslaught" - a catchphrase embracing blacks, communists, liberals, and the hostile world at large.

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[1] From "Notes and Documents" No. 7/84, August 1984

Modern South Africa is a highly industrialised, heavily armed police State based on the forcible separation of the races. Its population of some 30 million consists of 21 million Africans, four and a half million whites, 3 million Coloured people, and nearly a million Indians. The notorious system of apartheid which separates all these communities, and which, under the euphemism of "separate development", also separates ethnic groups, has united the world in a wholesale condemnation. Meanwhile, inside the country, individuals and groups of all races continually join in protest and acts of resistance despite harassment by the Security Police; despite bannings, imprisonment, torture, even murder.

Early Attempts to Co-operate

During the early years of this century leaders of the various racial groups decided to organise their own people: The Natal Indian Congress, founded in 1894 with Mohandas Gandhi as Secretary, was preoccupied with local unity in face of anti-Indian legislation; the African National Congress, founded in 1912 as the South African Native National Congress, faced an almost insurmountable problem in attempting to bring together not only the various ethnic groups, but rural and urban people, most of whom lived in great poverty. Meanwhile, Coloured people in the Cape had formed the African People's Organisation and their leader, Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman, called in 1906 for the non-racial Cape franchise to be extended to other parts of the country. A handful of whites spoke up for the rights of the other races, but the overwhelming force was divisive, and when eventually trade unions were formed, whether white, Coloured or Indian, Africans were excluded.

Although there was a tentative coming together of Coloured and African dockers when the Industrial and Commercial Union was founded in Cape Town in 1919, it was not until the 1930s that multi-racial unions were effectively formed. White radicals - immigrants from Latvia, Lithuania and the United Kingdom, as well as some Afrikaners - provided organisational training for their black comrades. Such achievements were arduously won when the norm was racial discrimination, and even stricter segregation laws were being passed when the police, as always, were given free reign to put down protests and strikes. The Minister of Justice, Oswald Pirow, was a pro-Nazi whose views reflected the mood of extremist Afrikaner nationalists.

The Second World War brought hope of change. It was, after all, a war against racism, and the South African Parliament, under General Smuts, declared war on the Nazi Reich by a small majority. In the resulting industrial boom, Africans flocked to the cities, and the labour movement flourished. In the Cape, Coloured people and whites co-operated, as did Africans and Indians in Natal. By 1945, the Non-European Trade Union Council could claim to represent 49 unions and 158,000 organised workers.

In the political area, there was little sign of co-operation between black groups. However, among those dedicated to work for unity was the Indian leader, Dr. Yusuf Dadoo. From 1943, he was at the forefront of the struggle, helping to organise protests against Pass Laws, attempting to form a United Front; actions that were little more than

symbols, but significant, never more so than in 1946, when Africans and Indians separately embarked on dramatic mass protests.

The Year of the Miners and the Passive Resisters

The African Mine Workers' Union had faced formidable obstacles since its formation in 1941. The miners' struggle for a living wage has been described as having "the epic quality of a mass movement of industrial serfs who risked life and liberty for elementary justice".[2]

Migrant workers on pitifully small wages, they were supposed to depend partly on peasant earnings back in the poverty-stricken Native Reserves. The steep rise in wartime prices and famine in the rural areas contributed to their hardships and desperation. The 308,000 black miners - the most important workers in the country - were the most harshly exploited.

In face of the growing militancy of African trade unions, the Government had passed War Measures: all strikes by all Africans under all circumstances were illegal; meetings of more than twenty persons on mine property were banned. But with the war at an end, the miners went on strike. Seventy-six thousand Africans in 21 mines came out in support of their Union's claim for the daily minimum wage to be raised from 2/5d to 10/- (from approximately 25 cents to a dollar). Men and women of all races assisted in organising this strike. It was the biggest strike in the country's history, but within days police had violently driven the miners back to work. Nine were killed, and more than a thousand injured.[3]

The trial that followed was the largest political trial yet in South Africa. The accused included 31 Africans, 11 whites, 6 Indians, 2 Coloured people and one Chinese. Of the 51, 29 were Communists, among them Dr. Dadoo and the Afrikaner lawyer, Bram Fischer.

The trial symbolised the Government's perpetual harassment of both the labour movement and of the Communist Party. Subsequently, the Chamber of Mines contrived to break the African Mine Workers` Union. The shameful episode underlined the gross exploitation of African workers by mine owners and all who profited from the sale of gold, and simultaneously highlighted the Communist Party's contribution to the struggle.

Dr. Dadoo had been brought to trial in Johannesburg from a prison cell in Durban, where he was serving one of several sentences for leading Indians in passive resistance. He and the Gandhian, Dr. Monty Naicker, President of the South African Indian Congress, with students such as Ismail Meer, J.N. Singh and Ahmed Kathrada, had launched the passive resistance campaign in Durban against a "ghetto" bill, a measure designed to restrict Indians permanently to certain areas. Over two years, more than 2,000

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[2] Jack and Ray Simons, *Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950,* p. 569.
[3] See "The African Miners' Strike of 1946" by M. P. Naicker below.

resisters, including 300 women, went voluntarily to jail, following the example set by Gandhi early in the century. And just as in Gandhi's time, when the British Henry Polak and the German Herman Kallenbach had been among those imprisoned, so on this occasion a few whites, including Michael Scott, joined resisters and with them went to jail.

Africans also took part: a branch of the African National Congress from Germiston wanted to show solidarity with an oppressed section of the population, in the belief that in time all black people could unite against common injustice.

Although the campaign brought no direct concessions from the Government, it made a powerful impact internationally. At the newly established United Nations, the representatives of the Indian Government, first, Sir Maharaj Singh, then Mrs. Pandit, led the indictment of South Africa's racial policies. At the same time, a multi-racial delegation led by the President-General of the African National Congress, Dr. A.B. Xuma, lobbied on behalf of the blacks of South West Africa in opposing General Smuts's attempts to incorporate that Mandated Territory. Thus South Africa's treatment of blacks was brought under United Nations scrutiny. It was the first step in what was to be a long history of arousing world opinion on behalf of the oppressed peoples of South Africa.

On returning home, Dr. Xuma joined with Dadoo and Naicker in signing a declaration of unity. It came to be known as the Doctors` Pact. They agreed to co-operate in the struggle for full franchise, equal rights, and opportunities for all races, the abolition of the Pass Laws and other discriminatory legislation, and they urged their people to make every effort to compel the Government to treat blacks in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter. This token of trust between Africans and Indians was as yet no more than that. Xuma might have welcomed co-operation with other races; the recently formed Youth League of the African National Congress did not.

Youth League Raises Obstacles

The Youth League, which had been founded in 1944, consisted of young African nationalists led by Anton Lembede, Nelson Mandela, Peter Mda, Walter Sisulu, and Oliver Tambo. They rejected what they called "foreign" leadership and ideologies. They were suspicious of both whites and Indians and particularly of Communists, believing that co-operation inevitably resulted in Africans being dominated by those groups. They insisted that in building "a powerful national liberation movement", the creed should be one of pure African nationalism. (In 1958, the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania and in the 1970s the Black Consciousness Movement were to express similar misgivings. But by then, the African National Congress had abandoned such sectarianism.)

The Youth League was not only restive at Xuma's eagerness to work with Indians, but felt that for too long the African National Congress had been a mere talking shop for intellectuals, passing resolutions and making token protests to the Government. It devised a programme of action, of strikes and civil disobedience, and when the Afrikaner

Nationalists came to power in 1948, and began forthwith to implement their policy of apartheid, the League planned a national stoppage of work for 1950.

But before the young African nationalists could organise what they had intended as their first important action, an *ad hoc* group in the Transvaal, consisting of representatives of the South African Indian Congress, the Communist Party and a section of the African National Congress called for a stoppage of work in the Johannesburg area. This was to be on May Day, 1950. The Youth League angrily protested against what they saw as a pre-empting of their initiative.

1950: The Breakthrough

The May Day strike was a substantial success despite a government ban on demonstrations, despite 2,000 police deployed in the Johannesburg area, and despite the opposition by the Youth League. More than half of the workforce stayed at home. But the day ended in tragedy: the police attacked gatherings, and, in the subsequent riots, fired on the crowds. Eighteen Africans were killed, and many more injured. Common rage and sorrow brought about a hitherto unimaginable rapprochement between the Youth League, the Indians, and the Communists. Mandela has described this occasion as a turning point in understanding through first-hand experience the ruthlessness of the police. He was deeply impressed by the organising capacity of the *ad hoc* group, and by the support black workers had given to the May Day call. The League decided to support the African National Congress, the Indian Congress, and the Communist Party, in organising a demonstration of mourning and protest, to be held toward the end of June 1950.

New laws aimed at driving people apart were in fact drawing them together: in particular the Suppression of Communism Bill, which was directed at a far larger target than the 2,000 Communists comprising some 1,600 Africans, 250 Indians, and 150 whites). The object of the bill was clearly to suppress all militant protest.

When the Youth League took part in the co-ordinating committee to plan the June demonstration, the atmosphere of mutual suspicion was gradually dissolved, and the League's fundamental change in policy was summarised thus: the African people pledged themselves "to liberate South Africa - black, white and yellow". The demonstration would be the first nation-wide call by the African National Congress on people to strike; the first confrontation between urban people and the State.

On June 26, 1950, there was a complete stoppage of work in Port Elizabeth and in Durban, but in other areas there was only partial success, if any. Port Elizabeth was fast gaining a reputation as the most militant black area, but the African National Congress recognised that the remarkable achievement in Durban was largely a result of the organising ability and support of the Indian community.

The Defiance Campaign Leads to an Alliance

Walter Sisulu, Secretary General of the African National Congress, was busy with the

next stage in implementing the Programme of Action: the call for civil disobedience. Mandela, remembering the disciplined enthusiasm of Indian volunteers during the 1946 passive resistance campaign - Meer, Singh and Kathrada had been fellow-students of his in Johannesburg - suggested similar action. Sisulu urged that all races be invited to participate. At its annual conference in December 1950, the African National Congress took the decision: there would be mass protests on April 6, 1952, followed by non-violent defiance of various apartheid laws.

With the support of the South African Indian Congress, the African National Congress began to organise. Symbolic of the close co-operation was the role of Moulvi Cachalia in assisting Mandela in the preparation of volunteers. His younger brother, Yusuf, also played a significant part: their father had been associated with Gandhi in 1907. Another of the most influential Indians was Nana Sita, a Gandhian. The Indian community not only provided organisational skills, but also generous financial support.

Not only the leadership, but members of the two organisations were working closely together in certain areas. For instance, the women of the African National Congress and Natal Indian Congress set up the Durban District Women's League to support the proposed campaign. In consequence, they were important in the women's movement nationally. Bertha Mkhize was President, Fatima Meer the Secretary.

When the Defiance Campaign was launched in June 1952, not only Indians joined the great majority of Africans who deliberately broke the laws, but Coloured people and a handful of whites were also among the 8,500 who went to prison. Manilal Gandhi, the Mahatma's son, at first had opposed the campaign, doubting Africans' capacity for sustained non-violence. Much impressed by all that he witnessed of early demonstrations, he joined one of two groups of whites who defied. These groups, one in Johannesburg, and one in Cape Town, included a trade unionist Betty du Toit, a law student Albie Sachs, a writer Freda Troup, and the son of the first South African-born Governor-General, Patrick Duncan. The participation of these individuals and the tremendous boost in self-respect which the campaign gave to the African National Congress paved the way for a more formal and substantial alliance.

On September 12, 1953, the South African Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO) was formed in Cape Town by trade unionists and by left-wing and liberal members of the Coloured community. Prominent among the organisers were Reginald September and Dr. Richard van der Ross. Soon after, in Johannesburg, on October 10, 1953, the Congress of Democrats (COD) was formed by white supporters of the African National Congress. Their constitution was based on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The significance of the Congress of Democrats lay not in its numbers - it never had more than a few hundred members - but in its stand on principle. It represented the commitment of a group of whites of whom Mandela was to say: "For many decades, Communists were the only political group in South Africa who were prepared to treat Africans as human beings and equals..."

By 1955, the South African Congress of Trade Unions had been formed and, along with the African National Congress, the South African Indian Congress, the Congress of Democrats, and the South African Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO) made up the Congress Alliance. As a result of the Defiance Campaign, the membership of the African National Congress had soared to 100,000. Government response to this success, to the new militancy, and to the growing support from other races, was to ban virtually all leaders and organisers, among them trade unionists. Since the passing of the Suppression of Communism Act in 1950, banning orders had proliferated, with Dr. Dadoo among the first to be restricted. Bans prevented the recipient from taking part in Congress activities, from attending meetings, from leaving a specified area. Year by year, the restrictions were made harsher, extended to cover more activities and longer periods. Chief Albert Luthuli, President-General of the African National Congress since 1952, was first banned and confined for one year. This was later increased to two, and then to five years. Infringement of bans could mean anything up to ten years' imprisonment.

"The Congresses realise", said Mandela, who had himself been banned, "that these measures create a new situation... we have to analyse the dangers... evolve new plans of political struggle".

In addition to the unique system of banning, severe new laws were enacted. Anyone committing any offence "by way of protest, or in support of any campaign against any law", could be sentenced to three years in jail, a fine of $300, a whipping of ten strokes, or a combination of any two penalties. For incitement, the sentence was five years, and $500.

The Congress of the People

The innumerable bannings had sapped the high confidence generated by the Defiance Campaign. A historic suggestion transformed the mood.

In 1953, Professor Z.K. Matthews, a renowned leader of the African National Congress and an academic, returned to South Africa after a year spent at the Union Theological Seminary in New York. Sensing the urgent need for constructive unifying action, he joined other Eastern Cape leaders, Dr. James Njongwe and Robert Matji, in formulating a new initiative. He put his proposal to a crowded conference of the African National Congress, urging it to call on all the people of the country "irrespective of race or colour". Its aim should be to draw up "a Freedom Charter for the democratic South Africa of the future". The exultant response of the Conference was reflected in the energetic organising by the African National Congress and its allies that followed.

On June 25, 1955, from all over the country came 3,000 delegates, men and women, to assemble on a patch of veld at Kliptown, outside Johannesburg. Two-thirds were Africans, the rest Indians, whites, and Coloured people. South Africa in miniature: doctors, peasants, labourers, ministers, housewives, servants, trade unionists, and lawyers. FREEDOM IN OUR LIFETIME read one banner, and LONG LIVE THE STRUGGLE read another. Many Africans and Indians wore national garb, and the

colours of the African National Congress, black, green and gold dominated the scene. As always, there were the ubiquitous police.

Due to bans, many inspiring leaders were absent. When an award symbolising the highest distinction in African society was announced for Chief Luthuli, Dr. Dadoo and Father Trevor Huddleston, only the latter was there to receive the *Isitwalandwe*, for his role in protests against the enforced removals of Africans from Johannesburg's western areas, and against Bantu education.

The Freedom Charter was read in English, Sesotho, and Xhosa. It began with the affirmation of the Congress Alliance:

> ***"We the people of South Africa declare for all our country and the world to know: that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people."***

The aims were spelled out:

> ***"The people shall govern; all national groups shall have equal rights, the people shall share in the country's wealth; the land shall be shared among those who work it; all shall be equal before the law; all shall enjoy equal human rights; there shall be work and security..."***

Some aims arose out of daily experience:

> ***"The privacy of the house from police raids shall be protected by the law" and "all shall be free to travel without restriction."***

Some were socialist:

"the mineral wealth... the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole."

The crowd approved each section with shouts. Police armed with sten guns marched on the Congress during its concluding hours on June 26, 1955. Delegates were questioned and searched, documents were seized. Yet, the mood as night fell was jubilant, almost triumphant.

The Freedom Charter was to live on, symbolising an ideal South Africa. Today, it is the cornerstone of the recently founded United Democratic Front. In 1955, it consolidated the absolute repudiation of racialism by the African National Congress, and firmly established the alliance of all races.

The Women's Protest

The Federation of South African Women was formed in 1954, in order to provide multi-racial support to the Women's League of the African National Congress. The African National Congress was already in the thick of protest against the extension of the Pass Laws to African women. Among the Federation's organisers were Ray Alexander, who since 1929 had been developing trade unions in the Cape, Helen Joseph, a British-born social worker, and Fatima Meer, a Natal sociologist.

As always for the African people, the difficulties and obstacles in organising were immense. There was police harassment with bannings and frequent arrests. There were also the problems deriving from poverty, exacerbated by the great distances between towns and villages: how to afford fares and how to communicate with outlying branches when telephones, stenographers and typewriters were virtually non-existent. Nevertheless, there were country-wide protests which were to culminate in a mass demonstration in Pretoria in August 1956.

Port Elizabeth women raised $800 for the railway fares and filled two coaches in the train, while from Durban, twenty-three women set off in cars driven by Indian friends. As thousands of women approached the capital from all corners of the country, the authorities announced that it would be illegal to go in procession through the streets.

Early on August 9, 1956, there was therefore no procession. But everywhere there were women, not more than three in a group, dressed in the colours of the African National Congress, some with babies on their back, some in saris, striding toward the Union Buildings. They were determined to tell the Prime Minister that they totally rejected the Pass Laws. Twenty thousand women converged on the Government offices, and at their head were Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph and Rahim Moosa.

Watched by the Security Police, Lilian Ngoyi knocked on Prime Minister Strijdom's door. The Prime Minister was not there, declared his Secretary. The three women delivered their stack of protests and then rejoined the huge crowd in the amphitheatre.

With one accord, the women rose to their feet and stood with hands raised in the Congress salute. For thirty minutes, they stood in complete silence. Not a child cried. Then they burst into the warrior's song of the women of Natal with its topical words:

"Strijdom, you have struck a rock once you have touched a woman:"

They sang the anthem: "*Nkosi Sikelel'i-Afrika*", and afterwards they dispersed.[4]

Lilian Ngoyi and Helen Joseph were among those charged with treason a few months later.

Treason Trial

The Treason Trial was the most spectacular proof of the multi-racial nature of the struggle in South Africa. It established that the resistance movement was above race; that black, white and brown were united against white domination. And, as never before, liberals, Christians and socialists came together in organising the Treason Trial Defence Fund, under the chairmanship of Ambrose Reeves, Bishop of Johannesburg.

In December 1956, 156 men and women were arrested, and from all over South Africa were brought to Johannesburg. The political journalist Ruth First was there, and her husband, Joe Slovo, a lawyer active in political trials. Most of the accused had attended the Congress of the People. The focus of the evidence was the policy of the African National Congress between 1955 and 1956; the Freedom Charter was the key document. The defence not only repudiated the prosecution's contention that the Charter was treasonable or a step toward a communist State, it positively declared the aim of the Congress Alliance as expressed in the Charter, and argued that the trial was a political plot. It was not 156 individuals who were on trial "but the ideas that they and thousands of others in our land have openly espoused and expressed".

After long months of preparatory examination, the charges against 61, among them Luthuli and Tambo, were dropped. By April 1959, only thirty remained on trial, the indictment against the others having been quashed. Among the thirty were Kathrada and Helen Joseph, who was not only a leader of the Women's Federation, but one of the founders and Vice-Chairman of the Congress of Democrats.

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[4] See also "Now You Have Touched the Women" by Elizabeth S. Schmidt below.

One hundred and fifty witnesses had been examined, as well as nearly 10,000 documents, before the State concluded its case. The trial had lasted four and a half years. Then, in March 1961, before the defence could conclude its argument, the three judges interrupted to announce a unanimous verdict: Not guilty. It was a phenomenal victory for the liberation struggle.

Sharpeville and its Aftermath

On March 21, 1960, Robert Sobukwe, leader of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, initiated widespread anti-pass law demonstrations. He was among those arrested at Orlando township. Thirty-five miles away, at the model township of Sharpeville, people gathered in their thousands, attracted by the non-violent protest, at the police station where passes were to be destroyed. As the morning wore on, the crowd, which journalists found "perfectly amiable", appeared to the police increasingly menacing. In the early afternoon, seventy-five policemen fired some 700 shots into the crowd, killing 69 Africans and wounding 180. Among them were women and children. Most of the dead had been shot in the back.[5]

That evening, a thousand miles away, in Langa outside Cape Town, the protest drew 10,000 people. Again the panic, again the shooting. Two Africans were killed, and 49 injured.

Outrage swept the country, precipitating riots and strikes and mass demonstrations. The Government declared a state of emergency. Both the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania were outlawed. Some 20,000 people were detained. Most were African men, both leaders and so-called "vagrants". Men and women of all races were rounded up, not just members of the Congress Alliance but members of the Liberal Party, and a missionary, Hannah Stanton.

It seemed that the liberation movement must surely be crushed. But detainees were able to conspire while in jail. One group of whites, including members of the multi-racial Liberal Party, agreed that after Sharpeville non-violent protest was futile. Upon release, they began to recruit like-minded men and women, among them former leaders of the National Union of South African Students and journalists, such as Hugh Lewin and Raymond Eisenstein. They formed a sabotage group, recruited black members and called themselves the National Committee of Liberation (later changed to African Resistance Movement). Their first action in December 1960 went unnoticed and it was not until October 1961, that their sabotage was reported. During the following two years such actions continued sporadically.

Among black detainees, it was decided to make one last attempt at non-violent protest. After their release, they called an "All-In African Conference" in March 1961.

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[5] See also "The Sharpeville Massacre - a Watershed in South Africa" by the Rt. Rev. Ambrose Reeves, and "The Sharpeville Massacre: its Historic Significance in the Struggle against Apartheid" by David Sibeko below.

Nelson Mandela, momentarily free of bans, was elected to lead a National Action Council, and to renew the demand for a National Convention in order to establish a new union of all South Africans. In support of the demand, a nation-wide stay-at-home strike was to take place over two days in May. Organising from underground, Mandela was assisted in his clandestine existence by comrades of all races.

In the days running up to the strike, the Government called out police and army. A massive display of force was directed at the African townships. On the second day, Mandela was obliged to call off the strike.

Nevertheless, hundreds of thousands of Africans had responded to his call, and in Durban they had been joined by Indian workers. In Cape Town, for the first time, there was a substantial response from the Coloured people. Mandela spoke of the immense courage this took. And he declared:

"If the Government reaction is to crush by naked force our non-violent struggle, we will have to reconsider our tactics."

Early in June 1961, he took part in secret deliberations with a small group from the outlawed African National Congress. The crucial decision was made: after half a century of non-violence, the policy of the African National Congress must change. The main organisation would continue its underground organising, and would remain non-violent, but a select few of the African National Congress would unite to undertake controlled violence. *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Spear of the Nation) was formed. Sabotage was to be their first form of action because, as Mandela was to explain:

"It did not involve loss of life, and it offered the most hope for future race relations."

Among the group were Walter Sisulu, who would continue to lead the African National Congress, Ruth First, Joe Slovo, Denis Goldberg and Harold Wolpe, as well as Ahmad Kathrada.

Umkhonto's first acts of sabotage took place on December 16, 1961. A few days earlier, Chief Albert Luthuli had received the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo: It was as though this event set the seal on a long and extraordinary history for, as he said in his address, the honour must be accepted in the name of the "true patriots of South Africa", all those in the African National Congress who had "set the organisation steadfastly against racial vaingloriousness".

The shootings at Sharpeville had sent waves of outrage around the world. It was as if the international community had suddenly realised the full horror of apartheid, and had

seen how police violence had escalated through the long years of oppression. The award of the prize to Luthuli was a measure of the world's sympathy, admiration and, perhaps, its guilt.

The State Reacts

A new Minister of Justice, B. J. Vorster, took office in face of intensifying outbreaks of sabotage. In the Cape, there were also indiscriminate killings and rioting by groups of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, who had broken away to form *Poqo*. Vorster introduced a Sabotage Act, which contained widely-ranging offences, including trespass and the illegal possession of weapons, with a minimum sentence of 5 years and maximum of death. Commenting on the law, the International Commission of Jurists said that it reduced the liberty of the people "to a degree not surpassed by the most extreme dictatorships of the Left or the Right".

The Minister greatly extended his power to ban individuals. New banning orders were issued to 52 whites, 35 Africans, 9 Coloured people and 6 Indians. The new and arbitrary punishment of house arrest was now added to other bans. Helen Joseph was the first to be served with a house arrest order.

On May 1, 1963, Vorster brought in 90-day detention: solitary confinement without charge or trial for renewable periods of 90 days, without access to lawyers or family. The Security Police could interrogate for unlimited time, until the detainee had given "satisfactory" replies. "Torture by mindbreaking", protested one opposition Member of Parliament, but only Helen Suzman, the lone Progressive Party Member of Parliament, voted against every stage of the bill which embraced this legalising of torture.

The police detained or arrested thousands, most of them Africans. Among them was Albertina Sisulu, the first woman to be held under the 90-day law. (Twenty years later, after spending most of the intervening period under bans, she was again detained before being brought to trial for furthering the aims of the African National Congress.)

The first death in detention took place on September 5, 1963, when Looksmart Solwandle Ngudle was found hanged in his cell. A year later, Babla Suliman Saloojee was the fourth detainee to die: he "fell" seven floors from the Security Police Headquarters in Johannesburg. Police torture had become lethal.

Meanwhile, in hundreds of trials, men and women were charged not only under the Sabotage Act, but also under the Suppression of Communism Act, with "furthering the aims" of the African National Congress or the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania. Many of the young white saboteurs of the African Resistance Movement were captured and sentenced to between two and ten years, while Eddie Daniels, the one Coloured member to be brought to trial, was sentenced to fifteen years. One of their members, John Harris, acting on his own initiative had committed a uniquely violent act in placing a petrol bomb in the concourse of Johannesburg railway station on July 24, 1964. A woman had been killed, and several others were seriously injured. Harris was hanged on April 1,

1965.

It was the Rivonia trial, however, that became the focus of world attention, so that the United Nations General Assembly voted by 106 votes to South Africa's one in a call for the release of the men on trial, and of all other political prisoners in South Africa.

The Rivonia Trial

In July 1963, the police made a sensational coup. At a house in the Johannesburg suburb of Rivonia, they captured several of *Umkhonto*'s leaders, as well as members of the underground African National Congress: Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Ahmad Kathrada were there, along with white Communists who had been at the heart of organising the sabotage. In the trial that followed, Nelson Mandela, who had been captured in August 1962, was also brought from prison where he was serving a sentence of five years for his activities in organising the 1961 strike.

The men in the dock in the Rivonia trial, the men eventually to be found guilty of organising sabotage, were visible confirmation that the liberation movement had steadfastly rejected any taint of racism. But even in prison, apartheid was the law: Dennis Goldberg was confined to Pretoria jail's special section for white political prisoners, while his comrades were sent to Robben Island. All, equally, had been sentenced to imprisonment for life.

The outlawing of the African National Congress and Pan Africanist Congress of Azania after Sharpeville had sent hundreds of their members, as well as Indian and white militants, into exile. The mass arrests of 1962-1963 stepped up the exodus. After the extreme violence with which police suppressed the uprising of the youth in 1976, waves of young men and women left the country. Most joined the African National Congress in exile while some joined the black consciousness organisations and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania. Exiles became officials in Congress missions, or studied or trained for the day when they could continue the armed struggle back home.

On April 25, 1969, the African National Congress had held a conference at Morogoro in the United Republic of Tanzania. It was decided at that meeting that membership would henceforth be open to all races. Joe Slovo was among those elected to the National Executive. Even the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania had bent its rule to accept one white member, Patrick Duncan, who led their mission in Algiers until his untimely death.

Bram Fischer

In this brief record of how all races have contributed to the struggle in South Africa - a record that inevitably is far from complete - one man stands out as a symbol of resistance to a tyrannical regime. He would have been the first to deplore such a remark, such a singling out of any individual.

Bram Fischer, Q.C., the distinguished Afrikaner lawyer who led the defence in the Rivonia Trial and played a prominent part in many other political trials, including the Treason Trial, was himself arrested and brought to trial in October 1964. Along with thirteen other whites, he was charged with furthering the aims of the Communist Party. In January 1965, he "jumped" bail and went underground. His comrades, including the staunch Eli Weinberg, Violet Weinberg, Ivan Schermbrucker, and several young women, were all found guilty and sentenced to between two and five years' imprisonment.

In a letter to the Magistrate, Fischer explained his decision to go underground. His act had not been prompted by fear of punishment; indeed, he realised his eventual punishment might be increased. But he wanted to demonstrate that no one should meekly submit to South Africa's barbaric laws.

At a time when Vorster, through the 90-day law, had succeeded in crushing all militant opposition in the country, Fischer had been prepared to sacrifice family and career, if necessary his life, to make this solitary act of protest. Not young, not fit, nevertheless he fought back. While all the police forces in the country sought him out, he was attempting to recreate a radical opposition. He had been underground for more than eight months when Vorster brought in a new law: 180 days detention. Solitary confinement. The new notorious methods of police interrogation. Within days, men and women had been detained. Within weeks, on November 11, 1965, Fischer was captured. At his trial in 1966, he was found guilty of conspiring to commit sabotage with Mandela and the other men he had defended in the Rivonia trial, and of furthering the aims of the Communist Party.

During the trial, he made a statement from the dock. In it he said:

"All the conduct with which I have been charged has been directed towards maintaining contact and understanding between the races of this country. If one day it may help to establish a bridge across which white leaders and the non-whites can meet to settle the destinies of all of us by negotiation and not by force of arms, I shall be able to bear with fortitude any sentence which the court may impose on me."

He was sentenced to life imprisonment, to be served in Pretoria prison. In 1974, it was discovered that he had cancer. Only when he was near death was he allowed into

the care of his family. On May 8, 1975, he died. After the funeral, the authorities insisted that his ashes be returned to the prison.

Renegades

The Rev. Beyers Naude is regarded not only as a renegade, but also as a heretic by the ruling Afrikaner Nationalists. A dominee of the Dutch Reformed Church, who for 23 years was an inner councillor of the secret *Broederbond*, he gradually became convinced that apartheid was unchristian. From such a beginning, he made a profound philosophical journey until he founded the multiracial ecumenical Christian Institute. During the rise of the Black Consciousness Movement, and at the time when its leaders and organisations were banned in 1977, Naude and the Institute were also banned. Today he worships as a member of a black congregation. In 1982, he was banned for a further three years.

Although Afrikaner Nationalists evince a particular hatred for their "renegades", all whites co-operating politically with blacks have been treated as though they are renegades to their racial group. The Liberal Party founded in 1953, which was the only multi-racial political party to be formed since the outlawing of the South African Communist Party, in its turn suffered the bannings of leaders and organisers, and eventually, in May 1968, it was outlawed as a Party. Chief Luthuli, when asked how a white South African could best support the struggle, replied: "In the Transvaal, join the Congress of Democrats; in Natal, join the Liberal Party". It was in Natal that Alan Paton, Peter Brown, Violaine Junod and Jordan Ngubane were among the leaders. One of the founders of the Party, Ruth Haymann, was the first white lawyer to have the distinction of being banned and placed under house arrest; as an attorney, she had played a key role in political trials during the early 1960s.

Apartheid Brings Politics into Every Aspect of Life

In South Africa, humanitarian work that challenges racial divisiveness inevitably becomes political. Such work includes that of the Black Sash women in their advice offices in the major urban areas. During the past 20 years, these middle-class white women have become experts in the complex network of apartheid laws which control every moment of the lives of Africans. They have assisted countless men and women and now handle some 25,000 cases a year. But often, in face of increasing administrative restrictions, they are powerless to help. Sheena Duncan, their national president and daughter of a past president, has said that, in recognising the resulting frustration, they are nevertheless encouraged to continue their work, because their main function has come to be political pressure, carried out through educating the black community.

The Unity the Government Fears

Co-operation between blacks and whites strikes at the heart of apartheid. In 1959, Albert Luthuli was for a while free of bans. He began to address meetings, not just of Africans, but of all races. Not just the faithful few of the Congress Alliance, but ordinary

whites as well. In Cape Town, crowds gathered to hear him. His theme was "white fears and non-white aspirations". His lucid, uncompromising approach proved immensely attractive to many white South Africans. The Johannesburg *Star* described his visit to the Cape as a "triumphal tour". But the triumph was short-lived: no sooner had he arrived in Johannesburg than police handed him a new banning order. He was prohibited from all gatherings and was to be restricted to his home in the rural area of Lower Tugela for five years. Previously, his bans had excited little protest outside the Congress Alliance, the Liberal Party, and *New Age*, the left-wing newspaper. Now, the white press came out with banner headlines and editorial criticism of the "palpable injustice". All races made their protests at meetings in Johannesburg and Durban.

Invaluable to Chief Luthuli through the years of his restriction was the practical help which E.V. Mahomed unstintingly provided. Eventually he too was banned.

To the Government, Luthuli represented a peculiarly dangerous threat: he, more than any other African leader, had profoundly affected the whites. The Government dreaded whites coming to know and understand blacks as people, thereby losing the blanket fear which over generations has been fostered in order to cement white domination. Multi-racial co-operation must be stamped out. In recent years, therefore, among the main targets of police repression have been the men and women of all races working together in the labour movement, at universities, and in the churches.

The Trade Unions

Since 1972, blacks have made spectacular progress in forming national industrial unions. Despite intimidation and constant harassment from both Government and employers, they have been winning a large number of strikes. Although 30 white and black organisers were banned in 1976, new leaders were thrown up and the bannings failed to cripple the unions. Nor could the Government ban the unions themselves, for multi-national companies employing black workers were under intense pressure from anti-apartheid organisations abroad to withdraw from South Africa. Even the 450,000 black mineworkers at long last achieved a legal union in 1983, under a multi-racial confederation. This was not, however, without a tragic episode; a week of strikes in July 1982, as in 1946, met with violence, and ten miners were shot dead while hundreds were arrested, and thousands were sent back to the poverty-stricken "homelands".

According to figures tabled in the South African Parliament on May 25, 1982, 260,000 blacks were members of registered trade unions, and another 100,000 belonged to unions not registered under new legislation. During 1981, there had been 342 strikes involving nearly 93,000 workers, 93 per cent of them black. The most important black unions were grouped under the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU), which was based on grass-roots organising and which had, by November 1982, 100,000 members spread over 390 factories.

The young whites involved in this resurgence are not only union organisers. They include academics and students who help with researching and publishing information

on the nature of the South African system. With economic and political facts, they refute the arguments of local and foreign industrialists, businessmen and financiers who support the South African Government. Their achievement can be measured by the waves of detentions in recent years, each carrying off small numbers of politically active whites, as well as black union officials.

The most unusual detention involved Hannchen Koornhof, the 26-year-old niece of the Minister for Co-operation and Development - the euphemistic title for the man who controls black lives. Her father, a medical professor, speaking of the political disagreement with his brother, said:

"That is the tragedy of this country, you can love a person, you can be close to a person and yet not understand the political views which make him do what he does. I know many people are hurt by his policies."

What the *New York Times* reporter called "a rare alliance",[6] was struck when Professor Koornhof volunteered to intervene on behalf of a black political prisoner: rare, because he was a Cabinet Minister's brother, and the prisoner was Zwelakhe, journalist son of Walter Sisulu.

On November 27, 1981, Dr. Neil Aggett, Transvaal regional secretary of the African Food and Canning Workers' Union, was detained under the Terrorism Act. On February 5, 1982, he was found hanged in his cell. At the six-month long inquest into his death, George Bizos S.C., a lawyer representing the Aggett family, claimed that security police, by brutal interrogation methods, had broken Aggett and destabilised his personality to such an extent that they drove him to commit suicide. The methods included assaults, torture by electric shock treatment, and days of non-stop interrogation.

Ismail Momoniat and Pramanathan Naidoo, with great courage, gave evidence of the torture. And it was revealing that a lawyer representing the State remarked, that, if a statement by Dr. Aggett describing this treatment was permitted as evidence, it would expose "the working methods and techniques" of the security police, and would reduce "the esteem in which they are held by the public and other nations."

Nevertheless, the Magistrate, in finding that Aggett had committed suicide, rejected submissions that this had been induced by ill-treatment at the hands of the security police.

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6 *New York Times*, January 3, 1982

Neil Aggett was given a hero's funeral. Thousands of mourners, most of them black, marched through the streets of Johannesburg and, in a calculated act of defiance, carried banned banners of the African National Congress, and sang freedom songs.

A few months later, there was another hero's funeral, for Ruth First, in Maputo in Mozambique. She had been killed instantly, while opening a letter in her office at the Centre for African Studies. As research director for the Centre, she had been particularly engaged in a study of Mozambicans who had been miners in South Africa. During the mine strike of 1946, she had been among the handful of whites to assist the African Mine Workers` Union in its organising. To the time of her death she remained a member of the African National Congress.

Security police interrogations of trade union organisers during recent years have focussed on the African National Congress. As emerged from the Aggett inquest and other court hearings, the police have been desperate to get detainees to admit to connections with the outlawed Congress. Aggett had repeatedly denied that he was a member. Another man said: "The torture became so bad, I almost offered a false admission that I was a member of the African National Congress".

To this end, the State at first planned to join Thozamile Gqweta - who has been called South Africa's most harassed trade unionist - Sam Kikine and Sisa Njikelana, with two white detainees, Barbara Hogan and Cedric Mayson. But even the South African security police eventually realised the patent foolishness of this attempt to link these Eastern Cape leaders of the South African Allied Workers` Union, with two Johannesburg supporters of African National Congress.

Barbara Hogan was a thirty-year-old post-graduate student working part-time for the Environmental Development Agency. She had compiled reports for the African National Congress on such matters as trade unions and boycotts. She pleaded guilty to furthering the aims of the organisation, but denied the further charge of treason. The judge found she had served the African National Congress with dedication and enthusiasm. He found her guilty of high treason. She was sentenced to ten years` imprisonment.

Raymond Suttner, a lecturer in law at Natal University, had also pleaded guilty to furthering the aims of the African National Congress in 1975. In court, he explained what precisely he had done:

"... duplicating, typing, sticking stamps. Most of the time I did this work on my own... The goals for which I worked warranted whatever sacrifices were required."

He was sentenced to 7½ years' imprisonment.

The President’s Council Stimulates Protest

Prime Minister Botha's constitutional proposals for a President’s Council have stimulated massive protests. The tri-cameral parliament, ostensibly representing whites, Coloured people and Indians, will be dominated by the whites. White church leaders and liberals have condemned the proposals for excluding Africans and for ensuring the continuation of racial discrimination. It has been pointed out that the Government wants to co-opt the Coloured and Indian minorities as co-defenders of the "nation" against the African majority. By gaining political rights, these communities would become eligible for conscription to fight in the war that white South Africa has been waging against the South West Africa People’s Organisation in Namibia and Angola, and against *Umkhonto we Sizwe* in South Africa.

The Indian Congress had already been galvanised into effective boycott of elections to an Indian advisory council set up by the Government in 1981. The Coloured Labour Party, however, was divided between those eager to join the whites, and others who totally rejected the idea of the President’s Council.

By September 1983, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, the Zulu leader, was addressing huge crowds of all races, attacking the proposed Council. He was joined in the attack by Chief Kaiser Matanzima of the Transkei, and by four other leaders of the so-called "independent homelands", as well as by African businessmen and clergy. The Council was designed to polarise South Africa racially, they said, and they pledged themselves to work for a National Convention at which a constitution acceptable to all the people of South Africa would be negotiated.

That the hot argument ranging through the country should embrace such controversial figures, was a healthy sign. The climate was ripe for the growth of a new multi-racial mass organisation. The President’s Council had provided a focus for resistance.

The United Democratic Front

In 1981, a resurgence of the banned African National Congress was manifest in the series of guerrilla strikes by *Umkhonto* insurgents, and in the emergence of new organisations espousing the policy of co-operation across racial barriers. A multi-racial conference of more than 100 delegates from both political organisations and trade unions, as well as prominent individuals, endorsed the Freedom Charter as the cornerstone of their movement.

By August 20, 1983, the so-called Charterists had organised a huge conference. Five thousand people crammed into a vast marquee in a Coloured area outside Cape Town. They represented 320 organisations and innumerable supporters. Some 2,000 more stood outside in the cold night, listening to the speeches over loudspeakers, despite warnings that they risked arrest. Press reporters remarked on the resemblance to the Congress of the People in 1955.

The President's Council and further laws to confine the movement of blacks were angrily rejected. The United Democratic Front was launched. To cries of "Amandla!" (Power), Nelson Mandela, imprisoned in the nearby Pollsmoor jail, was formally named a patron. Albertina Sisulu, whose husband shared a cell with Mandela, and who herself was in detention, was elected a President, along with two other veterans of the struggle, Archie Gumede, a Durban lawyer and leader of the "Free Mandela" campaign, and Oscar Mpetha. Mpetha, the Cape labour leader, at the age of 74 was facing a five year prison sentence on a terrorism charge, after having spent the previous three years in detention or on trial. Conspicuous among the United Democratic Front organisers were Indians and white students.

A pamphlet of the United Democratic Front announced:

"We speak with the voice of unity. Each one of us here carries the hopes and dreams of our people. In our thousands, from every corner of the land, from town and country, we send out our call for freedom... Black and white, young and old, worker, student, priest: on this historic day we have begun our march."

Oscar Mpetha told the conference:

"I can safely say to the Nationalist Government that the past is theirs and the future is ours".

Within two months, the State was cracking down on the United Democratic Front, by banning the organisation's meetings. The banning of individuals would have aroused condemnation overseas as a denial of human rights. Most seriously, the scheduled meeting of the national secretariat, due to take place in Johannesburg in October 1983, was banned under the Internal Security Act on the grounds that it would endanger the public peace.

Since 1981, supporters of the Black Consciousness Movement had also been organising. Their National Forum Committee still refused to co-operate with whites, but gave a pledge to work for an "anti-racist Socialist republic". Even as the great conference of the United Democratic Front was taking place, not far away, the all-black South African Council on Sport was attacking its policies, describing white allies as the "most far-seeing agents of apartheid capitalism" who "attempt to infiltrate and capture"

the leadership of the people's organisations.

The challenge was taken up by Dr. Alan Boesak, the influential black clergyman and President of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. As one of the founders of the United Democratic Front, he expressed understanding of the emotions behind the Black Consciousness Movement. "We have seen with our own eyes brutalisation of our people at the hands of whites", he said. But at a time when apartheid was being modernised and streamlined and given a new multi-coloured coat, the struggle would have to be against blacks who collaborated, as well as against whites. "South Africa belongs to all its peoples", he declared.

Dr. Boesak, in former times, would have been categorised as "Coloured". Now all activists, whether of African, Indian or Coloured descent, chose to be black. But true unity has yet to be achieved.

Steve Biko, at the time of his last fatal detention, had been planning a journey in which he had hoped to meet representatives of the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania to discuss with them the possibility of unity with the Black Consciousness Movement. Clearly, the security police knew of his intention, and one aim of their brutal interrogation was to discover the details of his plans. Unity of all those committed to liberation in South Africa, unity of black and black, and black and white, remains the greatest threat to the South African State.

There are families who for generations have worked for that unity: the Cachalias and the Naidoos, for instance. And if there is one individual who epitomises the multi-racial nature of the struggle, and whose life and work provide a powerful refutation of the black consciousness attack, it is Helen Joseph. Nearly eighty years old, she continues to campaign for a South Africa based on the Freedom Charter.

The first of any race to be placed under house arrest and, along with Lilian Ngoyi, the only woman to be among the Treason trialists throughout the four and a half years of the trial's duration, she was not only a leading organiser of the South African Federation of Women but, almost single-handed, she inaugurated and worked for the Human Rights Welfare Committee. With Joe Morolong, a member of the African National Congress, and Amina Cachalia of the Indian Congress, she made a journey of 12,000 kilometres to take food and clothing to the banished people - men and women who had been deported to remote areas where they lived in isolation. As a result, Mrs. Joseph was repeatedly banned until, in 1971, the restrictions were lifted - because she had cancer.

Today she particularly inspires students who regard her not as a voice and presence from the past, but as a representative of the future, a future when justice will prevail, when freedom will be won.

THE INTERNATIONAL IMPACT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION[7]

by

George Houser

Introduction

January 8, 1982 marked the 70th anniversary of the founding of the African National Congress of South Africa. There could be a no more appropriate time to consider the international impact of the South African struggle for liberation than in this anniversary year. The circumstances on the African continent, and in South Africa itself, are far different today than they were seventy years ago. Yet, the ANC has changed and adapted as necessary, to maintain not only its relevance but its place of leadership in the struggle for equality and freedom in South Africa. It is well to remember that the founding conference of the ANC (at first called the South Africa Native National Congress) came only two years after the formation of the Union of South Africa. In fact, in his opening address to the conference held in Bloemfontein, its prime mover, Pixley Seme, contrasted the African meeting to that of the whites, who had founded their union in 1910. Now, he said, "We have called you to this conference so that we can together find ways and means of forming our national union for the purpose of creating national unity and defending our rights and privileges".

The movement for justice, independence and equality in South Africa is many faceted. But the ANC has always been central to the struggle for fundamental change. In 1958 Anthony Sampson wrote about the treason trial. What he said is as relevant now as then.

"It is Congress around which African opposition and its allies have centred for the last ten years, and it is Congress which is likely to present the main threat to white supremacy in the future."

How does one measure the impact of a conflict in any one of the countries sharing a portion of the globe's surface? How does one measure the impact of the South African struggle? South Africa is only a moderately-sized country thousands of miles from

[7] From "Notes and Documents", No. 2/82, January 1982

Europe, the Americas, and much of Asia. And yet, the impact of the South African struggle has been an increasing one. Its primary impact is on all of the people of South Africa, of course. But over the years it has also affected the lives of people far removed from South Africa.

Why is this? In part, it is because of the considerable wealth of the country. It is also because of its strategic location overlooking the Cape route with its vast oil traffic. In addition, the struggle has within it the seeds for an international confrontation of the major Powers. Yet, an overriding impact of South Africa on the world may be found in the nature of the struggle: a conflict between a white minority trying desperately to hang on to power and privilege and a black majority trying to change the situation, to eliminate the political and economic exploitation and the racial discrimination upon which the policy of apartheid is based. The struggle in South Africa has intensified at that precise moment in history when colonialism is being successfully challenged throughout the world. The South African struggle is pivotal. It is symbolic of the effort by all exploited people everywhere in the world to achieve equality and freedom, and therefore has the support of most people the world over.

The South African struggle has had also some impact on movements in other countries - in India, in Europe, and in the national struggles of other African countries. It has affected labour, student, religious struggles of organisations in the United States. It has had a major effect on debates and actions in the United Nations. And it impacts on world stability as it affects major world Powers in their relations to one another.

The impact of the South African struggle has not been static. It has changed as the world situation has altered over seventy years. The differences have been especially great in the last thirty years since the Defiance Campaign against Unjust Laws of 1952, which ushered the ANC into the modern nationalist liberation era. In 1952 there were only four independent countries in Africa. The Afro-Asian effort to change the direction of the United Nations on colonial issues was barely beginning. As a continent, Africa was still under colonial domination. Therefore, important as the Defiance Campaign was, it had nothing of the impact then that such an effort would have today.

The impact of South Africa on the rest of the world is due not just to events inside South Africa, but to what takes place in a wider context. Consider the context of the South African struggle. The apartheid republic was once "protected" by a buffer zone of the Portuguese colonies of Mozambique and Angola, and Southern Rhodesia, which was under white minority control. The April 1974 coup in Portugal and the independence of Zimbabwe undermined white South Africa’s confidence. The Governments of these bordering States are now led by movements which for years carried on guerrilla struggles against their former white and colonial oppressors. The opponents of apartheid in South Africa now have neighbours to give them support as they carry on their struggle.

The United Nations has been increasingly brought into the fray. Foreign policies of countries the world over have had to deal with the reality of the South African struggle. Issues have been raised in the context of this struggle that affect the Olympic Games,

tourism, cultural, military, political and economic relations with South Africa. Campaigns for boycotts and limited sanctions internationally in support of the liberation struggle inside South Africa have deeply concerned the white minority Government. They have responded in contradictory ways. New announcements that "changes" will take place in South Africa are juxtaposed to new and draconian measures of repression. They have built up a huge war machine. They have initiated an effort at *détente* with some African States. They have spent millions of dollars in propaganda schemes in the United States and Western Europe. They have tried in every way to include their country in the Western alliance on the strength of the contention that their struggle is against international communism.

These desperate efforts by the racist regime in South Africa have at best had limited and temporary success. But they reflect the fear of the minority regime. They point to the escalation of the South American struggle in its domestic and international dimensions. They indicate that the South African struggle, indeed, has an international impact.

The purpose of this paper is to give selective attention to the international impact of the South African struggle. This paper will not give detailed attention to critical events inside South Africa which are the cause of international reaction and impact. That task has been and will continue to be done in other studies. Here the approach will be one of summarising the context of the struggle and then discussing the impact of the events outlined. In spite of the limitations of this approach, perhaps this paper can convey something of the tremendous international impact of the South African struggle.

I. Impact on Struggles in Other Countries

For the most part, the impact of the South African struggle is reflected in international reaction to critical events in South Africa. The Sharpeville massacre of 1960, and the student uprising of 1976, for example, very clearly triggered responses at the United Nations, or led to efforts in many countries to boycott South African goods. Yet, there is another dimension by which the South African impact might be measured, and that is the way in which the struggle against racism there has influenced other struggles elsewhere. Only brief consideration can be given to this dimension here. Perhaps a prime example is India, especially through the person of Mohandas K. Gandhi.

Gandhi spent about twenty years of his life in South Africa from 1893 to 1914. These years in the perspective of the struggle for India’s independence, were a period of preparation for the leadership he gave later to the Indian National Congress.

Indians were first brought to Natal in 1860 as indentured workers in the sugar cane fields. By 1891 there were about 100,000 Indians in South Africa, mostly in Natal and the Transvaal.

Gandhi went to Natal as a young lawyer to handle a lawsuit for a client. What was to be a temporary sojourn became a stay of about two decades. He was impelled to organise his first campaign of *satyagraha* (non-violence) to oppose discriminatory treatment of his

fellow Indians.

In 1895 a tax of £3 was imposed by the Government of Natal on every indentured Indian worker who had finished his term of employment. The purpose of this tax was to force Indians to return to India. In the Transvaal, several discriminatory laws were put into effect. One levied a tax similar to that of Natal on Indians. Another required every Asian who wished to live in the Transvaal to register and carry a certificate of registration at all times. Thus the pass law system, already applied to Africans, now affected Indians as well. And in 1913, the Cape Supreme Court ruled that only Christian marriages were legal.

These laws, in addition to personal acts of discrimination and violence against Gandhi led to his organising efforts. The Natal Indian Congress was formed in 1894. The first mass passive resistance campaign began in 1906 against the Transvaal pass law. At a huge meeting held in a Johannesburg theatre, a *satyagraha* oath was taken committing the participants not to co-operate with the law and to resist it non-violently. Large numbers were arrested. Only 500 out of some 13,000 Indians in the Transvaal registered. At a mass meeting in Johannesburg in August 1908, passes were defiantly burned. The Government responded by deportations to India and the people of India reacted angrily. Gandhi himself was arrested on several occasions for disobeying the pass laws and spent considerable time in prison.

When Gandhi returned to India, he already had a national, if not an international, reputation growing out of the campaigns in South Africa. His South African experience had helped prepare him for his leadership in India's national struggle. Furthermore, his organising efforts among the Indians of South Africa had helped lay the ground work for later co-operation of Africans and Indians in their struggle against the unjust laws of South Africa.

Another example of a way in which the South African struggle has had influence elsewhere is seen in the campaigns against discrimination in the United States. This is a subject for much longer study. There has been a mutual influence of these struggles on one another over the years. Many African leaders have profited by their contacts with and information about campaigns against racism in the United States. But also leaders and movements in the United States have drawn inspiration from the concerted efforts to oppose injustice on the African continent and in South Africa in particular. Dr. W.E.B. DuBois, an American, was one such leader. He was a proponent of Pan Africanism. Whether the struggle was in the United States, South Africa, the Caribbean, or elsewhere, it was all one. He wrote that the problem of the 20th century was the problem of colour. In a meeting honouring DuBois held by the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid in February 1978, Andrew Young, then the United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations, rightly said:

"... as we attempt to put an end to apartheid in Africa, we are also putting an end to apartheid in

America. We are putting a lie to the theory and philosophy of racist domination everywhere in the world as we join in a fulfilment of the prophecy and teaching of W.E.B. Dubois."

Paul Robeson was another such leader. In July 1952, he wrote an article entitled "We Can Learn From the Struggle in South Africa". The article was about the Defiance Campaign. Robeson wrote:

"Just imagine if you started something like that in the South or even in New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Indianapolis, Louisville and Los Angeles".

Then, referring to the NAACP, to millions of church and fraternal organisations, he said if they

"could unite long enough to confront the nation's leaders... we wouldn't have to worry about the forthcoming political campaigns... we'd have our civil rights. This is the challenge I see in the South African militant protest".

Robeson fervently believed that the movement for racial justice in the United States was strengthened by support for the South African struggle. In 1946 he addressed a rally in Madison Square Garden:

"In that process of helping others (in South Africa) we add to our own strength and bring nearer full freedom for ourselves".

It is not by accident that Martin Luther King was very conscious of not only the anti-colonial struggles throughout the African continent, but of the campaigns being carried on against racism in South Africa. En route to Oslo to receive the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, he made a speech in London. In it, he referred to Nelson Mandela and Robert Sobukwe, "among the hundreds wasting away in Robben Island prison". He said "in our

struggle for freedom and justice in the United States, which has also been long and arduous, we feel a powerful sense of identification with those in the far more deadly struggle for freedom in South Africa".

King spoke at a mass rally organised by the American Committee on Africa on Human Rights Day (December 10) in 1965 at Hunter College auditorium in New York. He said:

"The civil rights movement in the United States has derived immense inspiration from the successful struggles of those Africans who have obtained freedom in their own nations".

The struggle in South Africa he saw as a critical part of not only the African struggle, but of that on a world-wide basis. King noted that in the United States and Britain "through our investments, through our Government's failure to act decisively, we are guilty of bolstering up the South African tyranny".

Other black American leaders recognised the indivisibility of the campaigns to end racial discrimination and segregation in the United States with the struggle in Africa and South Africa. Jackie Robinson took a leading role in the effort to boycott the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City if South Africa was allowed to participate. Philip Randolph was a strong voice supporting a boycott of banks loaning funds to South Africa in 1966. The NAACP played a particularly critical role in demonstrating against the United States-South African tennis matches in the Davis Cup in 1978 in Nashville, Tennessee (USA).

The liberation struggle in South Africa, and the wider struggle in Africa against colonial domination, has had a deep effect on the leadership of the anti-racist movement in the United States.

The impact of South Africa's struggle on the international scene has grown as the crisis in South Africa has deepened. This paper covers the last thirty- five years, from 1946 to 1981, as the reference period for examining South Africa's impact. It should not be inferred from this that nothing of critical importance in South Africa happened before mid-century. This would obviously be incorrect. Nor should the inference be made that international responses to South African developments did not exist until about the time the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948. Passive resistance campaigns were organised at the turn of the century, as discussed above. The League of Nations had to deal with the issue of South Africa's mandate over Southwest Africa (Namibia), which the United Nations inherited, dating to 1920. But accepting this, international response and reaction to the South African crisis has grown tremendously over the last three decades.

II. The Late 1940s through the 1950s

A. The Context

The pressures which were to make South Africa, and indeed the continent of Africa as a whole, an area of world attention and concern, were just taking shape in the 1950s. At the beginning of the decade there were only three independent States on the continent. By the end, there were only nine. At the first meeting of the United Nations in 1946, there were only 14 African and Asian members out of a total of 54 members. Pan Africanism achieved a new reality in the 1950s. The first conference of African independent States was held in Accra in April 1958, with only eight countries present. This was only a year after Ghana's independence which had been achieved by a nationalist struggle inspired by Kwame Nkrumah. The first All African People's Conference (AAPC) was held in Accra in December 1958, gathering together the leadership of the movements from all parts of the continent struggling for freedom, from Algeria to South Africa. Three hundred delegates representing sixty-five organisations from twenty-eight African countries gathered in Accra to strengthen each other in their common struggle.

The Afro-Asian group at the United Nations was formed in 1955 after the landmark Bandung Conference. A specifically African group was not set up until after the first conference of independent African States in 1958 with, of course, only eight members.

On the whole the struggle in Africa was carried on non-violently in the 1950s with the notable exceptions of the F.L.N. (National Liberation Front) in Algeria and the *Mau Mau* in Kenya.

Inside South Africa, two events dominated the 1950s. One was the Defiance Campaign against the Unjust Laws of 1952, and its aftermath, the Congress of the People and the Freedom Charter of 1955. The second was the arrest on the charge of treason of 156 leaders toward the end of 1956. Most were members of the ANC.

The Nationalist Party had come to power with its programme of apartheid in 1948. Legislation was passed affecting all areas of life for the Africans and included the Group Areas Act, the Bantu Education Act, the Suppression of Communism Act, the Riotous Assemblies Act, the Separate Reservation of Amenities Act, the Immorality Act, etc. The pass laws had long been in existence. The practice of apartheid was not new, but its extension and the brutal thoroughness with which it was implemented was.

A new militancy appeared within the ANC led by younger members who had formed the Youth League in 1944. In only a few years, the Youth League was to dominate the whole organisation. The first concrete expression of this leadership was the Defiance Campaign. This non-violent civil disobedience campaign began on June 26, 1952, with the aim of challenging key apartheid laws - the pass laws, the Group Areas Act, the Separate Representation of Voters Act, the Suppression of Communism Act and the Bantu Authorities Act, and stock limitation laws. Prime Minister Malan rejected the

demand of the ANC for abolition of these laws and stated the essence of the apartheid position: "You will realise, I think, that it is self-contradictory to claim as an inherent right of the Bantu, who differ in many ways from the Europeans, that they should be regarded as not different, especially when it is borne in mind that these differences are permanent and not man-made."

The campaign lasted for the remainder of the year. Almost 9,000 volunteers were arrested for publicly and non-violently disobeying various apartheid laws. Toward the end of the campaign, Chief Luthuli, as president of the ANC, had issued a call to whites to participate. Some did, such as Patrick Duncan, son of a former Governor-General of South Africa, and Albie Sachs, a young lawyer and son of a trade union leader.

A significant aspect of the campaign was that it represented a joint effort by the ANC, the South African Indian Congress, and an organisation of Coloured people. A Joint Planning Council had been named that acted as the Steering Committee. This co-ordinated action of Africans and Indians was seen as an implementation of the so-called Doctors` Pact of 1947, by which Dr. Xuma, then President of the ANC, Dr. Naicker, President of the Natal Indian Congress, and Dr. Dadoo, President of the Transvaal Indian Congress, had committed themselves to work jointly for full franchise rights and equal economic and industrial rights of all the people of South Africa.

The campaign effectively ended in December 1952, when the South African Government passed legislation to deal in severe ways with those who broke the apartheid laws. The Public Safety Act and the Criminal Laws Amendment Act empowered the Government to suspend virtually all laws, and established penalties of three to five years` imprisonment or fines up to $500 with ten lashes for violation of the law.

As Chief Luthuli pointed out in his book, *Let My People Go*, perhaps a main contribution of the Defiance Campaign was that it created "among a very large number of Africans the spirit of militant defiance". Luthuli looked upon the Campaign as "a turning point in the struggle." Two organisations that were essentially white in membership were spawned by the campaign - the Congress of Democrats, which became a key part of the later Congress Alliance, and the Liberal Party, led by Alan Paton.

The working alliance of Africans, Indians, Coloured people and whites which began with the Defiance Campaign, matured with the holding of the Congress of the People and the adoption of the Freedom Charter on June 26, 1955. The Charter, originally conceived by Prof. Z.K. Matthews, became, in effect, the platform for the ANC. It was prepared for and approved by the Congress of the People at a gathering of about 3,000 adherents at Kliptown, Johannesburg. The theme is laid out in the opening sentences:

"We, the people of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know: that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and

white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people".

The holding of the Congress of the People and the adoption of the Freedom Charter was in effect a continuation of the act of defiance.

In September 1955 the Government began organising police raids on the houses of any South Africans suspected of sedition, treason or offences under the Suppression of Communism Act. The press reported almost a thousand raids on houses and offices over a period of months. Finally this led up to the infamous arrest on the charge of treason of 156 leaders. One hundred and three were African, twenty-two Indian, twenty-three white, and four Coloured. The arrests were given world-wide attention not only because of the way they were conducted (police raiding houses from 2:00 to 4:00 a.m.), but also because those arrested were from a distinguished group including professors, doctors, lawyers and clergymen.

Thousands of people demonstrated in support of their leaders outside the Drill Hall, where the trial went on. The Treason Trial was to continue for several years until finally in 1961, the Government was "not able to make its case" and the charges were dropped.

Luthuli wrote of the treason arrests:

"I do not hesitate to say that out of the mingling of the government's opponents of all races... a new sense of solidarity and a new sense of direction were born".

A legal defence fund was established under the leadership of Ambrose Reeves, the Anglican Bishop in Johannesburg. There was broad-based support for legal defence coming from such people as Alan Paton, Alex Hepple, a Labour M.P., and Ellen Hellman of the South African Institute of Race Relations.

These developments in Africa and South Africa provided the backdrop for the impact internationally in the 1950s.

B. The Impact

The international impact to South African developments built up gradually. An editorial in the *New York Times* of August 12, 1952 was typical and set the framework for reaction to the Defiance Campaign:

"Who among us can keep reading day after day the little news items from South Africa without a feeling of dismay? There is something degrading to humanity about these stories of Negroes being arrested - thirty, fifty, a hundred at a time - fined, jailed and now flogged... outsiders are watching the whole proceedings with a growing sense of dread, as well as disgust... a solution (to the problem of South Africa) that is based on pure racism, on the theory of perennial and innate superiority of one race over another, is false, immoral and repugnant".

Both the Defiance Campaign and the treason arrests had occurred before the first All African People's Conference (AAPC) was held in Accra at the end of 1958. A small delegation from the ANC was present, consisting of some members who were outside the country. As Luthuli pointed out, conditions were such in South Africa that representatives could not go directly from inside. The AAPC discussed the South African situation at length. The Conference called for an international boycott of South African goods and advocated breaking relations with any country of Africa practising race discrimination. Luthuli wrote that the action advocating a boycott "heartened us to see that it made sense to liberatory forces outside our own country". The resolution at Accra was only the beginning of African support for the liberation struggle.

Developments in the 1950s in South Africa resulted in only the beginning of responses by new non-governmental bodies in Europe and the United States. Clause 29 of the Native Laws Amendment Act, the so-called Church Clause, gave the South African Government the power to prohibit Africans from attending white churches. Some prominent churchmen in South Africa, led by the Bishop of Johannesburg and the Archbishop of Cape Town, spoke out for civil disobedience, an act for which they could have suffered imprisonment and lashes. This led to an involvement of churches outside South Africa. The convocation of Canterbury of the Anglicans in Britain, for example, opposed as a body the apartheid policies of South Africa, and supported the South African bishops in their defiance.

In Britain, Canon L. John Collins of St. Paul's Cathedral set up a Race Relations Fund in his organisation, Christian Action, which raised thousands of pounds for purposes of

aid to the dependents of those arrested in the Defiance Campaign.

In New York, the Council on African Affairs raised funds for legal defence. And a new organisation calling itself Americans for South African Resistance was formed to give support financially for legal defence and relief to dependents of jailed Defiance Campaign volunteers.

This bare beginning was extended as the treason arrests occurred. Christian Action set up a Treason Trial Fund which later was to become the Defence And Aid Fund. In the United States the American Committee on Africa (ACOA) set up its South African Defense Fund. Close liaison was established with Bishop Reeves, the head of the defence fund in South Africa. Lord Gardiner, a distinguished jurist, was sent as an observer to the trial from Britain. Erwin Griswold, the dean of the law school at Harvard University, went from the United States. The British fund contributed about $350,000 to the treason trial defence, the American fund about $75,000.

South African events had an impact at the United Nations. From the first session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1946 until the time of the Sharpeville massacre, March 1960, the General Assembly had adopted 21 resolutions on the racial policies of the South African Government.

The first debates in the General Assembly revolved round the treatment of people of Indian origin. Dr. A.B. Xuma, President of the ANC, attended the session to lobby and worked closely with H. A. Naidoo of the Indian Congress. They used their influence to protest the so-called "Ghetto Act" (the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act of 1946). The joint effort was a beginning of political collaboration of Africans and Indians to oppose the Government, and was a concrete expression of the agreement written in the Doctors` Pact of 1947.

At this same session, Dr. Xuma delivered the first petition from the Africans of Southwest Africa, protesting the South African Government’s objective of incorporating the mandated territory into the Union. At this time, when there were only 54 members in the United Nations and the African-Asian members were only slightly more than one fourth of the total, a French-Mexican resolution was passed by 32 votes to 15, advocating a settlement of the dispute over the treatment of the Indian community in South Africa; and by a vote of 36 to 0, the Assembly rejected Smuts` move to incorporate South West Africa. India’s activity at the United Nations on these issues was critical. It led Luthuli to comment:

"The way in which India has taken up the cudgels on behalf of the oppressed South African majority, dragged the whole scandal of apartheid into the open, has heartened us immeasurably..."

The General Assembly first took up the racial situation in South Africa in September 1952 after the Defiance Campaign started. Prof. Z.K. Matthews, who had been president of the Cape Branch of the ANC, and was the leading figure of University College of Fort Hare, was the visiting professor on World Christianity at Union Theological Seminary in New York during the 1952-53 academic year. He attempted to appear as a petitioner before the Special Political Committee considering the agenda item. He was denied this opportunity. Up to this point in United Nations history, petitioners were permitted to appear only from trust territories. Matthews had an effect on the debate only as he lobbied among delegations in the hallways of the United Nations. By resolution 616A (VII), adopted by a vote of 35 to 1, with 23 abstentions, a Commission of three was created to study the racial situation in South Africa. In 1953 and 1954, the life of the Commission was extended. On December 14, 1954, the resolution of the General Assembly expressed the profound conviction that apartheid was a grave threat to peaceful relations between ethnic groups in the world. The following year the Commission was discontinued because a two-thirds majority was lacking. The vote was 33 in favour and 17 against, with 9 abstentions.

In 1956 again the representatives of the Government of South Africa charged that the United Nations was violating Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter by taking up a matter within its domestic jurisdiction. The announcement was made that South Africa would maintain only token representation at the United Nations until the Charter was honoured. In 1958, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eric Louw, attended the United Nations General Assembly, but absented himself from debates relating to South African policies.

As the decade ended, the South African struggle was beginning to have a growing effect on the international scene by becoming a focus of concern in Pan African politics, by responses from non-governmental organisations, particularly in Britain and the United States, and by the place given to South African issues at the United Nations.

III. The 1960s

A. The Context

The decade of the 1960s marked a great leap forward in the world’s consciousness of Africa and South Africa. In the year 1960 alone, seventeen African countries became independent. One of these countries was the Belgian Congo, where the ensuing disorder and the struggle for power, initially between forces backing Patrice Lumumba and those backing Joseph Kasavubu and later Moise Tshombe, led to limited confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The United Nations passed resolution 1514 (XV), the so-called decolonisation resolution in December 1960, with opposition from the colonial Powers and an abstention by the United States. Two more All-African Peoples Conferences were held - in Tunis in January 1960 and in Cairo in March 1961 - bringing together the liberation movements of most of the countries of Africa not yet under majority rule.

The Organisation of African Unity was founded in May 1963. The historic summit conference of 32 leaders, mostly Presidents or Prime Ministers, was held in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). An All-African Charter was adopted. The OAU Committee for the Liberation of Africa was set up in Dar es Salaam to administer a fund to aid liberation movements throughout the continent. A delegation was sent to inform the Security Council in New York of the explosive situation in South Africa.

The armed struggle against Portuguese colonial rule in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique began and increased in intensity throughout the decade. Also the armed struggle to overthrow white minority domination began in Southern Rhodesia and in Southwest Africa. All of this was to have an effect on the South African struggle.

The event which was to dominate developments in South Africa was the Sharpeville massacre of March 21, 1960, and its aftermath. This event also was to set the tone for international responses to the South African struggle. Sharpeville, established in 1949, was the name given to the African township of the municipality of Vereeniging. Early on the morning of March 21, according to an account by Bishop Ambrose Reeves, a crowd of 5,000 to 7,000 Africans peacefully marched to the municipal offices of the township. They were responding to a call from the Pan Africanist Congress to a demonstration to protest the pass system. Robert Sobukwe, president of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), said that those participating in the Sharpeville demonstration, as well as at other places in South Africa, would "observe absolute non-violence". A force of 300 armed reinforcements were called to control the demonstrators. Five Saracen armoured vehicles were on hand. At a given point, seemingly without a clear order, police fired into the midst of the crowd. Sixty-nine were killed, including eight women and ten children, and 180 were wounded including thirty-one women and nineteen children.

Although the Government was shaken by the intensity of the reaction both domestically and internationally, this had the effect of tightening the State's repression and control. On March 24, the Government banned all public meetings in 24 magisterial districts. A state of emergency was put into effect on 30 March lasting until 31 August. On 8 April, the ANC and the PAC were declared unlawful organisations. Some 20,000 Africans were detained for questioning. Bishop Reeves wrote:

"It is my personal belief that history will recognise that Sharpeville marked a watershed in South African affairs. Until Sharpeville, violence for the most part had been used in South Africa by those who were committed to the maintenance of the economic and political domination of the white minority... The fact is that (after Sharpeville) for the first time both sides in the racial struggle in South Africa are now committed to violence; the white minority to preserve the *status quo*; the non-white majority to change..."[8]

The banning of the liberation movement simply drove the leadership underground, or

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[8] See "The Sharpeville Massacre - a Watershed in South Africa" by the Rt. Rev. Ambrose Reeves below.

to political activity in exile. Three to four hundred members of the banned organisations left South Africa to widen their activities internationally. Offices of the liberation movement were at first established in Algiers, Accra, Cairo, Dar es Salaam, Lusaka, Lagos, Moscow, etc.

The Rivonia trial, which began in October 1963 and lasted through June 1964, was evidence of the new status of the struggle in South Africa. Six Africans, three whites and one Indian were arrested in the Johannesburg suburb of Rivonia on July 11, 1963. They were accused of committing 193 acts of sabotage and of recruiting men for training in acts of violence to overthrow the State. Among the accused were Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu, Secretary General of ANC. The accused were careful to make the distinction between the ANC and *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (established in November 1961), the smaller unit set up to commit acts of sabotage, but with care not to endanger life. On June 11, 1964, the defendants were sentenced to life imprisonment.

While the Government took drastic action to arrest and imprison the leadership of the liberation movements, acts of sabotage and violence continued. *Poqo*, associated with the PAC, was responsible for some actions. *Umkhonto* for others. What was clear was that a new stage in the struggle had been reached. Along with other top leaders, Robert Sobukwe, president of PAC, was jailed in 1960 for 3 years in Robben Island on charges of incitement and destruction of pass books. He was refused permission to take an exit permit to leave South Africa.

The issue of apartheid in sports began to rise as an international concern in the 1960s, although the South African Government established policy clearly in the 1950s. Under the apartheid regime, strict racial separation applied in sports as well as in all other aspects of life. In June 1956, T. E. Donges, the Minister of the Interior, said that "legitimate non-European sporting activities must accord with the policy of `separate development'". This meant that whites and blacks would have separate sports events and would not engage in competition with one another. Donges pointed out that any effort on the part of non-whites to engage in international competition at the expense of South African white participation would be looked upon as subversive.

The difficulty facing the South African Government was that sports transcended domestic policy. The attempt to enforce the apartheid policy internationally had wide repercussions. The campaign for the right of blacks to participate in the Olympics gained momentum with the organisation of the South African Sports Association in 1959. The aim of the Association was to open the way for black South Africans to participate in international sports recognised as Olympic sports. Under the apartheid system, black sports associations could affiliate with white bodies and a black athlete could be chosen through the white-controlled system to participate in an international event as an individual, but not as a representative of South Africa. In January 1963 the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SAN-ROC) was set up specifically for the purpose of achieving recognition from the International Olympic Committee to represent South Africa in Olympic competition in place of the white South African Olympic Games Association.

Some bending of the South African Government sports policy took place in the 1960s. The policy of apartheid was reinterpreted to mean that white and black could compete against one another if the club facilities to be used were not designated closed to the race. When Sewsunker (Papwa) Sewgolum, a South African of Indian extraction, won the South African Open golf tournament in 1963, he was not permitted to use the club house facilities although he did play the golf course. He was forced to receive his prize outside the club house in a heavy rain.

B. The impact

On February 3, 1960, Harold Macmillan, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, visited Cape Town and spoke to the South African Parliament. He said "the winds of change" were sweeping Africa, in a speech which reflected a response to the fervour for independence and equality on the African continent. The Johannesburg *Sunday Times* headed its editorial on February 7, "Mac Changed Political Face of Africa". It called this speech "the gravest international setback the Nationalist Government has suffered since it came to power in 1948. To add insult to injury, the heresy came from a distinguished Conservative rather than a `hopeless` Labour leader".

Less than a month and a half later, the events at Sharpeville and elsewhere in South Africa protesting apartheid pass laws took place. It was clear the "winds of change" were sweeping South Africa also. The reaction internationally was immediate and took the South African Government by surprise. Within 48 hours the United States State Department condemned South African police action for the first time. Members of all parties in the British Parliament deplored the police violence. The Security Council at the United Nations took up the question of apartheid for the first time and on April 1 decided that the situation in South Africa had led to international friction and could endanger peace and security. The resolution was passed with no dissenting voice, but with France and Britain abstaining.

The Sharpeville massacre gave impetus to efforts to punish South Africa economically. For a brief period, out of fear for stability, overseas investments in South Africa practically ceased. The value of shares on the Johannesburg stock exchange plunged by £500,000,000 below the January 1 level. The boycott movement was extended. It had begun in the late 1950s with the ANC resolution, which was adopted by the African Peoples` Conference held in December 1958. Already the boycott tactic had been adopted by the Jamaican Government, by the Ghana Trade Union Congress, the Tanganyika Federation of Labour, the Northern Rhodesia Trade Union Congress, and the 6th World Congress of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). On January 11, 1960, the Malayan Trade Union Congress decided to launch a boycott. On February 20, the Cyprus Workers Federation began a month-long boycott and pledged not to handle South African goods.

After November 21, 1960, the Norwegian Federation of Trade Unions began a two-month consumers` boycott in a decision taken jointly by union federations in Nordic

countries. The West German trade union federation, the DGB, called for a consumers` boycott during April. The month-long boycott started on March 1 in Britain was continued indefinitely as a permanent effort of the newly-formed Anti-Apartheid Movement. The Nigerian Federal Ministries were instructed to refrain from buying South African goods. AFL-CIO president George Meany wrote the United States Secretary of State asking for a halt to United States purchases of gold to demonstrate disapproval of "inhuman and callous" racial policies of South Africa. The merchant ship *African Lightning* returned to Durban, which it had left two months earlier, when Trinidad dock workers refused to unload its cargo from South Africa.

Undoubtedly the 1960 Nobel Peace Prize to Chief Albert J. Luthuli (awarded on December 10, 1961) was not unconnected with the Sharpeville killings. Sven Skovmand, a member of the Danish Parliament, wrote: "The Sharpeville massacre came as a shock to the Scandinavian people... Shortly afterwards Chief Luthuli was given the Nobel Prize mainly because of the influence of the anti-apartheid movements in Norway and Sweden."[9] The *Rand Daily Mail* commented that "Luthuli was now the most famous South African and that the attention of the world was now directed to the problem of South Africa in a new way".

The Sharpeville massacre probably did more to help spawn anti-apartheid organisations in other countries of the world than any development up to that time. Most important of these was the British Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM). Its first efforts were geared to a boycott of South African produce. An early leaflet of the Movement stated: "We buy nearly one-third of South Africa's total exports." It called for supporting the campaign to isolate and ostracise apartheid: "housewives, don't buy South African goods; co-operatives, boycott South African goods; sportsmen, don't play in South Africa; artists, don't perform in South Africa; trade unionists, don't support apartheid unions... No arms traffic with South Africa, no trade relations with South Africa.". Thus the terms were enunciated which were to be the agenda for action for the years ahead. The first honorary President of the AAM was Mrs. Barbara Castle, a distinguished Labour M.P. Local anti-apartheid groups were organised around Britain, making for an effective network for action on critical issues relating to South Africa. The *Anti-Apartheid News* was started in 1965 to provide a regular source of information on developments in South Africa and activities to oppose apartheid throughout the world.

Anti-apartheid groups sprang up in other parts of Western Europe. The Swedish South Africa Committee was organised after Sharpeville. It had been preceded by the Fund for the Victims of Racial Oppression in Southern Africa a year earlier. Similar groups were set up in Denmark and Norway. Active movements were formed in the Netherlands (*Comite Zuid Afrika*), France (*Comite Francais contre l`apartheid*), Finland (*Sydafrikakommittee*), Belgium (*Comite contre le Colonialisme et l`Apartheid*), Switzerland (*Mouvement Anti-Apartheid de Suisse*).

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[9] Skovmand, Sven, *Scandinavian Opposition to Apartheid,* United Nations Unit on Apartheid, "Notes and Documents", No. 23/70

Although these various organisations have established their own programmes and projects, they have directed their efforts toward opposing racism specifically in South Africa, and in supporting the liberation struggle. The effectiveness of their efforts has varied. They have been most effective as initiators of campaigns which have won wider support through established organisations such as trade unions, churches, and community-wide organisations. In this way they have often been able to have real influence on government policy.

In the spring of 1963 the Scandinavian youth movements combined their efforts in a boycott of South African goods. Although there was not a great deal of trade with South Africa, there was enough to have an impact. Sven Skovmand reported that "the import from South Africa of wines, canned fruit and oranges was dramatically reduced and has never really recovered."[10] A main thrust of the youth movement efforts was to influence the Scandinavian Governments to contribute funds for support to the victims of apartheid. This was very successful. The Swedish ambassador to the United Nations has always served as chairman of the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa ever since it was established in 1965.

After the events of March 21, international fundraising efforts to oppose apartheid and to support its victims increased dramatically. A Defence and Aid Fund was established in South Africa. In Britain, Christian Action set up its Defence and Aid Fund. Canon Collins wrote: "The Sharpeville incident marked a turning point, not only in the whole struggle against apartheid, but in particular, for the Defence and Aid Fund and my own work in this field". A United Nations resolution of 1963 called on member States to assist the victims of apartheid. In response to this appeal eleven Governments announced contributions of $300,000 to Defence and Aid Fund, the World Council of Churches and Amnesty International. In 1964 the British Defence and Aid Fund was expanded to become the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa with six affiliated national committees. Government contributions became available to the international body. In 1964, Sweden gave £40,000. The Netherlands gave £l0,000 in 1965. Other governmental contributions came from India, Yugoslavia, Pakistan, the Soviet Union, the Philippines, Iran and Jamaica.

At the United Nations, much greater urgency was reflected in the resolutions adopted. Only a few days after the Sharpeville massacre, on April 1, the Security Council took up the question of South Africa for the first time as has been noted above. In April of 1961 a resolution of the General Assembly calling for closing ports to South African shipping, refusing landing rights for South African aircraft, the breaking of diplomatic relations with South Africa, received a vote of 42 in favour, 34 against with 21 abstentions, and was not adopted for lack of a two-thirds majority. But the next year, on November 6, 1962, a similar resolution was adopted by 67 votes to 16, with 23 abstentions. The Security Council was requested to take appropriate action, including sanctions if necessary, and to consider the expulsion of South Africa from the United Nations. This resolution, 1761 (XVII), also created the Special Committee on the Policies of Apartheid

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10 *Ibid.*

of the Government of the Republic of South Africa which was to take a leading role from that time in initiating international action against South Africa's apartheid. The Security Council, on August 7, 1963, called on all States to cease the sale and shipment of arms, ammunition and military vehicles to South Africa. The United States, in a new move, joined eight other members of the Security Council in voting for the resolution with only Britain and France abstaining.

By the early 1960s, the pattern was set for United Nations actions on apartheid. The General Assembly, with a growing number of African member States, adopted increasingly tough resolutions on South Africa, calling for measures which would isolate South Africa economically, militarily, politically and culturally as long as the policy of apartheid continued. But the Security Council, by virtue of the veto power of Britain, France and the United States, stopped effective action by the combined force of the United Nations with the exception of the voluntary arms embargo.

The United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa was established by the General Assembly action on December 15, 1965. This effectively increased funds available for legal defence, financial assistance to the victims of apartheid and assistance to alleviate the plight of political prisoners. Over a six-year span beginning in 1966, sixty-six nations contributed over $2 million to this Fund.

In 1967 the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa (UNETPSA) was established to provide scholarship assistance for students from Namibia, the Territories under Portuguese administration and Southern Rhodesia. The assistance was given primarily to students who were politically exiled. It was designed to help prepare students to play a full part in the development of their own countries when the way was open to them to return home. In the year 1968-69, thirty countries contributed a little over $1,200,000 to this programme. In the case of both the Trust Fund and UNETPSA, the Scandinavian countries were consistently the most generous contributors.

The critical events in South Africa and the growing international reaction triggered some responses that were significantly new. In 1962 the major civil rights organisations in the United States, having become more conscious of the liberation struggle in Africa, formed a coalition called the American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa. The organisations involved included the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP), the Urban League, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the National Council of Negro Women and the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) at the outset. It held three national conferences that brought pressure to bear on United States policy toward Africa. One concrete and perhaps the most successful example of this was a campaign to stop United States naval vessels from visiting South African ports. Instances of racial incidents discriminating against black American sailors had received considerable publicity in the United States. A campaign led by the American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa centering attention on Congress and the White House was successful in achieving a new policy forbidding such visits.

In 1965 a "We Say No To Apartheid" campaign was initiated in the United States to encourage artists, writers, and entertainers not to visit South Africa nor to allow their works to be distributed there "until the day when all its people - black and white - shall equally enjoy the educational and cultural advantages of this rich and lovely land.". A large number of outstanding personalities of stage, screen and literature pledged to co-operate with this effort, including Tallulah Bankhead, Leonard Bernstein, Harry Belafonte, Victor Borge, Diahann Carroll, Sam Davis, Jr., Henry Fonda, Julie Harris, Langston Hughes, Burgess Meredith, Arthur Miller, Sidney Poitier, Ed Sullivan and Eli Wallach.

In the 1960s the first serious efforts were made to oppose economic ties between South Africa and particularly the United States and Britain. In 1964 an international conference on sanctions against South Africa was held in London. About 250 delegates and observers attended this conference. Official delegations came from thirty countries, and unofficial representations from fourteen others. The report of the conference found "that a policy of total economic sanctions against South Africa is feasible and practical and can be effective".

But the practical campaigns initiated in various countries were not so much geared to a policy of overall sanctions as they were for ending investments and loans. In the United States an expression of this effort was in the campaign to end bank loans to South Africa. In the mid-1960s a consortium of ten banks, led by Chase Manhattan and First National City Bank in New York, joined in a $40 million revolving loan fund to South Africa. In the period after Sharpeville when loans and investments in South Africa from overseas fell off sharply, South Africa sought aid from United States banks. One way in which help was given was through this loan fund. It became the main target of an effort by the Committee of Conscience Against Apartheid which was established by the American Committee on Africa for this purpose. Between 1966 and 1969 church bodies played a leading part in pressing the banks. Deputations were sent to talk with bank executives, statements were made opposing the loan at stockholder meetings, and some accounts were withdrawn. The Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church withdrew a portfolio of $10 million from First National City Bank. The revolving loan fund was finally terminated in 1969. If the protest campaign was not alone responsible for terminating the loan, it is unlikely the action would have taken place without it.

International sports competition reflected the impact of the struggle against apartheid in the 1960s. The central focus was the Olympic Games. A South African team was excluded from the Olympic Games held in Tokyo in 1964. The South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee (SAN-ROC) and the British Anti-Apartheid Movement (AAM) had appealed to the International Olympic Committee, at its meeting in Baden Baden in 1963, to exclude South Africa. The demand had been made on South Africa to "declare formally that it understands and submits to the spirit of the Olympic Charter... before 31 December 1963" or withdraw from the Olympics. South Africa did not comply.

The South Africans campaigned hard so that a South African team could be

represented at the Olympic Games held in Mexico City in 1968. At a meeting of the IOC in Teheran in 1967 South Africa offered concessions to meet the demands of the Olympic Charter. They were embodied in a plan to have a racially-mixed South African team at Mexico City but separate Olympic committees in South Africa would nominate candidates for the team with a liaison committee under a white chairman to designate the final members. Prime Minister Vorster and Minister of Sport, Fred Waring, both made public statements that this did not mean an end to apartheid in sports in South Africa. Waring said: "Our policy is separate sport and if the demand is made upon us... that we must change our pattern of sport and mix it, we are not prepared to pay the price". [11]

In December 1966, thirty-two African countries formed the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa. One of the first actions of this body was to call for a boycott of the Olympics if South Africa participated. Even so, these so-called concessions were briefly accepted by the IOC at its Grenoble meeting in February 1968. However, the decision was soon reversed due to the prospect of a massive boycott of the Games to protest South Africa's presence. Sixty-four outstanding amateur and professional athletes spoke out for a boycott of the Games if South Africa participated. This group of primarily black athletes was led by Jackie Robinson.

An ever-increasing number of international sporting bodies suspended or excluded South African teams from participating in events including boxing, cricket, fencing, judo, soccer, table tennis, wrestling and weightlifting.

Bishop Ambrose Reeves wrote in 1968:

> ***"The choice before the international community has been a clear one ever since Sharpeville. Either it takes every possible step to secure the abandonment of the present policies in South Africa or the coming years will bring increasing sorrow and strife both for South Africa and for the world."***

IV. From the 1970s to the 1980s

A. The Context

The importance of the changes in Africa in the past decade (the I970s and early 1980s)

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11 *Cape Argus*, September 16, 1967

has focussed international attention on South Africa with a new intensity. The armed struggle waged against centuries-old Portuguese domination in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique came to a successful conclusion. The military coup in Portugal in April 1974 ushered in changes in southern Africa that would affect the relationship of South Africa with the rest of Africa and the world. The struggle for power in Angola between contending movements backed by world Powers made the sub-continent a possible ground for major international conflict.

Zimbabwe's independence in April 1980 after a fourteen-year guerrilla struggle further isolated South Africa. The Government of this new country, headed by Robert Mugabe, represented a victory of a nationalist political coalition, the Patriotic Front, which South Africa had vigorously opposed. The political grouping led by Abel Muzorewa, which South Africa favoured, was decisively defeated in internationally supervised elections, and this victory came as a shock to South Africa.

The Namibian struggle for independence took centre stage. The plan for a United Nations supervised and controlled election leading to independence, which South Africa had in principle accepted, was not implemented because of South Africa's fear of a SWAPO victory patterned after Mugabe's in Zimbabwe. The South African Government, in desperate military moves from bases in Namibia, made increasing raids into southern Angola. Over 800 Namibian refugees were killed in a refugee camp at Kassinga in Angola in May 1978. In June 1980 an estimated 500 Angolan civilians and Namibians were killed in a South African raid called "Operation Smokeshell". A similar South African raid beginning on August 24, 1980, killed more than seven hundred people, according to Angolan reports. In January 1981 a South African commando raid to the outskirts of Maputo in the middle of the night, gutted three houses, killing thirteen people.

The 1970s marked a period of growing confrontation in South Africa. The greatest international impact came from the events which culminated in the Soweto student demonstrations of June 1976. Ironically the Soweto uprising and the draconian measures which the South African Government took to meet the challenge came on the heels of a brief experiment with détente in Africa. The overthrow of Portugal's empire in Africa, removing one of South Africa's major allies caused severe apprehension. Prime Minister Vorster travelled in Africa "in a vain effort to win friends and implement his forward policy". But this brief episode was interrupted by the rise of the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa, by the black demonstrations hailing the independence of Mozambique in 1975, by the struggle in Angola, and capped by the student uprising in Soweto and 70 other townships in South Africa.

The thousands of students demonstrating in the streets of Soweto in protest against the imposition of Afrikaans as a medium of education and indeed against the whole apartheid system might have gone by relatively unnoticed in the outside world if it had not been for the violence perpetrated by the police. Six hundred to a thousand were killed in confrontations over a period of only a few days. The demonstrations spread to Cape Town and other parts of South Africa. The world reacted. The student leaders came

to public attention. A new generation of political exiles was created as hundreds of youth escaped from South Africa to bordering countries and then to other parts of Africa and the world. A crisis of major proportions unfolded in South Africa even more severe than that at Sharpeville.

A writer in the Johannesburg *Star* of June 26, 1976, commented:

"The Soweto riot last week... could have an effect as far-reaching as (Sharpeville) on South Africa's future. For the first time since the PAC pass campaign there are signs of a unified urban black front closing rank against what it considers further unbearable oppression".

Signs of this unity were efforts of relatively new organisations to join forces, such as the Parents` Vigilance Committee, the Parents` Action Association, and the African Housewives League.

The atmosphere of confrontation in the 1970s was not limited to student actions. In 1973 a wave of wildcat strikes by trade unions erupted. More than 360 strikes and work stoppages took place in Natal in 1973 and 54 more in 1974. More than 50,000 African workers marched through the streets of Durban in February 1973 demanding higher wages. Dockworkers, bricklayers, textile and rubber workers, municipal employees were among those demonstrating. The strikes brought production to a halt in more than 100 firms and severely hampered municipal services. Five hundred workers in the textile industry were fired in Durban and financial help came through special funds, mostly from trade unions. In September eleven miners were shot by police when demonstrating for increased wages at the Western Deep Levels Gold Mine at Carletonville.

During the l970s the link between South Africa's economic activity and that of major Western Governments drew increased attention. The South African economy depends greatly on foreign capital. British firms provide about half of the long-term direct investment. The United States corporations make up about twenty per cent.

In 1950 United States investment in South Africa amounted to about $140 million. By 1976 the figure was $1.67 billion. Thus American investment became an important factor in the health of the white-controlled economy of South Africa.

The call from South African black leadership to Governments with strong economic links with South Africa to disengage became urgent. The South African Government looked upon this as treasonable. Nevertheless, leaders of the ANC, PAC and black organisations urged an end to economic ties. Bishop Tutu, then Secretary of the South

African Council of Churches, had his passport withdrawn in 1979 after a trip abroad. Voicing the views of a large constituency in South Africa, Bishop Tutu called, in a speech at the United Nations on March 23, 1981, for "economic pressure... that will persuade the South African authorities to come to the conference table before it is too late".

The South African Government proceeded with its apartheid policy in the 1970s with the creation of so-called "independent" bantustans, beginning with the Transkei in 1976. Ciskei became the fourth such "state" on December 4, 1981. No country except South Africa has recognised them.

The South African Government continued its crackdown on its individual and organisational opponents. In September 1977 Steve Biko, the inspirational leader of the black consciousness movement, was killed while in custody by the police. The reaction to this, both inside and outside South Africa, was overwhelming. A little over a month later, in October 1977, 19 organisations were banned and 28 individuals banned or detained.

The small gestures toward reform made by the Government of P.W. Botha, who became Prime Minister in 1978, did not change the atmosphere of bitter struggle inside the country. The fundamental demand of the black people for participation in the political process and in holding power in Government commensurate to their numerical strength, was frustrated by the repressive acts of Government and the merciless implementation of the bantustan policy. Sabotage activity by the underground ANC increased. In the two years from June 30, 1979, the *Rand Daily Mail* of July 28, 1981, reported 127 incidents of "political violence and sabotage" in which 70 people were killed. This included 30 serious arson attacks, 16 serious stonings, 13 explosive device incidents, 13 cases of railway sabotage, 10 grenade attacks, 6 attacks on police stations and 8 attacks on policemen. The most destructive attacks were on the oil-from-coal storage tanks at Sasolburg in 1980, with an estimated damage of $4 million, and on two major power stations in the Transvaal in July 1981.

The South African Government increased its defence spending by 40 per cent for fiscal year 1981/82 to $2.7 billion. It also vastly increased its lobbying, and pubic relations activities abroad in order to create a favourable image, particularly in the United States. An estimated $1.8 million a year is spent in the United States to sell the bantustan policy and the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance in Namibia, to encourage tourism, and to create an image of South Africa as an indispensable anti-communist ally globally.

In his speech before the Special Committee against Apartheid at the United Nations on March 23, 1981, Bishop Tutu said:

"I wish to say again that if the (South African racial) situation is not resolved reasonably quickly, it could very well be something that triggers off

World War III. Now for some people that sounds melodramatic but when you have been aware of what nearly happened between the United States and the Soviet Union over Angola, then you can realise that what I am saying is not hyperbole".

B. The Impact

The Soweto student uprising was undoubtedly the most traumatic development in South Africa in the 1970s. Yet, the international response, although immediate and dramatic, did not spawn new actions to the same degree as the Sharpeville massacre did sixteen years earlier. The effect of Soweto was to spur on actions already in progress rather than to trigger new kinds of responses. Disengagement campaigns were quickened and broadened; United Nations resolutions were more demanding; efforts for sports and cultural boycotts were strengthened. Also, for at least a brief moment, Western Governments became more sensitive to South African racism and its international repercussions.

When, only a little more than a week after the Soweto demonstrations, Prime Minister Vorster was in West Germany to meet with Henry Kissinger, United States Secretary of State, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt used the occasion to speak of West Germany's strong opposition to South Africa's racial policies and to dissociate Bonn from Vorster's presence there.

The Carter administration came into office six months after the Soweto uprising when the effects of the student actions were still very fresh. The rhetoric of this administration was strong. Mr. Andrew Young, as an architect of the Carter policy toward Africa, spoke of a "revolution in the consciousness of the American people" toward southern Africa. Vice-President Mondale met with Prime Minister Vorster in Vienna and said afterward that he hoped South Africa would not be under "any illusions that the United States will in the end intervene to save South Africa..."

One of the most concrete impacts of the South African struggle internationally in the 1970s was the quickened action for economic disengagement from South Africa in Western countries that were the principal trading partners of the Republic. An early success was the dramatic withdrawal of the Polaroid Corporation from South Africa announced on November 21, 1977. This action was made all the more important as Polaroid had sponsored a widely publicised campaign in January 1971 - in spite of pressure from some of its black employees and its stockholders to terminate its business there - proclaiming it would stay in South Africa in order to help improve the lives of South African blacks. But with the discovery that Polaroid equipment was being used by the South African Government to produce the hated passes, in violation of a specific agreement worked out in 1971, Polaroid terminated its South African business.

The South African issue of apartheid was responsible for rejuvenating student organisations and action on college and university campuses across the United States. An editorial appearing in the *New York Times* on April 2, 1978, said: "The campuses are astir again and the issue is South Africa. Students and teachers want to attack that nation's racist policies through the power of the American corporations doing business there." Almost overnight, campaigns began springing up on campuses shortly after the Soweto uprising to pressure the universities and colleges to divest themselves of stockholding in corporations doing business in South Africa. At Princeton University, the People's Front for the Liberation of Southern Africa was set up. The South Africa Support Committee was organised
at Amherst. At Stanford University the Stanford Committee for a Responsible Investment Policy led the effort. A South African Catalyst Project was set up to help initiate and co-ordinate efforts on a large number of campuses in the western part of the United States. A Northeast Coalition for the Liberation of Southern Africa was organised in the east. Demonstrations, mass meetings, leaflet distribution, confrontation tactics with university administrators and trustees were actively pursued. And the universities began to respond. By 1979 at least 18 outstanding institutions of higher learning in the United States partly or wholly divested. On dozens of other campuses the issue dominated campus activity. Universities had seriously begun to deal with the issue for the first time.

Churches were impelled to action in response to the liberation struggle in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. In 1969 the World Council of Churches inaugurated its Programme to Combat Racism. In ten years $2.6 million had been spent - more than half of it in southern Africa - in pursuit of its aim to oppose racism. Although the funds granted were to be used for humanitarian, not military, purposes the programme has been highly controversial leading the Salvation Army to withdraw from the Council in 1981. Both the ANC and the PAC have been recipients of grants.

The major policy issue confronting the churches has been their holdings in corporations or banks doing business in South Africa. The World Council of Churches took a position on this issue in 1972 when its Finance Committee was instructed to sell holdings and end investments in South Africa and Namibia, and not to make deposits in banks operating in these countries. One million and half dollars was involved.

The Governing Board of the National Council of Churches of Christ in America, representing 30 church bodies, made its definitive statement on the issue of investment on November 1, 1977, less than a month after the large-scale bannings and arrests in South Africa. The policy statement "called for ending economic and military collaboration with South Africa and to undertake to withdraw all funds and close all accounts in financial institutions which have investments in South Africa or make loans to the South African Government or businesses..."

The beginning of organised church efforts in the United States to give concentrated attention to social and political responsibilities in financial investments date from the early 1960s. The civil rights struggle first prompted attention to investments as a means

of pressing for political ends. In 1969, James Forman, who had been one of the leaders of the Student Non-violent Co-ordinating Committee, raised the issue to a new level when he appeared uninvited and unexpectedly in the pulpit of Riverside Church, perhaps the most prestigious Protestant church in the country, to present a black manifesto calling for reparations from the churches to black Americans for injustices of the past. Sit-ins took place at the headquarters of the National Council of Churches and denominations were spurred by internal pressure to give serious attention for the first time to church investments. The Corporate Information Center, established in l970, was broadened in 1974 to become the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility with 14 Protestant denominations and 150 Catholic orders associated.

Church bodies have been the most influential sector of American institutional life in pressing corporations involved in South Africa to examine their operations. Every year since 1971 resolutions at stockholders` meetings have been sponsored by church groups calling for withdrawal from South Africa or at least to end expansion.

A broad coalition of organisations - black and civil rights, churches, trade unions, students - have joined in the campaign to end bank loans to the South African Government. In Britain an organisation called End Loans to South Africa was founded in 1974. Its first objective was to campaign against Midlands Bank and its part in the European-American Banking Corporation loan of over $210 million which had come to public attention the year before. The main supporter in this campaign in Britain was the Finance Board of the Methodist Church. The issue was taken to the Midland's stockholder meeting where the call for a termination of the bank's involvement in the European-American Banking Corporation did not win, but where significant support for the campaign came from the Greater London Council, the Commissioners of the Church of England, more than a dozen other church bodies and three universities.

In the United States the Campaign to Oppose Bank Loans to South Africa, with 38 affiliated organisations, was set up to spearhead efforts for the withdrawal of funds from banks making loans to South Africa. Combined with this effort have been resolutions in stockholder meetings calling for an end to loans. Such resolutions also emanated mainly from church bodies. Although no major international bank has completely withdrawn from South Africa, the effect of the campaign on loans to South Africa has been to force bank administrations to announce policies which have, in some cases, ended loans to the South African Government or its projects, and have led to statements critical of apartheid.

A newer focus for campaigns has been investment policies of state and local Governments in the United States. Twelve states and ten cities in the United States have either adopted legislation against allowing public funds to be used for loans or investment in South Africa, or have efforts under way to accomplish this. States that have passed resolutions or legislation ending or limiting public funds for South Africa investment are California, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska and Wisconsin.

Internationally, the trade union movement has given increased attention to South Africa's apartheid policy. The International Labour Organisation first denounced South

Africa and apartheid in 1964. Nine years later, only 3 months after wildcat strikes erupted throughout South Africa, the ILO sponsored an International Trade Union Conference against Apartheid in Geneva. More than 200 national, regional and international unions, representing more than 180 million workers, participated. At about the same time the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) compiled a list of 1,600 companies with investments and/or loans in South Africa. The ICFTU called on unions affiliated with it to refuse to handle goods from South Africa. In Britain the Postal Truckers Union planned a work stoppage which the Government refused to permit. Boycott actions did take place in Canada, the Netherlands and Australia.

A number of national unions in the United States have withdrawn funds from banks loaning money to South Africa, including the Joint Furriers Council which withdrew an $8 million payroll account and a $16 million welfare and pension account from Manufacturers Hanover Trust. Other similar withdrawals have been made by the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, District 1199 of the National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees, and the National Longshoremen and Warehouse Workers` Union. Douglas Fraser, President of the United Auto Workers, made the following policy statement on March 3, 1978:

"The UAW will withdraw its funds from banks and financial institutions that participate in loans to South Africa because of the country's racist, undemocratic, political and economic practices".

In 1974 the United Mine Workers actively supported a boycott of coal from South Africa. Local dock workers refused to unload coal from southern ports of entry.

Perhaps it should not be surprising that one result growing out of the Soweto uprising in South Africa and the crisis atmosphere this helped engender, together with the action campaigns focussed on companies doing business with South Africa, was a new emphasis on reform in foreign-owned corporations in South Africa. These corporations were subjected to pressure to prove they could be a force for change in South Africa. The European Economic Community adopted a Code of Conduct for European business enterprises in South Africa. In the United States the so-called Sullivan Principles outlined six practices recommended for American-related corporations such as non-segregation, equal pay for equal work, increased managerial positions for blacks, and initiation of training programmes for blacks. Rev. Leon Sullivan, a Baptist minister and the only black member of General Motors Board of Directors, was the architect of these principles. The "codes of conduct" approach to change in South Africa immediately became a controversial issue. Opponents argued that they not only could not be a force for change, but they became a rationale for foreign-related firms to continue their role in South Africa which strengthened the white-minority Government. The fact that codes of conduct became an accepted approach by so many foreign companies in South Africa to justify their continued operation there was further testimony to the centrality of the issue of

investment in South Africa.

United Nations resolutions and activities on South Africa and apartheid were speeded up in the 1970s to keep pace with the urgency of developments. The Special Committee against Apartheid and other bodies initiated a multitude of conferences, seminars and studies. Among some of the notable actions were initiation of International Year to Combat Racism in 1971, the International Trade Union Conference against Apartheid in 1974, Seminar on the Eradication of Apartheid and in Support of the Struggle for the Liberation of South Africa held in Havana, Cuba, in 1976, and also the initiation of a Programme for the Decade of Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination the same year. 1976 was a land-mark session for the General Assembly on southern Africa. Thirty-seven resolutions were passed by overwhelming majorities marking the year of Soweto and Transkei "independence". There was the World Conference for Action against Apartheid in 1977, and the Seminar on South Africa's Military Build-up and Nuclear Plans held in London in 1978. The year beginning on March 21, 1978, was also proclaimed and observed as International Anti-Apartheid Year.

The resolutions of the General Assembly annually called for the isolation of South Africa, for a boycott of South African goods and for sanctions. In 1976 emphasis was put on an embargo on the supply of petroleum as a strategic raw material. The Security Council was more inhibited in its action than the General Assembly because of the constant reality of veto against any move for sanctions on South Africa by the three Western Permanent Members of the Security Council. A mandatory arms embargo action was imposed by the Security Council in November 1977 with United States approval. On April 30, 1981, however, the United States, Britain and France vetoed resolutions calling for comprehensive sanctions against South Africa on the issue of Namibia.

The increased attention by the United Nations to the arms embargo against South Africa and to the supply of oil to the regime stimulated activities in these areas.

In Oslo an office under the direction of Mr. Abdul Samad Minty was set up, called the World Campaign against Military and Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa. This office monitored violations of the arms embargo and helped to co-ordinate action internationally.

One case which received considerable attention involving an open violation of the South African arms embargo was the shipment of 50,000 shells and upto 60 gun barrels from the Space Research Corporation (now known as Sabre Industries). Space Research operates in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean and Belgium. The exposure of the gross violation of the arms embargo was first discovered by dock workers in Antigua in 1977. On April 22, 1980, the United States reported to the United Nations that the SRC had pleaded guilty in the legal case brought by the Government. Two men were sentenced to 6 months in prison. The company was given a $45,000 fine and went into bankruptcy.

The most effective work researching the supply of oil to South Africa has been done from the Netherlands. In March 1980 an International Seminar on an Oil Embargo against South Africa was held in Amsterdam. It was organised by the Holland Committee on Southern Africa, and the Working Group Kairos, in co-operation with the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid. The declaration of the Seminar referred to the United Nations General Assembly resolution on an oil embargo against South Africa of December 12, 1979, supported the implementation of an embargo and said: "Such an embargo has become feasible since all Member States of OPEC and other major oil exporting countries have now prohibited export of their oil to South Africa." This action was taken by OPEC countries in 1979. And yet a study issued by the two Dutch organisations in March 1981 revealed that "approximately once every five days, a supertanker sails into one of South Africa's ports with oil worth around $50 million". These oil deliveries are secret because the identity of the source of the oil must be guarded in view of embargoes by OPEC Member States.

Experience has shown the difficulty of effectively implementing both the oil and arms embargoes because of the complexity of trade and the multiplicity of agencies involved. More apparent success has occurred in the quite different area of international sports activities. The impact of South African events of the 1970s in international sport was considerable. A 1970 South African cricket team tour of Britain sponsored by the prestigious Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) was finally cancelled by the British Government. But this occurred only after months of demonstrations. A Stop-the-Seventies-Tour (STST) campaign was organised in 1969 which used a South African rugby team tour of Britain for a show of strength. Some 50,000 demonstrators were involved with 400 arrests in opposing the rugby tour. In spite of this, the MCC and the Cricket Council continued with their plans for the cricket tour. The British Government finally took action cancelling the 1970s tour when the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa threatened a boycott of the Edinburgh Commonwealth Games scheduled for later in the year and Governments such as India said they would definitely not participate if the cricket tour took place.

The 1971 Springbok Rugby Tour of Australia was a catalyst for national organisation which affected political alignments in the country. The tour was not cancelled but it ignited mass anti-South African demonstrations of unprecedented scope. For the first time since Sharpeville, South Africa was in the headlines in Australia. There were over 500 arrests, a strike by 125,000 workers, an 18-day state of emergency in Queensland and an expenditure of some $27 million by the Government for police. The coalition formed in opposition to this tour consisting of unions, students, churches and aboriginals may have been a key to electing Gough Whitlam, head of the Australian Labour Party, to power in 1972. This in turn was responsible for a new Australian policy on South Africa, disallowing any future racially selected teams to visit or transit the country, joining the Council for Namibia at the United Nations, contributing to the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa and even voting for the expulsion of South Africa from the United Nations.

South Africa was officially excluded from the Olympic Movement by action of the

International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1970. Nevertheless, South Africa's racial policies were a central feature affecting the Montreal Games in 1976. The issue was a tour by a New Zealand rugby team of South Africa only weeks after the Soweto student uprising. The Supreme Council for Sport in Africa made quite clear its intention to boycott the Olympic Games if New Zealand was permitted to participate following the rugby tour of South Africa. More than 30 national teams and at least 600 athletes were involved in the boycott. This action heralded the distinct possibility that future Olympics could definitely be jeopardised by sports contacts between any country and teams in South Africa selected within the framework of apartheid.

The effective extension of the principle of boycotting apartheid in sports was realised by the so-called Gleneagles Agreement signed in Scotland in 1977. The signatories were the Heads of the Commonwealth countries: they agreed to take all measures to stop sporting contacts with South African teams and individuals.

International antipathy to apartheid was well enough established by the 1970s so that any sports or cultural contact with South Africa almost any place in the world became a matter of controversy and confrontation. More than 6,000 people representing a broad coalition of civil rights organisations headed by the NAACP protested South Africa's participation in the Davis Cup tennis match in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1978. Demonstrators outnumbered spectators by more than 3 to 1, the matches were a financial disaster, and South Africa was subsequently suspended from further Davis Cup competition one month later. Protests did not stop Mike Weaver from his heavyweight match with Gerrie Coetzee in Bophuthatswana in 1980, but they did stop John McEnroe from going through with a million dollar tennis contest against Bjorn Borg in the same place.

The 1981 Springbok Rugby Tour of New Zealand and the United States led to protests of major proportions. The tour of New Zealand lasted six weeks, beginning in July. More than 2,000 were arrested and hundreds hurt as a result of demonstrations and police action. The Government of New Zealand opposed the tour but did not cancel it. Prime Minister Muldoon commented: "Long before the (tour) began, I said it would be a disaster. I believe I was right". The *New York Times* story of October 22, 1981, read as follows: "Most New Zealanders believe that the invitation to the South African Springbok team to play rugby here was not worth it".

In the United States, the rugby tour began on the heels of the New Zealand visit. An *ad hoc* Stop the Apartheid Rugby Tour, with more than 100 organisations in the coalition, was organised. The original schedule called for the Springboks to play in Chicago, New York and Albany. The Chicago and New York matches were cancelled through mass pressure on the city administrations. A game was secretly played with no fanfare or advance publicity in Racine, Wisconsin. The only publicised match took place in Albany with about 2,500 demonstrating against it in a heavy rain and a very sparse attendance of perhaps 300 in the stadium.

A measure of the international impact of the South African struggle is seen in the

campaign for the release of political prisoners, particularly pointed toward the release of Mr. Nelson Mandela, the leader of the African National Congress of South Africa now serving a life sentence on Robben Island for his conviction in the Rivonia trial of 1964. Next to Chief Luthuli, he probably is the most outstanding leader of the ANC. He was in charge of recruiting and directing volunteers in the Defiance Campaign of 1952. He was a law partner of Mr. Oliver Tambo in Johannesburg, now the President of the ANC. He was one of those accused of treason in 1956. He was also a founder of *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, the military arm of the ANC, which first organised acts of sabotage against the South African Government.

Although there have been limited campaigns for release of South African prisoners over the years, particularly in Britain where there are so many South African political exiles, the effort begun in 1980 received widespread international support. The campaign was started by the *Sunday Post* in South Africa in March 1980, after the dramatic victory of Robert Mugabe in the Zimbabwe elections. It gathered international support of significant proportions no doubt because it was initiated inside South Africa. Bishop Tutu was the first to sign the petition for Mandela's release to be circulated in all churches of the South African Council of Churches. Tutu commented:

"We call for the release of Mandela because the Government has to deal with him as a leader of the blacks. Once they release him they will have difficulty in justifying holding other leaders such as Walter Sisulu".

In June the United Nations Security Council adopted a resolution calling for the release of Mandela and all other political prisoners. In July all the Commonwealth countries called for Mandela's immediate and unconditional release. The British Labour Party invited Mandela and Toivo ja Toivo of Namibia (also on Robben Island) to address their party conference in October.

By September 1980, 72,000 people in South Africa had signed the petition, an act of particular courage because display of Mandela's picture or writing are illegal according to the prevailing security legislation and government regulation. Typical of action in African countries were 6,000 signatures to a petition circulated at the University of Zimbabwe in November. In April 1981, the British Anti-Apartheid Movement and the Defence and Aid Fund released an amazingly distinguished list of signatures representing members of Parliament, labour, church and community leaders. The combined constituency of the signatories represented an estimated 10 million people.

The South African struggle has had and will continue to have a major international impact because the majority of the South African people and their outstanding leaders such as Mandela are committed to carry on. In a letter to the South African Prime

Minister just before Mandela received a five-year sentence for leaving the country illegally in 1962, he said:

"... we wish to make it perfectly clear that we shall never cease to fight against repression and injustice... We have no illusions of the serious implications of our decision. We know that your Government will once again unleash its fury and barbarity to persecute the African people... But no power on earth can stop an oppressed people determined to win their freedom".

Chief Luthuli was reflecting the same determination when he said in his address upon receiving the Nobel Peace Prize:

"We South Africans... understand that much as others might do for us, our freedom cannot come to us as a gift from abroad. Our freedom we must make ourselves".

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THE AFRICAN MINERS' STRIKE OF 1946[12]

by

M. P. Naicker

"Two hundred thousand subterranean heroes who, by day and by night, for a mere pittance lay down their lives to the familiar `fall of rock` and who, at deep levels, ranging from 1,000 to 3,000 feet in the bowels of the earth, sacrifice their lungs to the rock dust which develops miners` phthisis and pneumonia."

- Sol Plaatjies, first Secretary of the African National Congress, describing the lives of black miners in 1914

Thirty years ago, on August 12, 1946, the African mine workers of the Witwatersrand came out on strike in support of a demand for higher wages - 10 shillings a day. They continued the strike for a week in the face of the most savage police terror, in which officially 1,248 workers were wounded and a very large number - officially only 9 - were killed. Lawless police and army violence smashed the strike. The resources of the racist State were mobilised, almost on a war footing, against the unarmed workmen.

But the miners` strike had profound repercussions which are felt until this day. The intense persecution of workers` organisations which began during the strike, when trade union and political offices and homes of officials were raided throughout the country, has not ceased.

The most profound result of the strike, however, was to be the impact it had on the political thinking within the national liberation movement; almost immediately it shifted significantly from a policy of concession to more dynamic and militant forms of struggle.

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[12] From "Notes and Documents", No. 21/76, September 1976

Birth of the African Mine Workers` Union

Black workers were introduced to trade unionism by the early struggles of white British workers who had begun to form trade unions from 1880 onwards. During the first thirty years of their existence the white workers were occupied in a turbulent struggle for decent wages, union recognition and survival.

Writing about this period Alex Hepple states:

> "It was a struggle of white men, striving for a higher standard of life and inbred with a fiery belief in their cause which carried them into bloody strikes, violence and rebellion. Their main enemy was the Chamber of Mines, a body of men who owned the rich gold mines. The quarrel revolved around the Chamber's low-wage policy. This conflict greatly influenced the pattern and direction of trade unionism in South Africa. It introduced the race factor into labour economics and steered white workers into support of an industrial colour bar, with all its damaging effects on workers` solidarity."[13]

Indeed solidarity between white and black workers was lost in those first thirty years, never to be regained to this day. The result has been that the white workers became the aristocrats of labour in South Africa, being among the highest paid workers in the world, while their black compatriots are, in the main, still living below the breadline. What is worse, the overwhelming majority of white workers in South Africa became the main and the most vociferous supporters of successive racist regimes.

However, they taught the black workers one important lesson, i.e., in order to win their demands they had to organise. The organisation of African mine workers was and remains one of the most difficult - and the most essential - tasks facing the trade union and national movement in South Africa. Recruited from the four corners of the country and beyond its borders in Malawi, Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland, Mozambique and, up to 1973, Angola, the African miners are spread out from Randfontein to Springs in the Witwatersrand, spilling over into the Orange Free State.

They are shut into prison-like compounds, speaking many languages, guarded and spied upon.

Any attempt at organisation exposed them to the wiles of employers, the antagonism of white workers and the ferocious arm of the law.

Many unsuccessful attempts were made to form a trade union prior to 1941. But in that year, on 3 August, a very representative miners` conference was called by the Transvaal Provincial Committee of the African National Congress. The conference was attended not only by workers from many mines, but also by delegates from a large number of African,

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[13] Alex Hepple, *South Africa - A Political and Economic History*. London: Pall Mall Press, 1966.

Indian, Coloured and white organisations, as well as representatives from a number of black unions. Some white unions gave their moral support and even the Paramount Chief of Zululand sent an encouraging message. A broad committee of fifteen was elected to "proceed by every means it thought fit to build up an African Mine Workers` Union in order to raise the standards and guard the interests of all African mine workers."[14]

From the first the committee encountered innumerable obstacles. The miners were ready to listen to its speakers, but the employers and the authorities were determined to prevent organisational meetings. Speakers were arrested and meetings broken up.

Another serious obstacle was the wide-scale use of spies by the mine owners.

Time and again provisional shaft and compound union committees were established, only to end in the victimisation and expulsion from the mines of the officials and committee members. Nevertheless, the organising campaign progressed steadily and the stage was reached where a very representative conference of mine workers was held. The Conference formally established the African Mine Workers` Union and elected a committee under the presidency of J. B. Marks, who soon thereafter was elected President of the Transvaal African National Congress as well.

Background to the Strike

In 1941, when the decision to launch the Mine Workers` Union was first mooted the wage rate for African workers was R70 per year while white workers received R848. In 1946, the year of the great strike the wages were: Africans R87 and whites R1,106.[15] In both cases it would be noticed that the wage gap between the white worker and the black worker was 12:1.

With the formal establishment of the Union, organisational work began in earnest in the face of increased harassment, arrests, dismissals, and deportation of workers by the police and the mine management. Nevertheless, the Union grew in strength and influence. The Chamber of Mines, however, refused even to acknowledge the existence of the African Mine Workers` Union, much less to negotiate with its representatives. The Chamber's secretary instructed the office staff not to reply to communications from the Union.[16] Unofficially, of course, the Chamber was acutely conscious of the Union's activities and secret directives were sent out to break the Union. But, with the rising cost of living, starvation of families in the reserves and increasing pressure by the mine management and white workers, the demands of the workers became more incessant.

In order to stave off the growing unrest among the African mine workers, the regime appointed a Commission of Enquiry in 1943, with Judge Lansdowne as its Chairman.

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[14] E. Roux, *Time Longer than Rope*. University of Wisconsin Press, p. 335.
[15] Annual Reports of the South African Government Mining Engineers
[16] "The Impending Strike of African Mine Workers", a statement by the African Mine Workers' Union, August 1946

Among the members of this Commission was A. A. Moore, President of the mostly white Trades and Labour Council.

The African Mine Workers` Union presented an unanswerable case before this Commission in support of the workers` claim to a living wage. The Chamber of Mines made no serious attempt to rebut the Union's case, reiterating that its policy was to employ cheap African labour. Meanwhile, however, the *Guardian*, a progressive South African weekly, the only paper which totally supported the strike, was sued by four mining companies for 40,000 pounds for publishing the Union's memorandum on the grounds that it was false and that the recruiting of mine labourers would be hindered. The Court decided against the *Guardian* and awarded 750 pounds damages to each of the four companies. No serious student of South African politics could have expected otherwise. It was surprising that the awards to the mine magnates were not higher.

The report of the Lansdowne Commission which appeared in April 1944 was a shameful document. It accepted the basic premise of the mine owners; all its recommendations were quite frankly made within the framework of preserving the cheap labour system. The miner's wage, said the Commission, was not really intended to be a living wage, but merely a "supplementary income". Supplementary, that is, to the worker's supposed income from his land. The evidence placed before the Commission of acute starvation in the Transkei and other reserves was ignored.

The report of the Commission was received with bitter disappointment by the workers. Even its wretchedly miserly recommendations were rejected, in the main, by both the regime and the mine owners.

The recommendations were:

- an increase of five pence per shift for surface workers and six pence per shift for underground workers, on the basic rate of 22 pence per shift obtained for nearly a generation;

- cost of living allowance of 3 pence per shift;

- boot allowance of 36 pence for 30 shifts;

- two weeks` paid leave per annum for permanent workers; and

- overtime wages at time and a half.

Towards the end of that year the racist Prime Minister, Field Marshal Smuts, announced that wages were to be raised by 4 pence for surface and 5 pence for underground workers, and that the extra wage would be borne by the State in the form of tax remission to the mines. The Chamber of Mines also agreed to overtime pay. All the other recommendations, miserly though they were, were completely ignored.

Obviously expecting that this would do little to allay the general discontent among the African miners, Smuts issued a Proclamation - War Measure No. 1425 - prohibiting gatherings of more than twenty persons on mining property without special permission. J. B. Marks, the President, and two other officials of the Union were arrested in December 1944, when they held a meeting at the Durban Deep Compound on the Witwatersrand. A few days later P. Vundi and W. Kanye, two organisers of the Union, were arrested on a similar charge in Springs. The arrested men were found not guilty on a technicality. The offence created by the Proclamation was that of being present at a gathering of more than 20 persons, whereas the accused had been charged with "holding a meeting". From that time, the police were more careful to frame their charges in correct legal phraseology and all trade union meetings in or near mine compounds ceased. Though the war ended, the Proclamation was not withdrawn.

Despite these difficulties the African Mine Workers` Union increased its following in numerous mines throughout the Witwatersrand. And on May 19, 1946, the biggest conference yet held of representatives of the workers instructed the Executive of the Union to make yet one more approach to the Chamber of Mines to place before them the workers` demands for a ten shillings (one Rand) a day wage and other improvements. Failing agreement, decided the Conference, the workers would take strike action.

From May till July the Union redoubled its efforts to get the Chamber to see reason. To all their repeated communications they received one reply - a printed postcard stating that the matter was receiving attention.

In his evidence at the subsequent trial of strike leaders and their supporters, Mr. Limebeer, secretary of the Chamber of Mines, said that the postcard had been sent in error. It was the Chamber’s policy, he added, not to acknowledge communications from the Union.

Decision to Strike

On Sunday, August 4, 1946, over one thousand delegates assembled at an open air conference held in the Newtown Market Square: no hall where Africans could hold meetings was big enough to accommodate those present. The conference carried the following resolution unanimously:

"Because of the intransigent attitude of the Transvaal Chamber of Mines towards the legitimate demands of the workers for a minimum wage of 10 shillings per day and better conditions of work, this meeting of African miners resolves to embark upon a general strike of all Africans

employed on the gold mines, as from August 12, 1946."

Before the decision was adopted, speaker after speaker mounted the platform and demanded immediate action. One worker said:

> "When I think of how we left our homes in the reserves, our children naked and starving, we have nothing more to say. Every man must agree to strike on 12 August. It is better to die than go back with empty hands."[17]

After the decision to strike was adopted, the President, J. B. Marks, stressed the gravity of the strike decision and said that the workers must be prepared for repression by possible violence. "You are challenging the very basis of the cheap labour system" he told them, "and must be ready to sacrifice in the struggle for the right to live as human beings." His speech was loudly cheered, as was that of the Secretary, J. J. Najoro, who declared that their repeated efforts to secure improvements by negotiation had always ended in failure, owing to the refusal of the Chamber of Mines to recognise the existence of the Union. There was little doubt, he warned, that the regime would attempt to suppress the strike by brute force.[18] But the meeting was in a militant mood. An old miner shouted: "We on the mines are dead men already."[19]

The Strike and the Terror

A letter conveying the decision of the meeting to the Chamber, and adding a desperate last-minute appeal for negotiations, was as usual ignored. The press and mass media, except the *Guardian*, did not print any news of the decision until the morning of Monday, 12 August, when the *Rand Daily Mail* came out with a front page story that the strike was a "complete failure". The report was obviously mischievous and a lie, as the paper went to bed before midnight, when the strike had not even begun.

The *Star* that evening, however, had a different tale to tell: tens of thousands of workers were out on strike from the East to the West Rand; the Smuts regime had formed a special committee of Cabinet Ministers to "deal with" the situation; and thousands of police were being mobilised and drafted to the area.

They dealt with it by means of bloody violence. The police batoned, bayoneted and fired on the striking workers to force them down the mine shafts. The full extent of police repression is not known but reports from miners and some newspapers reveal intense persecution and terror during the week following Monday, 12 August.

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[17] *Guardian*, Cape Town, August 9, 1946
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] *Ibid.*

A peaceful procession of workers began to march to Johannesburg on what became known as Bloody Tuesday, 13 August, from the East Rand. They wanted to get their passes and go back home. Police opened fire on the procession and a number of workers were killed. At one mine workers, forced to go down the mine, started a sit-down strike underground. The police drove the workers up - according to the *Star* - "stope by stope, level by level" to the surface. They then started beating them up, chasing them into the veld with baton charges. Then the workers were "re-assembled" in the compound yard and, said the *Star*, "volunteered to go back to work".

In protest against these savage brutalities, a special conference of the Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CONETU) decided to call a general strike in Johannesburg on Wednesday, 14 August. The Johannesburg City Council sent a deputation to plead with CONETU to maintain essential services. Many workers heeded the call, but the weakness of the unions generally, and the failure to bring the call home to the workers in factories, resulted in only a partial success of the strike.

CONETU called a mass meeting of workers at the Newtown Market Square on 15 August. The meeting was banned in terms of the Riotous Assemblies Act, and the decision banning the meeting was conveyed by a senior police officer, backed by a large squad of armed police. Those present were given five minutes to disperse. Only quick action by people's leaders who went among the angry crowd averted a massacre. A procession of women tobacco workers marching to this meeting was attacked by the police and one pregnant worker bayoneted.

By Friday, 16 August, all the striking workers - 75,000 according to the government "Director of Native Labour" but probably nearer 100,000 - were bludgeoned back to work.

Throughout the week hundreds of workers were arrested, tried, imprisoned or deported. Leaders of the African trade unions and the entire Executive Committee of the African Mine Workers` Union, the whole of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and scores of Provincial and local leaders of the African National Congress were arrested and charged in a series of abortive "treason and sedition" trials. Innumerable police raids, not only in the Transvaal but in all the main cities in the country including Durban, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Kimberley and East London, were carried out on the offices of trade unions, the Congresses and the Communist Party. The homes of leaders of the ANC, the Communist Party, the Indian and Coloured Congresses and the trade unions were also raided simultaneously. The white South African State was mobilised and rampant in defence of its cheap labour policy and big dividends for the mining magnates and big business. This marked the opening of a phase of intense repression by the racist regime of the day, led by Field Marshal Smuts, against the forces for change in South Africa. This repression continues to this day under the Vorster regime.

The African Mine Workers` Union, mainly because of the very difficult circumstances under which it operated, was never a closely-organised well-knit body. During the strike the central strike committee was effectively cut off from the workers at each mine by

massive police action and the workers had to struggle in isolation. They were continually told that all the other workers had gone back to work, and apart from Union leaflets hazardously brought into the compounds by gallant volunteers - a large number being caught and arrested - there was no system of interchanging information.

Nevertheless, thousand of miners defied terror, arrest and enemy propaganda and stood out for five days - from 12 to 16 August. During the strike 32 of the 45 mines on the Rand were affected according to one report received by the Union and later confirmed by the Johannesburg *Star*. According to the estimates issued by the Chief Native Commissioner for the Witwatersrand, 21 mines were affected by the strike, 11 wholly and 10 partially. The dead, according to this official, numbered nine, of whom four were trampled to death, three died in the hospital, one was shot dead and one "killed himself by running into a dustbin".

The regime called the strike a failure. But no great movement of this character is really a "failure", even though it might not succeed in its immediate aim.

A Historic Event

The African miners` strike was one of those historic events that, in a flash of illumination, educate a nation, reveal what has been hidden and destroy lies and illusions. The strike transformed African politics overnight. It spelt the end of the compromising, concession-begging tendencies that dominated African politics. The timid opportunism and servile begging for favours disappeared for all practical purposes. The Native Representative Council which, in a sense, embodied that spirit, in its session on Thursday, 15 August, in Pretoria, decided to adjourn as a protest against the Government’s "breach of faith towards the African people". They never met again.

Dr. A. B. Xuma, President-General of the African National Congress, joined a delegation of the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) sent to the 1946 session of the United Nations General Assembly when the question of the treatment of Indians in South Africa was raised by the Government of India. He, together with the SAIC representatives - H. A. Naidoo and Sorabjee Rustomjee - and Senator H. M. Basner, a progressive white "Native Representative" in the South African Senate, used the occasion to appraise Member States of the United Nations of the strike of the African miners and other aspects of the struggle for equality in South Africa.

Dealing with this visit the ANC, at its annual conference from December 14 to 17, 1946, passed the following resolution:

> "Congress congratulates the delegates of India, China and the Soviet Union and all other countries who championed the cause of democratic rights for the oppressed non-European majority in South Africa, and pays tribute to those South Africans present in America, particularly Dr. A. B. Xuma, Messrs. H. A. Naidoo, Sorabjee Rustomjee and Senator H. M. Basner, for enabling delegates to the United Nations to obtain first-hand information and data which provided the

nations of the world with reasonable grounds for passing a deserving judgement against the South African policy of white domination.

"Conference desires to make special mention of the Council for African Affairs for its noble efforts to defend fundamental human rights..."[20]

When the Native Representative Council adjourned, the Prime Minister, Field Marshal Smuts, met members of the Council and outlined new proposals to end the deadlock. Among his proposals was "a form of recognition" for African trade unions. However, he made it clear that such recognition would not include African mine workers: their affairs would be dealt with by an Inspectorate functioning under the Department of Native Affairs.

After considering this proposal, the Councillors stated:

"It is asking for too much to expect the African people to believe that this new Inspectorate, whatever the grade of officers appointed, will make a better job of protecting the interests of the mine workers than the Inspectorate has done in the past. The African mine workers demand the right to protect themselves through the medium of their own recognised and registered organisations."[21]

In a statement on May 11, 1947, on the Council's decision to adjourn, Dr. A.B. Xuma reiterated the demand of the ANC for "recognition of African trade unions under the Industrial Conciliation Act and adequate wages for African workers, including mine workers".[22]

The brave miners of 1946 gave birth to the ANC Youth League's Programme of Action adopted in 1949; they were the forerunners of the freedom strikers of May 1, 1950, against the Suppression of Communism Act, and the tens of thousands who joined the 26 June nation-wide protest strike that followed the killing of sixteen people during the May Day strike. They gave the impetus for the 1952 Campaign of Defiance of Unjust Laws when thousands of African, Indian and Coloured people went to jail; they inspired the mood that led to the upsurge in 1960 and to the emergence of *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Spear of the Nation) - the military wing of the African National Congress.

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[20] The Council on African Affairs, led by Paul Robeson, Dr. W. E. B. DuBois and Dr. Alpheus Hunton, American black leaders, greatly assisted the delegation during its visit.
[21] Gwendolyn Carter and Thomas Karis, *From Protest to Challenge*, Vol. II, p. 257. Stanford: Hoover University Press, 1973.
[22] *Ibid.* p. 258.

THE DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN RECALLED[23]

by

M. P. Naicker

Introduction

This year, June 26, will mark the twentieth anniversary of the beginning of the "Campaign of Defiance of Unjust Laws," launched jointly by the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress. This Campaign was first conceived towards the end of the most shameful session of the South African Parliament in the middle of 1951. The all-white Parliament had placed no less than seventy-five pieces of apartheid legislation on the Statute Book during this single session. These included the African Building Workers` Act, depriving African building workers the right to work in "white areas," that is, outside the Reserves; the Separate Representation of Voters` Act, depriving the Coloured voters the right to vote for the same candidates as White voters; the Suppression of Communism Amendment Act, curtailing the rights of free speech and assembly; and the Native Laws Amendment Act, making tens of thousands of urban Africans into displaced persons in the country of their birth.

The African National Congress Reacts

Discussing these and other draconian measures adopted by the Nationalist Party Government since it came to power in 1948, the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress (ANC), meeting during the week-end of June 16-17, 1951, decided to invite the head committees of other black national movements - the South African Indian Congress (SAIC) and the Franchise Action Council (an *ad hoc* federal body representing several Coloured organisations, which was set up in Cape Town to fight against the threat of the removal of Coloured voters from the Common Roll) to discuss a joint campaign of civil disobedience and a general strike against "the Government's drive towards the establishment of a racist-fascist State." The Conference of the National Executives of the ANC and the SAIC, together with representatives of the Franchise Action Council, met in Johannesburg during the week-end of July 28-29, 1951.

Opening the Conference, Dr. J.S. Moroka, President-General of the African National Congress, set the tone of the deliberations that followed, when he said:

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[23] From "Notes and Documents", No. 11/72, June 1972.

This paper was published in connection with the tenth anniversary of Defiance Campaign in 1972.

"It is my contention that no matter where a man comes from, if he has made South Africa his home, then he is a South African. We want to live in co-operation with all in this country... We have come together to find ways and means to fight this great fight which is before us. When we work together in a spirit of co-operation we shall go along the road to equality..."

At the end of its two-day deliberations, this historic conference, in a public declaration, stated its "firm conviction that all people of South Africa, irrespective of race, colour or creed, have the inalienable and fundamental right to participate directly and fully in the governing councils of the State". Stating that the rising tide of oppression against the people of South Africa had reached unbearable limits, especially among the Union's black population, the declaration said:

> "The brutal enforcement of the inhuman and enslaving pass laws, and the further impoverishment of the African people by the policy of stock limitation and so-called rehabilitation schemes, and also recent legislation such as the Group Areas Act, the Separate Representation of Voters` Act, the Suppression of Communism Act and the Bantu Authorities Act have caused untold misery and bitter resentment among the non-white peoples of South Africa.
>
> "The Nationalist Government in its mad desire to enforce apartheid, has at every opportunity incited the people to racial strife and has attempted to crush their legitimate protests by ruthless police action."

The declaration concluded by stating that the Conference, therefore, decided to embark upon an immediate mass campaign for the repeal of these oppressive measures and to establish a Joint Planning Council consisting of representatives of the ANC and the Indian Congress to co-ordinate the efforts of the African, Indian and Coloured people in this campaign.

By the year's end, the Joint Planning Council - whose members were J.B. Marks, President of the Transvaal ANC; Walter Sisulu, Secretary-General of the ANC; Dr. Y. M. Dadoo and Y. A. Cachalia, President and Joint Secretary respectively of the SAIC, with Dr. J.S. Moroka, President-General of the ANC, as Chairman - after months of considered deliberations with the highest officials of the African National Congress, the South African Indian Congress and the Franchise Action Council presented their blueprint for action to the National Executives of these three organisations.

I. PLAN OF THE CAMPAIGN

The ANC presented the plan to its 39th Annual Conference held in Bloemfontein from December 15 to 17, 1951. Adopting the report of the Joint Planning Council, the Conference decided to embark, in 1952, on mass national action, based on non-co-operation, against certain specified unjust and racially discriminatory laws of the Union Government, unless these laws were repealed before March 1, 1952. The Conference in the course of a lengthy public statement on this historic decision stated:

> "All people, irrespective of the national group they belong to and irrespective of the colour of their skin, who have made South Africa their home, are entitled to live a full and free life.
>
> "Full democratic rights with direct say in the affairs of the government are the inalienable right of every South African - a right which must be realised now if South Africa is to be saved from social chaos and tyranny and from the evils arising out of the existing denial of the franchise of vast masses of the population on the grounds of race and colour.
>
> "The struggle which the national organisations of the non-European people are conducting is not directed against any race or national group. It is against the unjust laws which keep in perpetual subjection and misery vast sections of the population. It is for the creation of conditions which will restore human dignity, equality and freedom to every South African."

The Conference also decided that Union-wide meetings and demonstrations of protest be organised on April 6, 1952, the 300th anniversary of white settlement in South Africa as a prelude to the launching of the Campaign of Defiance of Unjust Laws.

Indian Congress Pledges Support

Following close on the decision of the ANC to make 1952 a year of political action against unjust laws, the South African Indian Congress met in conference in Johannesburg from January 25 to 27, 1952, to discuss the report of the Joint Planning Council.

Appealing for unity to implement the plan of defiance of unjust laws adopted by the African National Congress, Dr. S. M. Molema, the ANC's Treasurer General, told the conference of the Indian Congress:

"Only so long as the white man can succeed in making us believe that non-European destinies are antagonistic or incompatible will he succeed in

destroying us one by one. If we realise the identity of our lot and combine to do relentless battle for our legitimate and common rights of life and liberty, we shall save ourselves and our children, and no power on earth can prevent our success."

The response of the Conference, after lengthy deliberations, was a unanimous vote in favour of joining the ANC in the Campaign of Defiance of Unjust Laws.

Correspondence Between the Congresses and the Prime Minister

With the Indian Congress totally committed to the campaign and the Franchise Action Council pledging support for the demonstrations planned for April 6, the African National Congress addressed a letter to Dr. D.F. Malan, the Prime Minister. The letter, signed by Dr. J.S. Moroka and Walter Sisulu, President General and Secretary General respectively of the ANC, drawing attention to the aims and objects of the Congress, called for the repeal of the laws enumerated in its 39th Conference resolution, "by not later than the 29th day of February 1952, failing which the African National Congress will hold protest meetings and demonstrations on April 6 as a prelude to the implementation of the plan for the defiance of unjust laws."

With characteristic arrogance, Mr. A. Camp, Private Secretary to Dr. Malan, in a letter dated January 9, 1952, rejecting the demands of the ANC, rebuked the Congress for having written to him directly rather than to the Minister of Native Affairs to whom, according to the Prime Minister, such correspondence was usually addressed by the ANC.

In obvious reference to the growth of a new type of leadership sponsored by the ANC Youth League - a leadership pledged to a Programme of Action adopted by the League in 1949 - the Prime Minister, stating that this probably accounted for the direct approach to him, expressed doubt if the present leadership of Congress "could claim to speak authoritatively on behalf of the body known to the government as the African National Congress."

Concluding his letter with a threat of drastic reprisals if Congress persisted with its campaign, Dr. Malan said:

"The Government will make full use of the machinery at its disposal to quell any disturbances,

and, thereafter, deal adequately with those responsible..."

Replying to the Prime Minister's letter on February 11, 1952, the ANC rejected the contention that Congress had at any time accepted the position that the Department of Native Affairs was the only channel of communication between the African people and the State and pointed out that the subject of its communication to the Prime Minister was not a departmental matter, but one of "general importance and gravity affecting the fundamental principles practised by the Union Government."

Renewing its pledge to embark on a mass campaign of defiance of unjust laws, the letter, dealing with the Prime Minister's contention that there was a danger of disturbances if the campaign was embarked upon, the ANC expressed its fear that the Government itself could create disturbances in order to suppress the movement.

Later events were to prove that this fear was not misplaced. Following on the ANC's correspondence with the Prime Minister, the South African Indian Congress also wrote to Dr. Malan expressing its full support of the call of the African National Congress for the repeal of unjust laws. The plan for struggle has been adopted, stated the letter - signed by Dr. Y. M. Dadoo (President), Y.A. Cachalia and D.U. Mistry (Joint Secretaries) - to lessen the burden of oppression of the non-European people and "save the country from the catastrophe of national chaos and ever-widening conflicts." The Prime Minister neither acknowledged receipt of nor replied to the letter. The stage was now set for the first part of the Joint Planning Council's plan - the April 6 demonstrations and meetings.

Demonstrations Held Throughout South Africa

The demonstrations on April 6 were preceded by hundreds of smaller meetings throughout the country. In the Transvaal and Natal, co-ordinating committees of the Provincial branches of the ANC and the Indian Congress were set up to make arrangements for April 6. In a leaflet calling on the people to attend the meetings and demonstrations on that day, the National Executives of the two Congresses declared:

> "This year, l952, marks 300 years since, under Jan van Riebeeck, the first white people came to live in South Africa.
>
> "The Malan Government is using this occasion to celebrate everything in South African history that glorifies the conquest, enslavement and oppression of the non-European people.
>
> "Nothing is said of the fact that South Africa has been built up on the sweat and blood of the working people. Nothing is said of the leaders of the non-European peoples.

"This van Riebeeck celebration cannot be a time for rejoicing for the non-European.

"It is the time to put an end to slavery in South Africa."

In the Cape, a special conference organised by the Franchise Action Council on March 16 discussed the part Coloured people would play on April 6. Among the speakers at the conference were Dr. Y.M. Dadoo, President of the Indian Congress, and Walter Sisulu, Secretary-General of the ANC. The Conference, which was attended by 91 delegates from 50 organisations representing 63,000 people in the Western Cape, pledged full support for the April 6 demonstrations and set up a special committee to organise meetings and demonstrations on that day throughout the Western Cape. International support for the April 6 campaign and the proposed Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign came from hundreds of Heads of State, Government representatives and organisations from all over the world. These included Prime Ministers Chou En-Lai of China, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of the Gold Coast and Dr. Mossadek of Iran; H.J. Brillantes, executive officer of the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines; the President of the All India Congress Committee; the Secretary General of the Arab League; the Council on African Affairs in the United States, headed by Paul Robeson; the Peoples` Progressive Party of British Guiana; and the World Federation of Democratic Youth.

On April 6, the day on which white South Africa was celebrating the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck and his first white settlers in South Africa, the black people and some white supporters demonstrated their abhorrence to racism and apartheid in a way never before witnessed in the country. Meetings held in almost every city and town were among the largest ever organised by black movements in the country. The Johannesburg meeting was attended by over 15,000; the meeting in Cape Town was attended by 10,000 as was the meeting held in Durban. In Port Elizabeth some 20,000 attended a meeting held on a hillside overlooking the city and the sea. Thousands more attended meetings and prayer services in Kimberley, Pretoria, East London and elsewhere. At each of these meetings, a pledge to join in the struggle against unjust laws was enthusiastically adopted.

The Government, obviously alarmed at this great show of unity and determination on the part of the black people, took several steps in an effort to intimidate the people and to influence the decisions of the joint meeting of the National Executives of the ANC and the Indian Congress scheduled for June 1, 1952, in Port Elizabeth to discuss details of the Defiance Campaign and to set a date for its launching.

Among the measures adopted by the Government were:

* The banning of a number of leading Congressmen and trade unionists from participating in meetings; confining them to their provinces and ordering them to resign from their organisations. Among the first to receive banning orders were Indian and African Congress leaders J.B. Marks, Dr. Y. M. Dadoo, Moses Kotane and David Bopape;

**** The expulsion of Sam Kahn from Parliament and Fred Carneson from the Cape Provincial Council, both elected to these bodies by Africans in the Western Cape, who at that time still enjoyed the right to vote for a white representative in Parliament and another in the Cape Provincial Council;***

* The banning of the *Guardian*, an independent weekly newspaper which supported the campaign; and

* The arrest of E.S. ("Solly") Sachs, Secretary of the Garment Workers` Union, which had the largest organised black trade union branch in the country. Mr. Sachs was arrested for addressing a meeting of his Union in defiance of a banning order prohibiting him from attending gatherings and ordering him to resign from his Union.

Defiance Begins

The African and Indian Congresses, meeting in conference on June 1, far from being cowed by these measures, reacted swiftly by taking the following decisions:

**** Setting June 26 for the commencement of the Campaign of Defiance of Unjust Laws;***

* Announcing that before this date banned leaders will defy their banning orders. Even while the Port Elizabeth meeting was in progress, Moses Kotane, National Executive member of the ANC, was arrested at a meeting he was addressing in Alexandra African township, Johannesburg, where he lived. Others were arrested in quick succession. J. B. Marks, Transvaal President of the ANC, was arrested at a meeting of residents in Orlando township, Johannesburg, and David Bopape, the Transvaal ANC Secretary, and Dr. Dadoo, President of the Indian Congress, were arrested at a meeting in a cinema in Fordsburg, Johannesburg; and

* The staff of the banned *Guardian* brought out a new weekly publication, the *Clarion*, which continued to follow the pro-Congress policy of its predecessor.

II. ACCOUNT OF THE CAMPAIGN

On June 26, 1952, planned acts of defiance of unjust laws were committed by bands of volunteers in all the main centres of the Union. For the first time in South African history, Africans, Indians and Coloured persons went into political action side by side, under a common leadership. In Johannesburg, 53 African volunteers defied the curfew regulations which applied only to Africans. In Boksburg, 53 African and Indian protesters led by the veteran passive resister, Nana Sita, President of the Transvaal Indian Congress, defied regulations requiring non-residents to obtain a permit to enter an African location. In Port Elizabeth, 30 volunteers were arrested for defying apartheid in railway stations by occupying a waiting room reserved for whites only. In Worcester in the Western Cape, nine Coloured and African people were arrested after they had joined a white queue in the local Post Office. In Durban, 25 Indian and African Congressmen were arrested for selling "Freedom Stamps" at a mass meeting. In Cape Town, Sam Kahn, banned member of Parliament and a member of the City Council, was arrested when he attended a meeting of the City Council in defiance of the banning order restricting him from attending gatherings. Among those arrested on this, the first day of the Campaign, were prominent leaders, Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela, Yusuf Cachalia and Raymond Mhlaba.

This pattern of resistance continued throughout the campaign and when sentenced, resisters chose imprisonment, rejecting the tempting option of a fine. Nor did they plead in mitigation. Instead group leaders used the Court to restate their abhorrence of apartheid and all that this vicious form of racism stands for and demanded full freedom and democratic rights for all in South Africa.

Intimidation and Brutality

The campaign gained momentum in the days that followed. Smaller towns and rural areas joined the campaign in increasing numbers. Batches of resisters were defying a variety of unjust laws and regulations in scores of small towns and villages such as King Williams Town, Middledrift, Peddie, Brakpan, Pietermaritzburg, Queenstown, Stellenbosch and Ladysmith.

In the face of this great upsurge, in yet another move to intimidate the people, the South African Security Police (the Special Branch), conducted, early in August 1952, the largest ever police raids on the offices and homes of the liberation movements and their leaders. Many of the raids were conducted without valid search warrants. Where offices or homes were locked they were broken into. The raids covered not only such major centres as Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, Durban, Cape Town, Pretoria and East London, but also such towns as Vryburg, Dundee, Kimberley, Mafeking, Ladysmith, Worcester, Pietermaritzburg, Hermanus, Middledrift and Thaba 'Nchu.

Apart from wanting to intimidate the people, the aim of these raids, as events were to prove later, was to find evidence for a major conspiracy trial, for the Government was

desperately trying to cut off the leadership of the ever-growing Defiance Campaign from the people. Meanwhile, the courts which, at the beginning of the campaign were sentencing resisters to relatively short terms of imprisonment, began handing out maximum sentences in almost all the areas. In Port Elizabeth, a magistrate began sentencing youngsters under 21 to canings. Police treatment of spectators at resisters` trials began to get rougher and there were many cases of men and women being injured as a result of police brutality. Reports from most prisons indicated that resisters were being singled out for extremely harsh treatment and forced to do the most back-breaking and menial jobs. A leader of one group of resisters in Brakpan was sentenced to three days of solitary confinement and spare diet in Boksburg gaol after he had given the Congress salute "Afrika!" in front of some warders. There were several reports of resisters being beaten up by prison warders. Despite this wave of intimidation and brutality, however, the campaign grew in momentum.

National Leaders Arrested

On August 26, exactly two months after the campaign had begun, and roughly three weeks after the massive police raids, twenty national leaders of the African National Congress and the Indian Congress and the youth movements of both these organisations, as well as the Chairman of the Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade Unions, were arrested and charged under Section 11 (b) of the Suppression of Communism Act. The leaders included: Dr. J.S. Moroka and Dr. Y.M. Dadoo, the Presidents of the ANC and the Indian Congress respectively; Nelson Mandela, President of the ANC Youth League; Ahmad Kathrada, President of the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress; and James Phillips, the Coloured Chairman of the Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade Unions. They were accused of leading the Defiance Campaign which aimed at "bringing about a change in the industrial and social structure of the country through unconstitutional and illegal methods."

Unprecedented scenes greeted the opening of the court case. The magistrate had to adjourn the proceedings to enable Dr. Moroka and Dr. Dadoo to address the thousands of people who had jammed the courtroom, the corridors and the courtyard, singing national songs and giving the "Afrika!" salute. Both leaders urged the people to be silent so that the trial could proceed. The crowd responded by moving over to an open square across the road from the court where they held an all-day meeting. Far from slowing down the campaign, the arrest and trial of the leaders aroused greater interest and determination and over 600 volunteers courted imprisonment in the week following the arrest of the leaders.

By October, less than three months since the campaign had begun, over 5,000 volunteers had been imprisoned. All over the country, in the African townships, in the rural reserves, in Indian and Coloured areas, enthusiasm for the campaign had reached new heights. Meetings of the Congresses were drawing more and more people. There was a wave of national consciousness and national unity of all the oppressed, unprecedented in the history of the country. Leader writers in the white-owned English-language dailies,

who had attacked the campaign before it had begun, were grudgingly admitting that vast masses of the black people were supporting the Congresses and the Defiance Campaign.

Violence Breaks Out

It is at this precise moment, that which the leadership of the campaign feared most and constantly warned against, happened: riots broke out, first in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth, and then in the southern Transvaal town of Denver, in Kimberley and East London. Immediately after the riots began in New Brighton township, Port Elizabeth, on the afternoon of October 18, 1952, Dr. J.L.Z. Njongwe, President of the Port Elizabeth Branch of the ANC, whose home was in New Brighton, called for a Judicial Commission of Inquiry. This demand, which was supported by the National Executives of the ANC, the Indian Congress and many other organisations and leading individuals, both black and white, was rejected out of hand by the Government.

From independent reports received by the Congresses at the time, the following facts emerge:

First, the Port Elizabeth riots followed the death of an African shot by a railway policeman on the busy New Brighton railway station. The police later alleged that the dead African had stolen a pot of paint. Hearing the shot, people from the nearby New Brighton African location rushed to the scene. Learning that one of the residents had been shot dead, the people began stoning the station buildings. Police reinforcements, which had also arrived on the scene, opened fire on the people, killing seven persons. The people retreated from the station and in the rioting that followed, four whites were killed.

Second, the riots in Denver, Southern Transvaal, began when residents of the Denver African Hostel, who had refused to pay increased rentals - from 11 shillings to one pound - rushed at a tenant who tendered the full rental on November 3, 1952. When the tenant was taken into the municipal buildings for protection by the municipal police, the people stoned the building. The arrival of a large contingent of armed police forced the people back into the hostel. The police then hid behind protective barricades and fired into the hostel, killing three people and wounding four others.

Third, five days later, three youths who had been drinking beer at the Municipal African Beer Hall in No. 2 Location, Kimberley, are alleged to have shouted the Congress salute when they had finished their drink. They were ordered out of the hall. They left and most of the other drinkers followed them out and congregated outside the beer hall. Some began stoning the hall. Police, heavily armed, arrived and instantly opened fire on the crowd. Thirteen Africans were killed and 78 injured.

Fourth, at East London, on November 9, a *bona fide* religious meeting for which permission had been granted by the authorities, was baton-charged by a large body of police whose commander decided that the meeting was not a religious one. The Government had earlier banned all meetings except religious meetings and had introduced a curfew in five areas including East London. The 1,500 people who had

gathered at the open-air meeting moved away and while they were doing so, the police climbed on to their open lorries and indiscriminately fired into the homes of the people while their lorries patrolled along the main roads of the location. The people reacted irrationally. They were reported to have burnt the local Roman Catholic Church and killed a nun and a white man.

The ANC and the Indian Congress called on the people not to be provoked into violence and warned them against *agents provocateurs*, whom they suspected of instigating the riots which broke out in quick succession in four different areas separated by hundreds of miles. The ANC also warned the people that the chaotic condition brought about by the situation would be used by the Government to declare a State of Emergency and to suppress the movement.

The Congresses, however, called on the people to rally closer to the movement and to continue with the campaign with the same discipline and unity they had displayed earlier in the campaign. More and more resisters joined the campaign and courted imprisonment and these were joined by four white democrats in Cape Town and seven in Johannesburg.

Suspension of the Campaign

Towards the end of November 1952, the Minister of Justice issued a proclamation banning all meetings of more than ten Africans anywhere in the country. Soon thereafter the Government enacted two savage and antidemocratic laws especially designed to suppress the Defiance Campaign. In terms of the first law - the Criminal Law Amendment Act - any person who broke any law in protest or in support of a campaign could be sentenced to the following:

a) A fine not exceeding three hundred pounds; or
b) imprisonment for a period not exceeding three years; or
c) a whipping not exceeding ten strokes; or
d) both such fine and such imprisonment; or
e) both such fine and such a whipping; or
f) both such imprisonment and such a whipping.

Other provisions of the Act laid down similar severe penalties for any person who

"in any manner whatsoever advises, encourages, incites, commands, aids or procures any other person... to commit an offence by way of protest against a law..."

Similar penalties were prescribed for any person "who solicits, accepts or receives from any person or body of persons... any money or other articles" for the purpose of assisting such a campaign or for "assisting any person" who has committed any offence as a protest against any legislation. Persons convicted under the Act would subsequently be prohibited by the Minister of Justice from being within any area defined in the prohibition order.

The second law - the Public Safety Act - empowered the Cabinet to suspend all laws anywhere in the Union whenever it was of the opinion that a state of emergency existed and to publish emergency regulations for anything it deemed necessary. These regulations could carry any penalty, including death, for any contravention, as well as confiscation of goods and property.

It was in this situation that in the middle of April 1953, Chief Albert John Mvubi Luthuli, who was elected President-General of the ANC in December 1952, declared that in the light of Government proclamations and the new laws, it was necessary for the organisation to take stock of the situation. He called off the Defiance Campaign and announced:

"It means studying our programme and the new situation in which we find ourselves, to adapt our plans and to see what we could now do to achieve our freedom."

III. AIMS OF THE CAMPAIGN AND ITS RESULTS

Although the movement was partly based on the experiences of the Indian passive resistance movement led by Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa in 1906 and 1913, unlike the Gandhian campaigns, the Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign was seen clearly by the leaders as a tactical step towards politicising the masses, inculcating a spirit of national consciousness among the people and thus building the national liberation movements into mass organisations of the people.

In the detailed discussions that were held by the National Planning Council and the leaderships of the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress prior to the formulation of the plan of action, the efficacy of the Gandhian philosophy of *satyagraha* (i.e. changing the hearts of the rulers by passively suffering imprisonment) in the face of an avowedly fascist regime was discussed at length. Undoubtedly there was a very small minority among the leadership who supported the Gandhian creed absolutely. But the vast majority agreed that the campaign itself could not defeat white supremacy. The major aim therefore was to build the liberation movements so as to embarrass the Government and to lead the people to mass industrial action.

The Defiance Campaign did not achieve the objective of mass industrial action because it had to be called off prematurely, due to the repressive measures adopted by the Government. The Campaign did, however, accomplish the other objects of the campaign. For the first time in its history the country witnessed a united and determined campaign embracing all the oppressed peoples under a single leadership, thus marking a turning point in the forms and methods of struggle hitherto conducted. In a relatively short period of time, the Congresses had organised a force of 8,557 highly disciplined volunteers who courted imprisonment. In the less than nine months that the campaign lasted, the membership of the African National Congress shot up from a mere 7,000 to over 100,000, and the ANC established itself as the undoubted leader of the struggle for democracy, freedom and national liberation in South Africa. The campaign transformed the ANC from a loose-knit body into an effective mass movement, with branches in almost every single area in the country and with offices manned by full-time personnel in all the major centres. Correspondingly, it strengthened its leadership, both at the national and local level. Dr. Moroka, who had succumbed to the pressures of the authorities during the trial of leaders, was replaced by Chief Luthuli, whose courage and dynamism was to dominate the political scene in South Africa until he died in 1967.

The Indian Congress likewise greatly consolidated its ranks and was the only spokesman of the South African Indian community, until it was silenced by the banning of all its national and local leaders in the early 1960s.

The campaign also stimulated the growth of the South African Coloured People's Organisation (later the South African Coloured People's Congress). The Congress of Democrats was formed at a meeting in December 1952, in Johannesburg, at which Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo, the present Acting President General of the ANC, spoke to over two hundred white supporters of the campaign. The Congress was composed of whites who were unconditionally committed to the policy and programme of the African National Congress. Branches of this organisation were established later in all the other major cities in South Africa.

The Defiance Campaign left an indelible mark on a variety of individuals and organisations. The Liberal Party, which was formed during the campaign, initially advocated a qualified franchise for the black people, but changed later to call for universal adult suffrage for all as demanded by the Congresses. Many Church organisations, particularly black church bodies, came out in support of the campaign. Many Chiefs, who had hitherto remained aloof from the struggles of the people, expressed support for the movement. Many joined the Congress and later led valiant struggles in their areas against the establishment of "Bantu authorities," stock limitation and forced removals.

International Impact

The impact of the campaign outside South Africa surpassed the expectations of the Congresses. On September 12, 1952, the delegations of 13 Asian and Arab States

proposed that the General Assembly of the United Nations should consider "the question of race conflict in South Africa resulting from the policies of apartheid of the Government of the Union of South Africa."

The Assembly had, since 1946, considered the question of the treatment of people of Indian origin in South Africa and had declared, in resolution 395 (V) of December 2, 1950, that a policy of "racial segregation" (apartheid) is necessarily based on doctrines of racial discrimination.

By resolution 616 (VII) of December 5, 1952, the General Assembly established a three-member commission to study the racial situation in South Africa. It also declared that "in a multi-racial society harmony and respect for human rights and freedoms and the peaceful development of a unified community are best assured when patterns of legislation and practice are directed towards ensuring equality before the law of all persons regardless of race, creed or colour, and when economic, social, cultural and political participation of all racial groups is on a basis of equality". It affirmed that "governmental policies of Member States which are not directed towards these goals, but which are designed to perpetuate or increase discrimination, are inconsistent with the pledges of the Members under Article 56 of the Charter."

In Britain, the Labour Party and the Trade Union Congress condemned the South African regime in resolutions adopted at their Congresses. The National Council of Civil Liberties held a nation-wide conference, a month after the campaign began, "to take action on the urgent situation created by the wholesale violation of civil rights by the Union Government."

A "Committee for a Democratic South Africa" was formed in London and, in New York a campaign launched by the Council on African Affairs to collect a minimum of $5,000 for the campaign and to secure 100,000 signatures to a protest petition, succeeded in not only obtaining the signatures but also raising more than double the amount modestly set by the planners.

In British Guiana, the Legislative Council passed a resolution condemning the South African Government and requested the Governor to convey copies of the resolution to the British Government and to the United Nations.

The Aftermath

The total disregard of world opinion by the South African Government and its vicious reaction to such a disciplined and avowedly non-violent resistance led to serious discussions among the leaders of the resistance movements. New methods of struggle were evolved and each action by the people led to vicious counteraction by the Government in which many hundreds of people lost their lives. Ultimately, convinced that they had no choice but to lead the people on the path of armed guerrilla action "to meet police violence with organised revolutionary violence," the Congress movement established *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Spear of the Nation) as its military wing. It announced

its existence with the bombing of Government installations and buildings on December 16, 1961. *Umkhonto* declared in an illegal leaflet:

> "This is a new independent body formed by Africans. It includes in its ranks South Africans of all races... *Umkhonto we Sizwe* will carry on the struggle for freedom and democracy by methods which are necessary to complement the actions of the established national liberation organisations. *Umkhonto we Sizwe* fully supports the national liberation movement and our members jointly and severally place themselves under the overall political guidance of that movement...
>
> "The people's patience is not endless. The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices - submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa."

THE SHARPEVILLE MASSACRE - A WATERSHED IN SOUTH AFRICA[24]

by

The Rt. Reverend Ambrose Reeves

History records that on May 13, 1902, the treaty which ended the Anglo-Boer war was signed at Vereeniging, then a small town some thirty miles from Johannesburg. Nobody could then have realised that some fifty-eight years later the whole world would learn of another event occurring in that part of the Transvaal; this time in the African township of Sharpeville. As with most towns on the Reef, as the white population of Vereeniging grew so did the township for Africans on the outskirts of the town. It is somewhat ironical that the outrage that was perpetrated at Sharpeville should have occurred at a place which had already earned a high reputation for African housing. Eleven years earlier the authors of the *Handbook of Race Relations in South Africa* had noted that "recently Vereeniging instituted its own building department and is making speedy progress in the erection of houses at the new Sharpe Native Township in which it is designed to build 3,165 houses at a total cost £1,219,216. Although the Smit Report recommended that work of a fairly straightforward type should be undertaken by the local authority, Natives working under the supervision of experienced European foremen, other local authorities have not acted on this recommendation to any considerable extent. They are probably not prepared to risk incurring the displeasure of European trade unions."

Yet in spite of the fact that the white local authority in Vereeniging was one of the first municipalities in South Africa to provide better housing for Africans, it was the events at Sharpeville on March 21, 1960, which shocked the world and which are still remembered with shame by civilised men everywhere. Early that morning a crowd of Africans estimated at between 5,000 and 7,000 marched through Sharpeville to the municipal offices at the entrance to the township. It appears that much earlier that day members of the Pan Africanist Congress had gone around Sharpeville waking up people and urging them to take part in this demonstration. Other members of the PAC prevented the bus drivers going on duty with the result that there were no buses to take the people to work in Vereeniging. Many of them set out on bicycles or on foot to their places of work, but some were met by Pan Africanists who threatened to burn their passes or "lay hands on them" if they did not turn back. However, many Africans joined the procession to the municipal offices quite willingly. Eventually this demonstration was dispersed by the police, using tear gas bombs and then a baton charge, some sixty police following them

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[24] 1. In 1966, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed March 21, the anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre, as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

The Unit on Apartheid published this paper to promote the commemoration of the International Day.

into the side streets. Stones were flung and one policeman was slightly injured. It was alleged that several shots were fired by Africans and that only then some policemen opened fire without an order from their officer to do so. Fortunately nobody was hurt.

I was not at Sharpeville when the shooting occurred but it was familiar territory to me. Time and again I officiated at the large African Anglican church there and knew intimately many of the congregation, some of whom were to be involved in the events of that tragic day. I could so well visualise the scene. Near my home in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg was a large zoo situated in acres of parkland. By a curious anomaly the lake near the zoo was the meeting place for Africans working in the northern suburbs on a Sunday afternoon. Work finished for the day they would leisurely make their way there in small groups - a gay, colourful, jostling crowd - families and individuals - some political, some not, chatting, laughing, singing, gesticulating and occasionally fighting. The thud of home-made drums could be heard shattering the Sunday calm, and over all the plaintive notes of the penny whistle - shrill and penetrating. It could so easily have been like that on that crisp autumn morning in Sharpeville. Like that, but so very different.

During the morning news spread through the township that a statement concerning passes would be made by an important person at the police station later that day. The result was that many who had been concerned in the earlier demonstration drifted to the police station where they waited patiently for the expected announcement. And all the time the crowd grew. Reading from the police report on what subsequently happened the Prime Minister told the House of Assembly that evening that the police estimated that 20,000 people were in that crowd. This seems to have been a serious exaggeration. From photographs taken at the time it is doubtful if there were ever more than 5,000 present at any particular moment, though it may well be that more than this number were involved at one time or another as people were coming and going throughout the morning. They were drawn to the crowd by a variety of reasons. Some wanted to protest against the pass laws; some were present because they had been coerced; some were there out of idle curiosity; some had heard that a statement would be made about passes.

But whatever may have brought them to the police station, I was unable to discover that any policeman ever tried either to find out why they were there or make any request for them to disperse. And this in spite of the fact that the presence of this crowd seems to have caused a good deal of alarm to the police. So much so that at ten o’clock that morning a squadron of aircraft dived low over the crowd, presumably to intimidate them and encourage them to disperse. This was surely a most expensive way of trying to disperse a crowd. The police claimed that the people in the crowd were shouting and brandishing weapons and the Prime Minister told the Assembly that the crowd was in a riotous and aggressive mood and stoned the police. There is no evidence to support this. On the contrary, while the crowd was noisy and excitable, singing and occasionally shouting slogans it was not a hostile crowd. Their purpose was not to fight the police but to show by their presence their hostility to the pass system, expecting that someone would make a statement about passes. Photographs taken that morning show clearly that this was no crowd spoiling for a fight with the police. Not only was the crowd unarmed,

but a large proportion of those present were women and children. All through the morning no attack on the police was attempted. Even as late as one p.m. the Superintendent in charge of the township was able to walk through the crowd, being greeted by them in a friendly manner and chatting with some of them. Similarly, the drivers of two of the Saracen tanks stated subsequently that they had no difficulty in driving their vehicles into the grounds surrounding the police station. And their testimony was borne out by photographs taken of their progress.

As the hours passed the increasing number of people in the crowd was matched by police reinforcements. Earlier there had only been twelve policemen in the police station: six white and six non-white. But during the morning a series of reinforcements arrived until by lunch time there was a force of nearly 300 armed and uniformed men in addition to five Saracens. Yet in spite of the increased force that was then available, no one asked the crowd to disperse and no action was taken to arrange for the defence of the police station. The police just strolled around the compound with rifles slung over their shoulders, smoking and chatting with one another.

Scene Was Set for Explosive Situation

So the scene was set. Anyone who has lived in the Republic of South Africa knows how explosive that situation had already become. On the one side the ever-growing crowd of noisy Africans - the despised Natives - the Kaffirs who, at all costs, must be kept down lest they step outside the place allotted to them. On the other side the South African police. Every African fears them, whether they be traffic police, ordinary constables or members of the dreaded Special Branch. Most policemen expect unquestioning deference from Africans. If this is not forthcoming they immediately interpret it as riot and rebellion. In part this is due to the widespread prejudice of white people the world over to those who happen to have a different coloured skin than their own. But in South Africa it is underpinned by the hatred, fear and contempt that so many white police have for all non-white people.

The only action taken during that morning appears to have come not from the police but from two Pan Africanist leaders who urged the crowd to stay away from the fence around the perimeter of the compound so that they did not damage it. Then Lieutenant Colonel Pienaar arrived in the compound. He appears to have accepted that he had come into a dangerous situation and therefore made no attempt either to use methods of persuasion on the crowd or to attempt to discover what the crowd was waiting for. Instead, about a quarter of an hour after his arrival he gave the order for his men to fall in. A little later he said, "Load five rounds". But he said no more to any of his officers, or to the men. Later, Colonel Pienaar stated that he thought his order would frighten the crowd and that his men would understand that if they had to fire they would not fire more than five rounds. Unfortunately, this was not understood by the policemen under his command.

During this time Colonel Spengler, then head of the Special Branch, was arresting two of the leaders of the Pan Africanist Congress. Afterwards he arrested a third man. Colonel

Spengler said subsequently that he was able to carry out his arrests because while the crowd was noisy it was not in a violent mood.

It is extremely difficult to know what happened next. Some of the crowd near the gate of the police station compound said later that they heard a shot. Some said that they heard a policeman say, "Fire". Others suddenly became aware that the police were firing in their midst. But all agreed that practically all of them turned and ran away once they realised what was happening. A few, it is true, stood their ground for some seconds, unable to understand that the police were not firing blanks. Lieutenant Colonel Pienaar was quite clear that he did not give the order to fire. Moreover, he declared that he would not have fired in that situation. It was stated later that two white policemen opened fire and that about fifty others followed suit, using service revolvers, rifles and sten guns.

Police Action Caused Devastating Consequences

But whatever doubts there may be of the sequence of events in those fateful minutes, there can be no argument over the devastating consequences of the action of the police on March 21, 1960, in Sharpeville. Sixty-nine people were killed, including eight women and ten children, and of the 180 people who were wounded, thirty-one were women and nineteen were children. According to the evidence of medical practitioners it is clear that the police continued firing after the people began to flee: for, while thirty shots had entered the wounded or killed from the front of their bodies no less than 155 bullets had entered the bodies of the injured and killed from their backs. All this happened in forty seconds, during which time 705 rounds were fired from revolvers and sten guns. But whatever weapons were used the massacre was horrible. Visiting the wounded the next day in Baragwanath Hospital near Johannesburg, I discovered youngsters, women and elderly men among the injured. These could not be described as agitators by any stretch of the imagination. For the most part they were ordinary citizens who had merely gone to the Sharpeville police station to see what was going on. Talking with the wounded I found that everyone was stunned and mystified by what had taken place. They had certainly not expected that anything like this would happen. All agreed that there was no provocation for such savage action by the police. Indeed, they insisted that the political organisers who had called for the demonstration had constantly insisted that there should be no violence or fighting.

Arrests Follow Massacre

To make matters worse, some of the wounded with whom I spoke in hospital stated that they were taunted by the police as they lay on the ground, being told to get up and be off. Others who tried to help were told to mind their own business. At first there was only one African minister of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa who tried to help the wounded and the dying. It is true that later the police assisted in tending the wounded and summoned ambulances which conveyed the injured to Vereeniging and Baragwanath Hospitals. Later still, 77 Africans were arrested in connection with the Sharpeville demonstration, in some cases while they were still in hospital. In fact, it was clear on my visits to the wards of Baragwanath Hospital that many of the injured feared what would

happen to them when they left hospital. This wasn't surprising, for Baragwanath Hospital was an extraordinary sight. Outside each of the wards to which the wounded were taken were a number of African police, some white policemen, and members of the Special Branch in civilian clothes. The attitude of the South African Government to the event at Sharpeville can be seen from its reaction to the civil claims lodged the following September by 224 persons for damages amounting to around £400,000 arising from the Sharpeville killings. The following month the Minister of Justice announced that during the next parliamentary session the Government would introduce legislation to indemnify itself and its officials retrospectively against claims resulting from action taken during the disturbances earlier that year. This was done in the Indemnity Act, No. 61 of 1961. Not that money could ever compensate adequately for the loss of a breadwinner to a family or make up for lost limbs or permanent incapacity. But it would have been some assistance. It is true that in February 1961 the Government set up a committee to examine the claims for compensation and to recommend *ex gratia* payments in deserving cases. But this is not the same thing, and in fact by October 1962 no payments had been made.

Failure of Police to Communicate with the People

Few commentators since Sharpeville have attempted to justify the action of the police that day. In fact, many of them have drawn special attention to the complete failure of the police to attempt to communicate with the crowd at the police station. If it had been a white crowd the police would have tried to find out why they were there and what they wanted. Surely their failure to do so was due to the fact that it never occurred to them, as the custodians of public order, either to negotiate with the African leaders or to try to persuade the crowd to disperse. Their attitude was summed up by the statement of Lieutenant Colonel Pienaar that "the Native mentality does not allow them to gather for a peaceful demonstration. For them to gather means violence." The same point was demonstrated even more graphically by one of his answers at the Court of Enquiry under Mr. Justice Vessels. When he was asked if he had learnt any useful lesson from the events in Sharpeville, he replied, "Well, we may get better equipment."

Not that all members of the South African Police Force are cruel or callous. No doubt many of them were shocked by what happened. At the same time what happened at Sharpeville emphasises how far the police in South Africa are cut off from sympathy with or even understanding of Africans. And this is underlined by the fact that at no time did the police express regret for this tragic happening. Yet it would be folly to attempt to fasten the whole blame for the events at Sharpeville on the police. By the mass of repressive legislation which has been enacted every year since 1948, the South African Government has given the police a task which
ever becomes more difficult to fulfil.

The Pass Laws

It was this legislation which was indirectly responsible for the tragedy of Sharpeville, and in particular the "pass laws". Indeed, the immediate cause of many in the crowd

assembling at the police station was the growing resentment of Africans to the system of passes. This system originated in 1760 in the Cape Colony to regulate the movement of slaves between the urban and the rural areas. The slaves had to carry passes from their masters. Subsequently, the system was extended in various forms to the whole country and was eventually collated in the Native (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945. This Act made provision for a variety of passes including registered service contracts and for passes permitting men to seek work in particular areas. But through the years an increasing number of Africans had been given exemption from these laws.

This was the situation which obtained until 1952 when a new act ironically called "The Abolition of Passes Act" made it compulsory for every African male, whether he had previously had to carry passes or no, to carry a reference book. If the holder had previously been exempted from the pass laws he was now privileged to carry a reference book with a green instead of a brown cover! But the contents were identical. The advent of the reference books meant that technically there were no longer any such things as passes. But, as will be understood, to the Africans reference books are passes for they contain all the details which were previously entered on the various pass documents. They contain the holder's name, his tax receipt, his permit to be in an urban area and to seek work there, permits from the Labour Bureau, the signature each month of his employer to show that he is still in the employment he was given permission to take, as well as other particulars. Even more objectionable than having to possess a reference book is the fact that this book must be produced on demand to any policeman or any of the fifteen different classes of officials who may require to see it. Failure to produce it on demand constitutes an offence for which an African may be detained up to thirty days while inquiries are being made about him. What this means in practice can be seen from the fact that in the twelve months ending June 30, 1966 no less than 479,114 Africans were prosecuted for offences against the "pass laws." At the time of Sharpeville there were 1,000 prosecutions a day for these offences. By 1966, this had risen to over l,300 a day. These figures speak for themselves.

In 1960 a new development occurred when the Government of South Africa decided for the first time in South African history to extend the pass laws to African women. In their case another fear was added that they might be subjected to manhandling by the police with a further loss of human dignity. In fact, by the time of Sharpeville it was estimated that three-quarters of African women were in possession of reference books. But many of the women who had not obtained reference books were strenuously opposed both to the pass system and to its extension to themselves. To them reference books stood for racial identification, and therefore for racial discrimination.

Intolerable Economic Situation

But this was by no means the only reason for unrest in Sharpeville. Anyone who knew the township at that time was aware that there had been increasing tension among the inhabitants because in that area wages were too low and rents were too high. Prior to March of that year rent had been increased in Sharpeville and this had added to the burdens of Africans living there. The previous year (1959) a study of the economic

position of Africans in Johannesburg had shown that 80 per cent of Africans were living at or below the poverty datum line. The probability is that the lot of Africans in Sharpeville was worse than in Johannesburg. A survey carried out by the Johannesburg Non-European Affairs Department in 1962 in Soweto showed that 68 per cent of families there had an income below the estimated living costs. A subsequent study in 1966 showed that this figure remained the same. So in spite of the increased prosperity of South Africa the economic position of a high percentage of Africans does not seem to have improved much since Sharpeville.

African wages in Sharpeville in 1960 were low, partly because African trade unions were not (and still are not) recognised for the purpose of bargaining with employers. But also, the continuing colour bar in commerce and industry meant, and still means, high minimum wages for white workers and low maximum wages for the black workers who make up the great majority of the labour force. All this means two wage structures in South Africa which have no relation to one another: in the fixing of the black wage structure the workers frequently have no say at all.

Several months before the tragic events at Sharpeville it was becoming obvious that those living in the township were facing an intolerable economic situation. It is too easy to dismiss the Sharpeville demonstration at the police station as the work of agitators and the result of intimidation. All that those who led the demonstration did was to use a situation which, for political and economic reasons, was already highly explosive.

Growing Resistance

Not that Sharpeville was an isolated incident. The ten years before Sharpeville had seen feverish activity by the opponents of apartheid. By means of boycotts, mass demonstrations, strikes and protests, the non-white majority had attempted by non-violent means to compel those in power to modify their racist policies. For example, on June 26, 1952, the Campaign of Defiance against Unjust Laws had been launched. The same day three years later (June 26, 1955) 3,000 delegates had adopted the Freedom Charter which had been drafted by the Congress Alliance. This took place at a massive gathering at Kliptown, Johannesburg. The following year the Federation of South African Women held a series of spectacular demonstrations against the extension of the pass system to African women. These culminated in a mass demonstration at the Union Buildings, Pretoria, on August 9, 1956. Some 10,000 women gathered there in an orderly fashion to present 7,000 individually signed protest forms. Again, from January 7, 1957, many thousand African men and women for months walked eighteen to twenty miles a day to and from work in Johannesburg in a boycott of the buses. Although in this particular case they gained their objective, a11 the various endeavours by Africans to secure change by peaceful means brought little tangible result.

The surprising thing was that in a11 this activity there was very little violence on the part of boycotters, demonstrators and strikers. In spite of great and frequent provocation by the police, Africans remained orderly and disciplined. They were in truth non-violent. As could be expected there were, however, occasions when the resentment and frustration

of Africans spilled over into violence. One such occasion was at Cato Manor near Durban on June 17, 1959. On that day a demonstration of African women at the beer hall destroyed beer and drinking utensils and was dispersed by the police. Several days later the Director of the Bantu Administration Department met 2,000 women at the beer hall. Once they had stated their grievances they were ordered to disperse. When they failed to do so the police made a baton charge. General disorder and rioting followed, with the result that damage estimated at £100,000 was done to vehicles and buildings. Later that day Africans attacked a police picket and were driven off with sten guns. After this, things remained comparatively quiet in Cato Manor until a Sunday afternoon in February, 1960, when the smouldering resentment of Africans there again burst into flame. An ugly situation developed in which nine policemen lost their lives. This was a deplorable business. Whatever may be said of the actions of the South African police these men died while carrying out their duties. The blame for their deaths must in the first instance lie on those who murdered them.

The fact that these deaths occurred in Cato Manor only a few weeks before the demonstration at Sharpeville must have been well known to the police gathered at the police station in Sharpeville that morning. Certainly more than one spokesman of the South African Government linked these two affairs together. There is not the slightest evidence, however, that there was in this sense any connection between the tragedies of Cato Manor and Sharpeville. But in another sense they were both intimately connected because more indirectly they both arose out of the action of those in power during the previous decade, who had taken every possible step to ensure that the whole life of the millions of Africans was encased within the strait-jacket of compulsory segregation.

Civilisation Without Mercy

Yet there the similarity ended. The crowd at Sharpeville was not attacking anything or anyone. Further, there is abundant evidence to show that they were unarmed. While nothing can justify the killing of police at Cato Manor, that incident cannot in any way exonerate the vicious action of the police at Sharpeville. As the late Sir Winston Churchill pointed out in a debate in the British House of Commons on July 8, 1920, "There is surely one general prohibition which we can make. I mean the prohibition against what is called `frightfulness'. What I mean by frightfulness is the inflicting of great slaughter or massacre upon a particular crowd of people with the intention of terrorising not merely the rest of the crowd, but the whole district or the whole country." (This is precisely what the police did at Sharpeville.) On that occasion Sir Winston concluded his speech with some words of Macaulay - "... and then was seen what we believe to be the most frightful of spectacles, the strength of civilisation without mercy." These are words which aptly summarise a11 that happened at Sharpeville that March morning.

Many people inside South Africa, though shocked for a time by the events at Sharpeville, ended by dismissing them as just one incident in the long and growing succession of disturbances that down the years have marked the implementation of apartheid. Certainly the Government of South Africa, though badly shaken in the days

immediately following Sharpeville, soon regained control of the situation. On March 24, the Government banned all public meetings in twenty-four magisterial districts. On April 8, the Governor-General signed a proclamation banning the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress as unlawful organisations, the result being that they were both driven underground. But neither of them became dormant. At the same time the Government mobilised the entire Citizen Force, the Permanent Force Reserve, the Citizen Force Reserve and the Reserve of Officers, and the whole of the Commando Force was placed on stand-by. Already on March 30, in Proclamation No. 90, the Governor-General had declared a state of emergency which lasted until August 31, 1960. During that time a large number of prominent opponents of government policy of a11 races were arrested and detained without being brought to trial. In addition some 20,000 Africans were rounded up, many of whom were released after screening.

So after some months eventually, at least superficially, life in South Africa became at least relatively normal. But underneath the external calm dangerous fires continue to smoulder: fires that can never be extinguished by repressive measures coupled with a constant and growing show of force. Outside South Africa there were widespread reactions to Sharpeville in many countries which in many cases led to positive action against South Africa: action which still continues. But here, too, most people, even if they have heard of Sharpeville, have relegated what happened there to the archives of history, just one of the too many dark pages in the human story.

Sharpeville Marked a Watershed in South Africa

Yet it is my personal belief that history will recognise that Sharpeville marked a watershed in South African affairs. Until Sharpeville, violence for the most part had been used in South Africa by those who were committed to the maintenance of the economic and political domination of the white minority in the Republic. Down the years they had always been ready to use force to maintain the *status quo* whenever they judged it necessary to do so. When the occasion arose they did not hesitate to use it. Over and over again, non-white civilians were injured by police action or by assaults on them when in prison.

Until Sharpeville the movements opposed to apartheid were pledged to a policy of non-violence. But on March 21, 1960, when an unarmed African crowd was confronted by 300 heavily armed police supported by five Saracen armoured vehicles, an agonising reappraisal of the situation was inevitable. Small wonder is it that, having tried every peaceful method open to them to secure change without avail, the African leadership decided that violence was the only alternative left to them. Never again would they expose their people to another Sharpeville. As Nelson Mandela said in court at his trial in October l962: "Government violence can do only one thing and that is to breed counter-violence. We have warned repeatedly that the Government, by resorting continually to violence, will breed in this country counter-violence among the people till ultimately if there is no dawning of sanity on the part of the Government, the dispute between the Government and my people will finish up by being settled in violence and by force."

Outwardly things may go on in South Africa much as before. Visitors may find a booming economy, the white minority may seem secure in their privileged position for any foreseeable future, some urban Africans may have higher living standard than formerly. But all this ought not to deceive anybody. The fact is that for the first time both sides in the racial struggle in South Africa are now committed to violence; the white minority to preserve the *status quo*; the non-white majority to change: change from society dominated by apartheid to one that is non-racial in character. Already there re clear indications that the opponents of apartheid are turning deliberately to violence. The fact that at the moment this is being expressed through small bands of guerillas who may be neither very well trained nor well-equipped does not mean that they ought therefore to be dismissed as having little significance. After all, we have the examples of Algeria, Cuba and Viet Nam before us as powerful reminders of what may result from very small and weak beginnings. In spite of the present calm in South Africa and a prosperity unparalleled in its history, within the Republic the seeds of violence have already been sown. Unless there is a radical change in the present political and economic structures of South Africa, that which has already been sown will be harvested in a terrible and brutal civil war which might easily involve the whole African continent in conflict before it ends. Indeed it may be that in the present situation in the Republic of South Africa are hidden forces which will involve humanity in a global racial conflict unless the present racist policies there are changed radically. The choice before the international community has been a clear one ever since Sharpeville. Either it takes every possible step to secure the abandonment of the present policies in South Africa or the coming years will bring increasing sorrow and strife both for South Africa and for the world. Sharpeville was a tragedy showing most plainly that the ideology of apartheid is a way of death and not of life. Can the nations recognise this before it is too late?

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THE SHARPEVILLE MASSACRE[25]

Its historic significance in the struggle against apartheid

by

David M. Sibeko

> "Half measures are no good in this wilderness any more than a leaking boat is any good in an ocean. One needs certainty, a sense of security, something solid to hold on to in the dangerous void - and it has to be absolutely solid."
>
> - Alan Moorehead

The savage massacre of African patriots at Sharpeville and other places in South Africa on March 21, 1960, is of paramount significance in the struggle against apartheid and needs to be understood in its historical scope.

Sharpeville marked unquestionably a turning point in the struggle for liberation in Azania. As a respected African church leader, Canon Burgess Carr of Liberia, said it was the watershed which spurred the outpour of revolutionary struggle against white minority rule and colonialism throughout southern Africa.[26]

The fatal gunning down of some eight score peaceful African demonstrators and the maiming of several hundred others, in a callous and live re-enactment of the "Wild West," rightfully brought international public opinion against apartheid South Africa to a boil. So far the massacres at Sharpeville, Langa, Nyanga and Vanderbijl Park stand out prominently in the minds of people all over the world as the sanguinary examples of apartheid barbarism. Within Azania these massacres which form the darkest cloud in a long nightmare of brutal repression, are revered as a source of inspiration and rededication.

The militant black students` movement, the South African Students` Organisation (SASO), had one of its early brushes with the South African political police, the Special Branch, after declaring March 21 "Liberation Day" and arranging a meeting to observe the Day at the University of Natal in 1973. One of the nine SASO members now charged under the Terrorism Act, in the Pretoria Supreme Court at the so-called Palace of Justice, Dr. Aubrey Mokoape, was arrested and charged with organising the commemoration of

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[25] From "Notes and Documents", No. 8/76, March 1976

[26] Sharpeville Day commemoration speech, Nairobi, March 1972

Sharpeville Day. As veterans of Robben Island prison will testify, political prisoners also defiantly hold special meetings to mark 21 March every year. Ever since 1960, from the eve of each anniversary of Sharpeville Day until after, police are put on alert throughout the Vaal triangle. This region in which Sharpeville is located is ringed off by heavily armed men, often with support aircraft hovering above the location itself. Anyone leaving or entering the place must show an official permit.

Sharpeville: a Source of Inspiration and Rededication

The reverence of the African people for this Day grows from the fact that the political campaign launched to attack a fundamental cornerstone of apartheid colonialism, i.e., the pass laws, brought them far closer to the seizure of political power than anything attempted before. Conversely the white minority regime dreads the memory of March 21, 1960, with the chain of staggering events which followed after that day.

In particular they hate to be reminded of those events which had the National Party Government as perilously close to collapse as it has ever been.

Lewis Nkosi, a South African journalist who left the country on an exit permit in 1961, was a political reporter with the *Post*, a newspaper aimed at the African market, when the Sharpeville massacre occurred. As is well known amongst Azanians, Mr. Nkosi was in that unique position of African professionals with good connections amongst whites. His assessment of the situation in Azania at the time can therefore be considered balanced as it reflects opinion on both sides of the colour line. Of the man who was the principal architect of the historic Positive Action Campaign against the pass laws, Mr. Nkosi wrote in 1963:

> "... a tall distinguished-looking African prisoner, a university instructor and political leader who, at the age of 36, has a rare distinction of having scared Dr. Verwoerd's Government out of its wits. As anybody knows by now, the South African Government does not scare easily."[27]

Continuing, Mr. Nkosi wrote:

> "In March 1960, Robert Sobukwe, President of the banned Pan Africanist Congress, helped to orchestrate a crisis that panicked the South African Government and nearly brought about the kind of political anarchy which all too often makes possible the transference of power overnight." [28]

This report comes closest to the truth of what it looked like in Azania after the Pan Africanist Congress launched its campaign against the pass laws on March 21, 1960.

Cold blooded massacres such as that in Sharpeville have been a deliberate tactic for

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[27] Nkosi, Lewis, "Robert Sobukwe: an assessment" in *Africa Report,* April 1963
[28] *Ibid.*

crushing political opposition from the earliest days of European colonialism in Azania, as much as they have been the pattern elsewhere in the world. As late as in 1946 trigger-happy white police had been used to crack down on a massive miners` strike along South Africa's gold-belt, the Witwatersrand. This tactic is still very much in use: striking African miners were massacred at Carletonville and the Western Deep Level Mine as recently as 1973. The impact of it all is all too often too temporary. But not so with Sharpeville.

A Landmark in the Struggle against Apartheid

Perhaps those who have commented that PAC and Sobukwe struck a fluke blow at the apartheid regime ought to be forgiven for their understandable ignorance. A veteran of the struggle against white settler domination like I.B. Tabata is better placed to judge. Mr. Tabata has conceded that Mr. Sobukwe and the PAC read the mood of the masses more correctly than anyone else: hence massive support for the Positive Action Campaign continued to roll in as from March 21.[29] It is fair to note that Mr. Tabata did not agree with the resistance tactics used by the PAC.

The leadership of PAC maintains that from their days as Africanists within the African National Congress they already had their finger on the national pulse. This is not the place for polemics but for the record it needs to be stated that PAC leaders explain that one of the main reasons why the Pan Africanist Congress had to be formed was the crying need amongst the masses for leadership that could take on the oppressor militantly. The grinding apartheid repression within South Africa was demanding a change of tactics from protest to positive action. The tactics of positive action were scoring successes elsewhere in Africa and the Azanian masses sorely wanted to have their fight against white domination linked up to the decolonisation struggle in the rest of Africa.

Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe and his Africanist colleagues resolved in 1958 to break away from the African National Congress and in April, 1959, they formed the Pan Africanist Congress, at the Orlando Community Hall in Johannesburg. The inaugural conference was attended by delegates from all over the country, representing more than 1,000 provisional branches of no less than 12 members each. A constituency wider than the already committed Africanists had grown in the period leading to the inaugural conference.

I have purposely introduced this article by a quote from Alan Moorehead's book, *The Russian Revolution*. I have done it because the quote was found to be applicable to the Azanian situation. The Africanists, Mr. Sobukwe and his comrades, believe there is no middle course between present-day white domination and African rule in Azania.[30] Mr.

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[29] Conversation with the author, Lusaka, October 1964

[30] PAC basic documents state that all South Africans who genuinely owe their loyalty to Africa and subscribe to the democratic rule of the African majority will be accepted as Africans.

Sobukwe said as much in an interview with a Swedish journalist who visited him in his place of "house arrest" in Kimberley, where he lives under a "maze of restrictions."[31] He said "a total overthrow is needed."[32]

In a speech he delivered at a rally to mark African Heroes Day in 1959, Mr. Sobukwe amplified the PAC attitude. He stated then:

"The issues are clear-cut. The Pan Africanist Congress has done away with equivocation and clever talk. The decks are cleared, and in the arena of South African politics there are today only two adversaries: the oppressor and the oppressed, the master and the slave."

As PAC members went around the country organising for the struggle, they found, in Mr. Sobukwe's own words, that the non-nonsense and militant posture of the PAC strikes "a responsive chord in the hearts of the sons and daughters of the land" and that it has "awakened the imagination of the youth of our land while giving hope to the aged who for years have lived in the trough of despair."[33]

Preparation for the Anti-Pass Campaign

The go-ahead for launching the Positive Action Campaign was given at the first and only national conference of the PAC held on December 19-20, 1959, in Johannesburg. The angry apathy which hung over the oppressed African masses was gradually giving way to an atmosphere of expectancy. PAC slogans like "*Izwe lethu*" (our land), "*I Africa*" were catching on like epidemic in the townships and villages, others like "Africa for the Africans!" were sprouting on walls along with the name of Sobukwe which was rapidly becoming a household word. *Drum*, the leading magazine for blacks, asked in a headline article: "Africanists` fireworks or false alarm?" That issue was banned by the regime and the police seized copies already in circulation.

At last the order came out! Against the background of intensified door to door campaigning by PAC activists, Mangaliso Sobukwe announced at a press conference in Johannesburg on March 18 that the Pan Africanist Congress would launch the first phase of its unfolding programme for the liberation of South Africa on Monday, March 21, 1960. The target of this campaign would be the pass laws, the lynchpin of the system of apartheid in South Africa. The door to door campaign was reinforced with a call on all

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[31] *The Times*, London, October 27, 1975
[32] *Dagens Nyheter*, Stockholm, July 1974
[33] Sobukwe, Mangaliso, *State of the Nation*, August 1959

pass-carrying African men to leave their passes at home, march to police stations nearest to them and demand to be arrested for refusing to carry a pass, euphemistically called the "reference book" since 1953 when the "Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Native Documents Act" was passed.

The pass system was deliberately chosen because: (i) it is the lynchpin of apartheid; and (ii) of all the apartheid laws none is so pervasive, and few are as perverted, as the pass laws. They show no respect for the sanctity of marriage - men are forcibly separated from their wives or *vice versa* because one of them cannot obtain the permit to reside in the same area. They tear away children from their parents: a child above the age of 16 needs a special permit to live with its parents outside the bantustan reservation, otherwise it must find accommodation in one of the location barracks they call hostels in South Africa. They deny men and women the universal right to sell their labour to whom they choose; every African man or woman seeking employment has to obtain a special permit to look for work - within a limited period, usually 14 days; otherwise they face deportation to the `homeland' bantustan reservation they most likely have never known. The indignities are legion and falling foul with any of the pass law regulations leaves an African open to arrest and imprisonment. Sentences are most frequently served out on prison farms, under the most primitive conditions.

The best known African campaign before Sharpeville was the potato boycott. It came as a result of exposures in newspapers like the *Post* about conditions for African prisoners in the potato prison farms of Bethal, in the Eastern Transvaal. Investigative reporters found that prisoners are dressed in nothing but sacks, they sleep on damp cement floors and are out working the potato fields with bare hands from the crack of dawn until dusk. They are continuously whipped by jailers on horse back, and the one meal a day they eat is always half-cooked dried maize without any protein. Many die from disease and torture before they complete the relatively short terms of imprisonment, between two and six months.

The pass laws, therefore, affect every living black person in Azania. A campaign aimed at liquidating this obnoxious system automatically enjoys the support of every African man, woman and child. PAC aimed at striking a death blow at this cornerstone of apartheid fascism with its very first campaign. In his final message to all party branches and regions, on the eve of the campaign, Mr. Sobukwe explained that the principal aim of the campaign is to get enough of the black labour force behind bars. He said:

"Industry will come to a standstill and the Government will be forced to accept our terms. And once we score that victory, there will be nothing else we will not be able to tackle."

Contrary to less informed opinion, Mr. Sobukwe did recognise that the campaign's total victory would be sabotaged. Accordingly he added in the same message:

"But we must know clearly that our struggle is an unfolding one, one campaign leading to another in a never ending stream - until independence is won."[34]

The challenge to the racist regime, on this occasion, was going beyond a simple demand for concessions. The bid was clearly for political power. It was expected that the regime may hit back like a cornered beast. In Mr. Sobukwe's message to the regions and branches it was pointed out:

"The Government will be ruthless. They will probably cut us off from one another, censor the press, use their propaganda machinery to malign the leaders, mislead the people and spread falsehood about the Campaign."[35]

In this non-violent campaign there is none that could have been more concerned to avoid the shedding of even an ounce of blood than the leadership of the PAC. Mr. Stanley Motjuwadi, a long-time journalist with *Drum* and its current editor, recalls in the issue of his magazine of November 22, 1972:

"A day after the Sharpeville shootings I had an interview in Johannesburg's Fort prison with Mangaliso Robert Sobukwe ... He was awaiting trial on a charge of incitement and seemed to have aged overnight. He was depressed and almost at the point of tears - the Sharpeville tragedy had really hit him hard."[36]

Any who have followed Sobukwe's role at the head of PAC know full well the man's courage: he went through nine years of imprisonment without flinching and all those who have seen him, during his imprisonment and now under house arrest, including Members of Parliament from the ruling National Party and the white opposition parties, testify that his convictions remain as strong and his determination as unwavering. Mindful of the panic a threat to their power creates in despots, Mr. Sobukwe wrote to the Commissioner of Police of South Africa, on the eve of the campaign, emphasising that the PAC campaign against passes would be non-violent and imploring the Commissioner to instruct his men to refrain from the use of violence in an attempt to put down demonstrations. As a further precaution Mr. Sobukwe sternly told PAC leaders and cadres all over the country:

"My instructions, therefore, are that our people must be taught now and continuously that in this campaign we are going to observe absolute non-violence."

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[34] Sobukwe, Mangaliso, "Message to all Party branches and regions", March 1960
[35] *Ibid*.
[36] Motjuwadi, Stanley, *PAC in Perspective: Sobukwe the man who still walks tall*, London, 1973.

Many assessors of the tragic events of March 21, 1960, have shown the same disregard for PAC's precautions against police violence as was shown by the South African police themselves.

Monday, March 21, 1960

It is appropriate to focus on Sharpeville itself at this stage. Under the chairmanship of Nyakale Tsolo, the PAC branch at Sharpeville approached almost every house and the men's hostel in the township, mobilising support for the strike against passes planned for Monday, March 21, 1960. The full story of Sharpeville is still to be told, hopefully by those who helped to make this history. I was fortunate as head of the regional executive committee of the Vaal from 1963 to work in the underground amongst many of the organisers and participants in the historic event. Like most veterans of war the people of Sharpeville hate to relive their wartime experience but I was able to learn from direct participants a great deal of what took place.

Not a single bus moved out of Sharpeville to take passengers to work on that Monday. PAC task force members started out before the break of dawn lining up marchers in street after street. By daybreak the marchers, under the leadership of the task force, were moving to a pre-appointed open ground, where they merged with other demonstrators. In line with the instruction of the Party leadership, when all the groups had been assembled, the 10,000 and more men, women and children proceeded to the local police station - chanting freedom songs and calling out campaign slogans "*Izwe lethu*" (Our land); "*I Africa*"; "*Awaphele ampasti*" (Down with passes); "*Sobukwe Sikhokhle*" (Lead us Sobukwe); "Forward to Independence, Tomorrow the United States of Africa"; and so on and so forth.

When the marchers reached Sharpeville's police station a heavy contingent of police was lined up outside, many on top of British-made Saracen armoured cars. Mr. Tsolo and other members of the Branch Executive moved forward - in conformity with the novel PAC motto of "Leaders in Front" - and asked the white policeman in command to let them through so that they could surrender themselves for refusing to carry passes. Initially the police commander refused but much later, towards 11 a.m., they were let through. The chanting of freedom songs was picking up and the slogans were being repeated with greater volume. Journalists who rushed there from other areas, after receiving word that the campaign was a runaway success in this mostly ignored African township, more than 30 miles south of Johannesburg, confirm that for all their singing and shouting the crowd's mood was more festive than belligerent. But shortly after the PAC branch leaders had been let through into the police station, without warning, the police facing the crowd opened fire and in two minutes hundreds of bodies lay sprawling on the ground like debris. The joyful singing had given way to murderous gunfire, and the gunfire was followed by an authentic deadly silence, and then screams, wild screams and cries of the wounded.

Littering the ground in front of that police station in nearby dusty streets were 69 dead

and nearly 200 injured men, women and children; a revolting sight which appalled decent human beings the world over as pictures of the massacre got around.

The same pattern of events had taken place in nearby Vanderbijl Park, where two Africans were gunned down by white police a few minutes later, and at Langa and Nyanga, a thousand miles away in Cape Town, where five people were shot dead by white police.

Domestic and International Implications

With that savagery the apartheid regime sealed the path of non-violence and PAC resolved to continue the struggle through arms in future.

It was a revealing comment, the one made by Carel de Wet, the Member of Parliament for Vanderbijl Park, a former cabinet minister in Mr. Vorster's Government, who is currently serving a second term as ambassador to the Court of St. James. He complained: "Why did the police kill only two *kaffirs* in my constituency?" Clearly the mass killings were by design and they were intended to "teach the *kaffirs* a lesson." But the African people refused to be intimidated by the racist regime's hired killers, Africans across the land poured out into the streets in their hundreds and thousands in support of the campaign against passes. Much of industry, as hoped for by the PAC leadership, ground to a halt. As a result there was an unprecedented run on the stock market and a helter-skelter pull-out of £43 million in foreign capital by investors. The country's reserves drained rapidly. In contrast to the exuberant anti-government demonstrations by Africans in every major city in South Africa, perilous gloom seemed to settle over white South Africa and thousands fled abroad, causing the overseas travel business to be the only brisk business in town. The frustration of white settlers, particularly the mostly complacent English-speaking settlers, was dramatically shown by one man, David Pratt. He is the English-speaking farmer who fired two shots into Mr. Verwoerd's head at the annual Rand Ester Show in Johannesburg in April 1960. On that occasion the settler premier miraculously escaped death. (He was later stabbed to death in the House of Parliament in 1966.) Mr. Pratt told a magistrate he had done it because Verwoerd "was leading the country into darkness" before he was whisked off to a mental asylum and oblivion.

Speaking after yet another massive PAC demonstration of 30,000 outside Parliament in Cape Town, the man who acted as Prime Minister after Mr. Verwoerd had been shot, Paul Sauer, called for a "new book" for South Africa and said things should not be allowed to slide back to conditions that had created the worst crisis the racist regime had ever faced.[37]

The Verwoerd regime did not heed one of their own kind. Paul Sauer was quickly dropped from the cabinet and disappeared into the backbenches before dying. The Minister of Justice who had given partial victory to PAC by temporarily suspending the

[37] *The Star*, Johannesburg, January 20, 1973

pass laws also got the sack from the cabinet. The regime declared a state of emergency at the beginning of April 1960, and arrested over 18,000 people, including most of the country's leading anti-apartheid politicians, black and white. During this first ever nation-wide state of emergency the PAC was outlawed, and with it the ANC. The state of emergency was virtually a declaration of martial law. Meetings were banned, curfew was imposed and press censorship was introduced, in effect if not in fact.

The international community reacted with shocked anger to the Sharpeville, Langa, Nyanga and Vanderbijl Park massacres. The question of apartheid was brought up in the United Nations Security Council for the first time soon after the Sharpeville massacre. In April 1960, the Council called on the apartheid regime to "initiate measures aimed at bringing about racial harmony based on equality... and abandon its policies of apartheid and racial discrimination". When the racist regime refused to give in to the reasonable and legitimate demands of the African people and strengthened its discrimination laws through the emergency, almost every country in the world turned from shocked anger to angry condemnation. Most countries have never stopped their attacks on the apartheid policies of the South African white-settler regime. Since that time international public disgust with apartheid South Africa is manifest in her total isolation from normal human contact with the rest of the world, her international standing is better to only that of her sister pariah - the Ian Smith racist regime in Rhodesia.

The Observance of the International Day: a Tribute to the Martyrs of Sharpeville, Langa, Nyanga, Vanderbijl Park

The support of the international community is especially valuable to the people of Azania in their struggle for self-determination. The world community's heightened sensitivity to political injustice in 1960 combined with the political assault on the apartheid system - an assault conceived and carried out by the Azanian people - plays an important part in immortalising Sharpeville.

The designation by the United Nations of March 21 as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is a source of pride to the Azanian people and their liberation movement. The posthumous tribute to the martyrs of Sharpeville, Langa, Nyanga and Vanderbijl Park is viewed as tantamount to the canonisation of men, women and children who paid for the noble cause of freedom with their own blood.

Further, it is important to bear in mind that the Azanian people see their own struggle as part of the whole of mankind's fight for the elimination of oppression. At the beginning of his trial - along with other PAC leaders, including Potlako K. Leballo, the National Secretary who is presently Acting President, Zeph Mothopeng, the Secretary for Judicial Affairs, and the late Rosett Ndziba, a former member of the Regional Executive Committee for the Witwatersrand - Mangaliso Sobukwe delivered an unprecedented political statement from the dock, the record of which the court refuses to release. Mr. Leballo referred to this statement when addressing the Security Council in 1974:

"It will be remembered that when this case began we refused to plead because we felt no moral obligation whatsoever to obey laws which are made exclusively by a white minority...[38] But I would like to quote what was said by somebody before, that an unjust law cannot be justly applied. We believe in one race only - the human race to which we belong. The history of the human race is a long history of struggle against all restrictions, physical, mental and spiritual. We would have betrayed the human race if we had not done our share."

The good rapport between the struggling African majority in South Africa and the international community suffers, however, from the economically inspired indifference of major industrial nations whose business companies have not only reversed the outflow of capital sparked off by the PAC anti-pass campaign but have multiplied manifold their investments in the apartheid republic.

Typical of the unfeeling attitude of foreign investors is a disclosure in *Newsweek*, which reveals that:

"Top executives of sixteen major U.S. corporations - there are 300 all in all operating in South Africa - met secretly in January to discuss whether their presence was a tacit vote for apartheid... The consensus was that they should stay and use their considerable economic influence to better conditions for black workers from within."[39]

This rationale lacks credibility and could never survive the test of an open meeting. South Africa has depended on foreign investments throughout its economic growth which dates to the last century. During that time Africans have had their every political, social and labour right taken away by an unending stream of draconian laws. It comes as no surprise when we find that erstwhile advocates of "foreign investments in South Africa to influence change" like Chief Gatsha Buthelezi of the KwaZulu bantustan and the Rev. Beyers Naude of the Christian Institute say in a joint statement published recently: "Foreign investment in the central economy is devoid of all morality."[40] They were responding to a statement made by the "Minister of Bantu Administration," M.C. Botha. Mr. Botha had spelled out in unequivocal terms just how little the so-called homelands are ever going to get by way of autonomy.

"In the economic framework of the country, the economy of the homelands is interwoven with that of the Republic of South Africa and it stands to reason that the development of the homelands cannot be carried out at a pace which would have detrimental effect on the economy of the country."[41]

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[38] Refusing to plead was another PAC "first"; it has been emulated on several occasions since.

[39] *Newsweek*, New York, March 15, 1976

[40] Gatsha Buthelezi and Beyers Naude, *Foreign Investment in South Africa*, Johannesburg, March 10, 1976

[41] *Ibid*.

Mr. Botha's statement makes it clear that South Africa is one country and effectively undermines the "independence" gimmick for so-called homelands. Safeguarding of the vital economic interests of South Africa under apartheid is based on keeping the bantustan reserves as reservoirs of cheap labour, the source of super-profits for foreign investors. No amount of foreign "economic influence" will alter that. On the contrary, the 16 major U.S. corporations investing in South Africa whose executives met in January - including IBM, ITT, GM, Ford, Firestone, Burroughs and Goodyear - know it.

"There Will Always be Others to Take our Place"

At the end of their trial, at which they were charged of sedition and incitement because of their leadership of the Positive Action Campaign in the uprising which followed the Sharpeville shootings, Mr. Sobukwe told the court: "If we are sent to jail there will always be others to take our place."[42] This forecast, based on a deep understanding of African hatred for white settler domination, has been vindicated countless times.

In the post-Sharpeville era the South African racist regime has enacted a series of harsh laws to harass its opponents, compounding the notoriety of apartheid year in and year out. Evidence was abundant that both the PAC and the ANC had resolved to carry on with the struggle underground, after the outlawing of the two African organisations. In 1962, the present white settler Prime Minister, J.B. Vorster, then "Minister of Justice," propelled himself to the front ranks of the ruling National Party's extremists by introducing the General Law Amendment Act, a sweeping piece of legislation, more notoriously known as the "Sabotage Act," which upgraded simple offences like painting anti-government slogans to treasonable offences, punishable by a minimum of five years and a maximum of the death sentence.

The apartheid regime was forced into desperate measures by the spreading activities of the liberation movement in the underground, confounding the earlier boasts of that regime that it had "broken the backbone" of the African organisations. PAC's underground armed wing, which came to be known by the Xhosa name *Poqo* (which means authentic), succeeded in spreading *Mau Mau* style panic amongst the white settlers. In the underground, PAC's branches had been regrouped into small cells and armed units, whose standard weapon, like that of the *Mau Mau* of Kenya, was the panga, a home-made machete. These *Poqo* units staged a number of armed attacks on police and Government stooges, including guards of the puppet chief minister of the Transkei, Kaiser Matanzima. It was as a result of one of these attacks on the main police station in Paarl, when two whites were killed, that Mr. Vorster ordered Justice Snyman to conduct an inquiry into the Paarl uprising.

Midway through his inquiries, Justice Snyman suspended hearings and submitted an interim report warning the Government that PAC planned similar attacks on white South

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[42] Motjuwadi, *op. cit.*

Africans on a nation-wide scale during 1963, on orders of Potlako Leballo and the national headquarters of the PAC in Maseru, Lesotho.[43] Mr. Vorster reacted by amending the Sabotage Act to include the infamous 90-day "detention without trial" law and the so-called "Sobukwe Clause" (of the same Act) empowering the "Minister of Justice" to detain at his pleasure the PAC leader after he completed the three-year hard labour sentence for leading the Sharpeville campaign. Under the 90-day detention law the rule of *habeas corpus* was overridden and any commissioned police officer could order the detention of a political suspect for 90 days at a time and the courts, such as they are, are powerless to act. This travesty of justice, universally condemned within South Africa and abroad, has today been succeeded by an even more draconian indefinite detention law, the 1967 Terrorism Act. Black consciousness movement detainees have been held under the Terrorism Act for indefinite periods after the pro-FRELIMO rallies in September 1974.

A massive swoop on suspected members of the PAC was mounted by the South African security police from the end of March 1963. By the middle of the year more than 10,000 *Poqo* suspects were behind bars. The ANC underground, which had been conducting a campaign of sabotage under its armed wing, *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, suffered similarly. Some of the casualties of this *blitzkrieg* against the underground movement were those who appeared with Nelson Mandela, the former Transvaal president of the ANC, in the comparatively well reported Rivonia trial which began in October 1963. Thousands of detainees were during 1963 convicted of belonging to PAC and furthering its aims in violation of the ban imposed in 1960. They received relatively milder sentences. Hundreds of those whom state prosecutors found to have come from higher up in the ranks received far more severe sentences. Records show that 40 *Poqo* activists were executed from amongst those arrested in 1963. The list of executed PAC men has since that time passed the 100 mark: because even within prisons jailbreaks were staged and government spies were killed. Also several other cells have been raided during the latter part of the 1960s and in the 1970s. Most of those charged under the Sabotage Act have been given long stretches on Robben Island, where many from the 1963 arrests are still serving, and a few have been executed. In his extensively researched but hopelessly one-sided book, *Urban Revolt in South Africa*, Edward Feit grudgingly concedes that the growing discontent amongst the African masses was attested to "by the mounting support for PAC and its terrorist wing *Poqo*."[44] Mr. Sobukwe's promise that "others will take our place" was being fulfilled. With the rise of the Black Consciousness Movement, following the bleak period and widespread apathy ushered in by the ruthless suppression of the 1960s, it is evident that apartheid brutality has all but spent itself as a deterrent. The timing could not be more fortuitous in the light of the victories which African liberation movements have scored in Angola and Mozambique and the intensifying armed struggle in Namibia and Zimbabwe. Just as Sharpeville resulted from the high tide of decolonisation in Africa north of the Zambesi, the battle for liberation everyone is predicting soon to take place in South Africa stands to gain from the favourable

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[43] "*Poqo*, the *Mau Mau* of South Africa" in *The Standard*, Dar es Salaam, January 1969

[44] Feit, Edward, *Urban Revolt in South Africa, 1960-1964*, Northwestern University Press, 1971

conditions now surrounding the African masses within Azania.

The Apartheid Regime is Vulnerable

The greatest significance of the campaign which led to the Sharpeville shootings lies in the fact that it proved that the South African apartheid regime, like all oppressive regimes, is vulnerable. Further it shows that it is the human element and not sophisticated weapons alone, which will be the decisive factor in the resolution of the struggle between the African majority and their white minority oppressors. Years after apartheid South Africa equipped itself with the finest arsenal of modern weapons in the whole of Africa, a seasoned commentator on the political scene, Allister Sparks, told readers of the Johannesburg *Rand Daily Mail* that the growing black labour movement "places tremendous real power in the hands of black workers; this is going to become the main pressure factor in South African politics in the future."[45] I would add that the decisive factor will be the armed struggle. Be that as it may, it is worth recalling that on the eve of Sharpeville, Mr. Sobukwe said when African workers force industry to come to a standstill "the Government will be forced to come to our terms."[46] A combination of renewed armed struggle, with the rough edges of the 1960s smoothed out, and pressure on industry by the African labour force, are far more powerful than any weapon in Mr. Vorster's arsenal.

Sharpeville Day in 1976 is therefore being commemorated under very promising prospects for the struggle in Azania. At this time, supporters of the Azanian national liberation struggle would do well to be mindful of one particular danger facing Azanians in particular, and Africa in general. According to a survey published in 1972 by the United Nations Unit on Apartheid "total foreign investment in South Africa amounted in 1970 to R5,818 million.[47] A guide to the rate at which foreign money is pouring into South Africa is that for 1970 alone £328 million came in, "only to be exceeded once again during 1971."[48] The principal investors are Britain, the United States, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, i.e., the leading Western industrial countries and Japan. The first four are members of NATO and the first three are also permanent members of the Security Council.

In its very first meeting to consider the question of apartheid in South Africa, the Security Council recognised that apartheid could endanger international peace, which is an understatement. But for these countries and their investments, apartheid South Africa would not be as strong an enemy for the oppressed African majority to deal with.

In a brilliant article which tears away the double talk which he calls South Africa's "new-speak," a *Washington Post* correspondent says South African foreign policy

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[45] Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, *Southern Africa*, Uppsala, 1973
[46] *Speeches of Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, 1949-59*, Dar es Salaam, 1975
[47] South African Reserve Bank, *Quarterly Bulletin of Statistics*, December 1971
[48] United Nations Unit on Apartheid, *Foreign Investments in Apartheid South Africa*, 1972

> "stripped of diplomatic phrasing... rests on the notion that poor black neighbouring States can be bought off; give them enough aid and they won't harbour the guerrillas that could threaten the system."[49]

On the other side of the blackmail coin is an even grimmer picture, crystallised by the introduction of the new Defence Amendment Bill which declares as a "legitimate target" any African country, south of the Sahara, judged by the apartheid regime to be posing a threat to South Africa. The aggression against the People's Republic of Angola and stubborn occupation of the southern part of this independent African State is a demonstration that this new defence bill, like all of South Africa's barbaric laws, is no mere threat. Apartheid South Africa feels licensed to commit aggression against any independent African State. The British magazine, *The Economist*, reveals where Western countries stand when their economic interests get affected:

"It is on the borders of South Africa... that the West should be ready to draw a line in defence of its economic interests."

And since it is OAU tradition that independent States should help those countries fighting for their liberation, it is clear that "defence of its economic interests" for the West could include aggression against those countries in Africa which refuse to take South Africa's bribes.

To help the Azanian liberation movement, and Africa as a whole, a commitment is required from the international community which goes beyond the condemnations poured at South Africa since Sharpeville. Measures need to be taken, within the United Nations system, as well as at the national level in every country, and these must rapidly lead to all United Nations Member States, amongst other measures, ratifying and implementing the provisions of the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid.

A recent report from the Nairobi *Sunday Nation* on the general atmosphere inside Azania is fitting for concluding this article because the situation it describes is reminiscent of the mood inside the country during the time of Sharpeville:

> "At first glance inside South Africa there is little to show that it could be on the brink of prolonged war. But scratch the surface, there are all the fears and frustrations of a population preparing to defend itself. It is whites who are getting edgy...
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> "At the scene of a shooting in central Johannesburg - I hear a chilling

[49] *Washington Post*, February 23, 1976

comment: `They are getting frightened, it's Angola.' Main railway stations are periodically packed with soldiers, many leaving behind wives and children as they head off to the barracks. The radio plays record requests `for the boys on the border'...

"A mining official discreetly displays his armoury, which he bought just in case - two hand guns, a .22 rifle and a shotgun. Many of the whites have been on retreat most of their lives, moving down Africa as each country gained independence and black rule. South Africa was the last `refuge'... Now they all sit in South Africa - four and half million whites outnumbered five to one by blacks - wondering what the future holds. A lot have yet another escape route through retaining their original nationality, particularly the British. In the meantime they will heed Major General Neil Webster, Director-General of Resources, who recently told them `to get used to the idea of living with a warlike situation for many years to come'."[50]

[50] *Sunday Nation*, Nairobi, February 22, 1976

STUDENT MOVEMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA[51]

A study of three student movements illustrating student problems and the Government's response

INTRODUCTION

In the Republic of South Africa, the decade of the 1960s began with the massacre at Sharpeville. It was followed by the State of Emergency, and the banning of the two major opposition forces, the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress. A number of laws were added to the books which went a long way towards destroying the remnants of human liberty. South Africa quite unabashedly became a police State.[52] In his capacity as Minister of Justice, Mr. Vorster was held responsible for much of the repressive legislation and often seemed to enjoy the "prestige" that the destruction of open political opposition brought him. In speeches at political rallies all around the country he launched scathing attacks on the "communists," "liberals," "humanists," and "pinks" who were subverting the Government. In 1966, following the assassination of Dr. Verwoerd, Mr. Vorster became Prime Minister.

This is the context in which student activity and student protest in South Africa must be understood. Increased oppression by the Government has been accompanied by a weakening and withering away of those institutions and persons who are prepared to accept the consequences of open opposition to the State. A significant exception to this general trend has been certain segments of the student population. Predictably, these segments have come under increased attack by the Government. A study of three student organisations will illustrate the major issues involved in the struggle between the students and the Government and will also illuminate certain fundamental realities of South African society.

The issues that have stimulated, preoccupied, disturbed and, in one case, destroyed student organisations are relationships between the races - relationships between the

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[51] From "Notes and Documents", No. 16/70, May 1970.

This paper, prepared by the Southern Africa Committee of the University Christian Movement in New York, deals with three student movements in South Africa. It does not purport to be a history of the student movement in South Africa, as it does not cover other student movements, notably the youth leagues of the non-white political organisations.

[52] See Kahn, E. *The Separated People*

English and the Afrikaners, and between South African student organisations and international organisations.

Obviously, South Africa did not become a police State overnight. A brief historical survey of the Students` Christian Association will illustrate the forces that have been at work for generations, leading to the present state of affairs. The National Union of South African Students will be studied next, being the most active student organisation in the critical years following Government action to segregate South African universities. Finally, the University Christian Movement will be dealt with as a new organisation benefiting from the experience of both the Students` Christian Association and the National Union of South African Students.

I. THE STUDENTS` CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

The birth and early years of the Students` Christian Association (SCA) illustrate the key issues raised in its history. First, it came into being in 1896 at the impetus of the World Student Christian Federation, that is, at the impetus of an international organisation, and it maintained this international tie throughout its life. Second, the founding conference was at Stellenbosch, centre of Dutch culture and intellectual life. Hardly had the association begun when its life was disrupted by the Anglo-Boer War. Conflict between Boer, or Afrikaner, and English has been one of the fundamental forces that has shaped South African society. This conflict was of great importance within the SCA as well. Finally, from 1902 to 1965, the SCA served students of all races.[53] Problems relating to race were of central importance throughout the life of the association.

Race Relations in the Twenties

From the very beginning, SCA work among Africans was carried on quite separately from work among European students. A speech by the first secretary for African work, given at the University of Stellenbosch in l926, gives a feeling of the times:

> "The appearance of Native speakers on an open platform to address European audiences, and especially university students, is an event in the history of the Native question in South Africa, of far reaching consequences ... When students of a university are willing to listen to a Native speaker, we feel that by that very act an important bridge has been thrown over the gulf between black and white in South Africa."[54]

This statement testifies to the reality of the gulf between black and white, but also to

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[53] Andrew, M. G., "Historical Foundations", in *South African Outlook*, Vol. 95, No. 1154, July 1967, p. 103

[54] Haslett, T. M. (ed.) *Federation News Sheet*, Monthly bulletin of the World Student Christian Federation, February 1926, No. 47.

the nascent and optimistic belief within the SCA that such events would sooner or later solve the "Native question." There appeared to be a rising tide of liberalism, especially among students, that was looked to with much hope by those who believed that segregation in society was repressive and belonged to the past age. One of the events that inspired this hope was the SCA conference at Fort Hare in 1930.

Fort Hare Conference, 1930

Opened by South Africa's famous liberal statesman, Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr, the conference was asked whether or not the gain of one race had to be secured at the cost of the other's loss, whether or not the races had to be a menace to each other.[55] In the context of that gathering, the answer to his questions was an emphatic "no."

The African section of the SCA had invited whites to participate in this conference. In spite of the fact that the Africans had arranged for separate eating and sleeping facilities, following the generally accepted customs of South Africa, the European delegates voted in favour of common meals. The number of persons in attendance was about 275, of whom about eighty were European, both English and Afrikaner.

In order to understand the significance of this gathering, it is important to remember that for many in attendance, this was a unique experience. Fort Hare was the only institution of higher education for Africans at the time. The participation of Africans in the discussion of problems of social justice was described as "highly impressive." This is an indication of the fact that it was exceedingly difficult for whites and blacks in South Africa to meet on any kind of equal footing. By and large, relationships were those of master/servant relationships. For most whites, finding themselves in a meeting where they were a distinct minority, guests of the Africans who were articulate and highly concerned about problems of economic justice, industrialisation and relationships between the races would have been an event without precedent in their lives.

The response and ramifications of the conference were indicative of the nature of South African society. Some elements of the press were very agitated by the conference, objecting that such gatherings endangered white civilisation and lowered the prestige of whites. The students were attacked. "Their behaviour was not so much a matter of conviction, as that they had lost their heads."[56] This kind of objection was raised because black and white had eaten at the same tables, had participated in sports together, and had discussed matters of serious concern to all present.

What was outrageous to some was greeted with applause by others. The National Union of South African Students supported the conference. To some it was a sign of a new day, having implications outside the organisation itself. It was seen as part of a movement: "There are minority groups in both races who have begun to co-operate,

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[55] Paton, Alan. *Hofmeyr*, (Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 173.
[56] *Federation News Sheet*, December 1, 1930

realising that no one section of South African society can mould the future of South Africa without the collaboration of the other... Whatever may be the attitude of the general public, the fact remains that dynamic forces are being released in the life of South Africa, looking toward a new order of society. The Fort Hare Conference will probably be remembered as at least one of the sources from which this new life flowed ..."[57]

Hope of new life has frequently been disappointed in South Africa. The 1930s, however, did display a surge of liberalism. In order to put this in perspective and understand the level of consciousness of the problem of all concerned it is helpful to hear what the participants in that era said about their conference. The December 1930 meeting of the Council of the SCA issued the following resolution regarding the Fort Hare Conference:

> "With regard to the criticisms which have been levelled against certain happenings at the conference, the Council... readily recognises the fact of existing racial differences, as evidence of which recognition it would point to the existence in the SCA organisation of two sections, European and Bantu. This fact and its implications are also fully acknowledged by the Bantu students themselves, as witnessed by the following statement voluntarily made by the members of the SCA branch of Fort Hare:
>
> > "`Whereas it has come to our knowledge that certain people entertain some fear regarding our aims and aspirations with respect to the social relationship between Black and White in South Africa, we, the Executive and members of the South African Native College Students` Christian Association, wish to state that although we shall always expect and work for social justice for all, and shall appreciate any helpful offer or invitation from the white section of the community, we do not wish to press for any intimate social intercourse between the two races.
> >
> > "'The meeting of Bantu and European at the same tables and in athletic competition was unpremeditated and no part of the original programme. Strong exception has been taken to this intermingling of the races, and we recognise that deference is due to the feelings of a large portion of the South African people. From this point of view, we regret that what has happened has given rise to misunderstanding and estrangement. The Council urges all concerned to have considerate regard on all occasions for the country's feelings in the matter of social intermingling.'"[58]

What is well illustrated is the great evil of custom, enforcing separation even when no laws existed making this separation mandatory. The very quick recognition of "racial differences" and the willingness of the African section to disavow any desire for

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[57] *Ibid*., September 1, 1930
[58] *Ibid*., March 1, 1931

"intimate social intercourse between the races" were almost inevitable. This was true because of the isolation, the limited vision and the weakness of the forces who shared the hope for a South Africa freed from the burden of race as the primary category with which to judge all of life and its relationships.

The dynamism and hope of that conference were present, but it was also a painful experience, "painful because it was all a dream and who knows how many years must pass and how many lives be spent and how much suffering undergone before it all comes true."[59]

The 1951 Conference

The SCA continued to grow, having, by 1939, 280 branches and 9,000 members in the universities, training colleges and secondary schools throughout the country. The work of the SCA was varied: it included the religious activities of Sunday schools and Bible study groups, with Europeans sometimes going to Coloured and African areas. It also included more intensive urban study tours, with European students going to the African locations to learn about conditions there. The African section of the SCA continued to be quite separate, seeing the growth of the urban population and of non-mission urban schools as a primary challenge. In the 1940s work among Indians was begun and a separate Coloured section established.

1948 witnessed the victory of the Nationalist Party and also the death of Jan Hofmeyr. The year thus symbolised the weakness of liberalism as a significant force in society and the growing strength of Afrikaner nationalist policies. Segregation and separation were the order of the day and were to become ever more thoroughly entrenched in South African society.

"Race Relations in South Africa" was the theme of the 1951 General Conference of the SCA, a conference which set up the structure that would eventually lead to the death of the SCA. This conference is instructive because of the issues raised and the decisions taken. The concerns were population and land distribution, white dominance and racial segregation. There was also a discussion of the constitution of the SCA which necessitated a concrete decision on the nature of race relations within the SCA itself. One of the major addresses at the conference outlined possible solutions to the race problem as territorial, social and economic segregation. This solution was sharply challenged by the African secretary. He said that the English and the Afrikaner stood for essentially the same thing: segregation. Further, he pointed out that apartheid was impracticable because economic integration and the Westernisation of the African were irrevocable. Non-Europeans would not look to Europeans for solutions to race problems as Europeans had failed to be united, even among themselves.[60]

The critical discussion became that of the organisation of the SCA. The decision

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[59] Paton, *op. cit.*, p. 173
[60] *Federation News Sheet,* September-October 1951

taken set up distinct sections: English, Afrikaner, Bantu, and Coloured. The mere fact that all four groups were present in the discussions earned the conference condemnation as "communistic and liberalistic." However, this structure was a disaster, conforming to the South African way of life, the institutionalisation of apartheid into the SCA. Branches withdrew from the organisation both because it was too conservative and because it was to liberal. But the sectional structure was accepted and carried forward.[61]

Over the years the SCA continued to grow in numbers. By 1959 there were 66,000 members. There was also an increased concern with non-political matters. The SCA, for example, felt that it could include within its ranks persons of very wide political differences and that it was unnecessary and even undesirable to make a statement about its stand *vis-a-vis* apartheid. European tours to urban locations continued and some of these were very important to the individuals involved. The participants were only English students, for the Afrikaner students had withdrawn.

Tensions within the SCA

The tensions within the association increased. In 1961, the SCA sent a delegation to the World Student Christian Federation conference in Strasbourg. The statement of that delegation spells out the problems:

> "We South Africans are involved in an intricate situation with two types of nationalism facing each other in one geographical area. The Dutch-speaking South Africans have only recently realised their nationhood; for example, only in 1925 did their language become a recognised language although they had been a political entity long before that. Generally speaking, the English-speaking South Africans naturally do not share many of the Afrikaans sentiments. They feel their nationalism realised in the British Commonwealth, and so on. In opposition to this nationalism which strives to retain what realisation it has achieved, we have the awakening of African nationalism which again strives to get rid of any elements which obstruct the realisation of their self-fulfilment... Within (our) population we find a great diversity of cultural, religious, and social differences. It is to be understood that hardly two of our nine delegates share exactly the same sentiments or opinions, for within this complicated situation the SCA is planted.
>
> "Apartheid is the political policy by which the predominantly Dutch Government is following a policy of separate development for each group. Some of us in the SCA, knowing true Christians who believe in apartheid and who are serving the people of South Africa in loyalty to Christ, feel we cannot condemn absolutely; and on the other hand, knowing Africans, Asiatics, Coloureds, and whites who are suffering because of the implications, cannot confirm absolutely. However, there are those among us who absolutely condemn or confirm.
>
> "As an SCA which has in its fellowship people from these groups, we face the

[61] Andrew, *op. cit.* p. 104

> situation as men and women seeking... We are seeking to have more and more traffic on the bridge which the SCA is seeking to be, as the only movement in South Africa which includes all shades of political thinking and religious conviction.."[62]

There was not a neat balance of power between the differing groups: the SCA became more and more dominated by the Afrikaans students with Dutch Reformed Church affiliation. The English speaking students began to work through denominational societies such as the Anglican and Roman Catholic societies. By this time, the major churches in South Africa had very little contact with or stake in the SCA. In spite of the large number of its students who participated in the SCA, the Dutch Reformed Church, the church of all of the Nationalist politicians, was not happy with the SCA. Quite understandably, the leadership was unhappy with an association that was still multi-racial, and which was quite independent and not a direct youth and student branch of the Dutch Reformed Church.

Further, there was a split in the SCA between those who wished to be affiliated with the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) and those who sought alliance with more conservative Christians around the world. The SCA found itself becoming less socially and politically concerned at the very time that the WSCF was becoming more politically involved. Before 1964, the SCA was already moving away from the WSCF, but the action of that body that year caused the SCA to disaffiliate.[63]

The substance of the WSCF action was contained in two letters: the first letter sent to the South African association by the Committee criticised it sharply for its failure to "disassociate itself in word and act from the policy of apartheid". It told the Association that in its opinion the situation "has become a threat to world peace and will, if it continues much longer, end in a bloodbath which may have a chain reaction all over the continent and beyond".

"Further," it said, "the South African Association had made `little or no attempt' to comply with a Federation request made four years ago that it re-examine and clarify its stand on the matter..."[64]

The second letter, addressed to other member movements of the Federation, called upon their governments "to apply massive pressure to compel a radical change in South African policy..."

In the letter cutting its ties to the Federation, the South African SCA charged that the WSCF had "overstepped" its functions and was turning into "a superstructure... which is now busy enforcing the will of the majority on the minority." It said the Federation was leading its member movements to become "political pressure groups" and that "to this

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[62] *Federation News Sheet*, July 1961, p. 49
[63] Andrew, *op. cit.*, p. 104
[64] *Federation News Sheet*, December 1964, p. 31.

our Association cannot and will not subscribe. (We) have no other choice to make than to terminate affiliation with the WSCF... This decision is final!"

The Death of the SCA

The breakaway from the WSCF was the first step in the break-up of the SCA. The international tie was cut. The Afrikaans section enthusiastically endorsed the division of the SCA because this supported apartheid and enabled them to be more directly related to the Dutch Reformed Church. It became evident to all concerned that the time had come to end the life of the Association. This happened in January of 1965. Four independent sections were recognised: the Afrikaans, the English, the Bantu, and the Coloured. However, at the very time that the break-up occurred, there was a desire on the part of some for continuing contact. The African section invited the new SCA, which was the English group, and the Coloured section to unite into a new movement. It looked for a time that rather than a genuine break-up occurring, what would really happen would simply be a secession of the Afrikaans branch. Before long it became clear that it was more responsible to allow the whole organisation to die. Then and only then could new life be possible.

The SCA had tried to deal with the inherent tensions in South African society by isolating people from each other, by becoming less and less political, by avoiding a clear confrontation with the rulers of society. The result was that there finally was nothing to hold the various sections of the association together. The experience of the SCA illustrates well the superhuman task that exists if the attempt is made to include persons of all races and faiths in one organisation. Non-confrontational withdrawal was tried and it failed.

II. THE NATIONAL UNION OF SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS

The National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), more than any other student organisation, has stood up to the Government and has borne the brunt of its attacks. As it was committed to freedom and equality for all (the principles of which are embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations), these attacks were to be expected in view of the South African Government’s policy of racism and inequality. The recent history of the Union is a series of conflicts with the State because of the Union’s attitudes about race and because of the publicity that NUSAS has made for South Africa throughout the world. The English-Afrikaner split in South Africa has been an indirect factor in the life of NUSAS, as the Afrikaans universities are not members of NUSAS, but rather are supporters of the policies of the State that NUSAS continues to fight.

Segregation in South African Universities

NUSAS has never been an organisation favoured by the Nationalist Party, but it was

not until the mid-1950s that the organisation became involved in active opposition to the policies of apartheid, this in response to the policy of the Government to segregate the universities.[65] Before that, since its establishment in 1924, NUSAS had been like many other student unions, limiting its concern to student affairs. The direct interference of the Government in the internal affairs of the universities, culminating in the legislation of 1959, made impossible the distinction between "student affairs" and "political affairs."[66] NUSAS played a leading role in the organisation of opposition to the legislation and it was this that set the pattern for the organisation's subsequent opposition to apartheid.

The legislation of 1959 made segregation at the previously "open" universities complete. Neither the University of Cape Town nor the University of the Witwatersrand had ever accepted total integration in the university. Both had propounded the policy of academic integration while maintaining a considerable degree of social segregation. The governing bodies of these two universities made clear their attitudes in their opposition to the 1959 legislation. On December 12, 1956, the Council of the University of Cape Town passed the following resolution:

> "(1) It is opposed in principle to academic segregation on racial grounds;
>
> "(2) It believes that separate academic facilities for non-Europeans and Europeans could not be equal to those provided in an open university;
>
> "(3) It is convinced that the policy of academic non-segregation, which as far as possible the University of Cape Town has always followed, accords with the highest university ideals and has contributed to inter-racial understanding and harmony in South Africa..."[67]

Two days later, the University of the Witwatersrand adopted a similar resolution. Throughout the campaign against the legislation, the question of non-academic social segregation had been carefully avoided and both the universities and the students argued for "academic freedom" and university autonomy. During the 1950s, few students had campaigned actively against their own universities to destroy the practice of social segregation on the campuses of the "open" universities. The campaign of 1959, however, made clear the dichotomy between academic integration and social segregation.

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[65] For a more detailed account of the earlier history of NUSAS see Legassik, Martin, *The National Union of South African Students: Ethnic cleavage and ethnic integration in the universities*. Occasional Paper No. 4, African Studies Center, University of California, Los Angeles, 1967.

[66] The Extension of University Education Act, No. 45 of 1959 and the University College of Fort Hare Transfer Act, No. 64 of 1959

[67] *The Open Universities in South Africa*. Published on behalf of the conference of representatives of the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1957, p. 4.

Beginning in the early 1960s, NUSAS and the Students` Representative Councils (SRC) of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand, against the wishes of the universities concerned, sought to remove this dichotomy. In 1965, at a mass meeting on the campus of the University of Cape Town, students decided to hold no dances on the campus unless the university administration agreed to permit students of all races to attend. The University Council refused and insisted that the dances be segregated. This attitude of the Council has been the source of much recent conflict between the students and the administration.

At the 1967 NUSAS Assembly, student councils at all the affiliated universities were called upon to do everything in their power to abolish all racial discrimination on their campuses. Prior to this Assembly, some 1,700 students at a mass meeting at the Witwatersrand University had decided by a large majority that it was the duty of the university to ensure that there be no discrimination in the university and it was the further duty of the university to guarantee that all university members have free access to all university facilities. The same meeting decided that all functions organised by the SRC should be open to all students, regardless of race.

NUSAS has continued to use this issue as a focus of opposition. One of the most visible actions in 1969 was activity at the time of the 10th anniversary of the loss of academic freedom. Demonstrations were held throughout the country. Police with dogs arrested non-violent protesters. Duncan Innes, president of NUSAS, stated at the close of the week of protests that the fact that the universities were not free was a glaring reminder that the country was not free. He said, "Our opposition to apartheid is just beginning."[68]

One final point should be made concerning segregation on the campuses of the English-language universities. Throughout the history of NUSAS, the annual assembly has always been held at one of the affiliated universities, i.e., one of the English universities. Increasingly during the 1960s, NUSAS petitioned the universities to allow their non-white delegates to the assembly to make full use of the facilities on the campuses, this in particular reference to sleeping arrangements. Again and again the universities refused, and NUSAS was forced to house its non-white delegates off the premises. At the 1968 assembly, the delegates resolved that in view of the fact that congresses could not be held on a basis of equality and non-discrimination at the universities, future congresses should not take place on the university campuses. The possibility of finding a suitable venue for a large multi-racial conference is almost nil in the present South Africa but the delegates refused to continue to accept the universities` practice of social segregation. The NUSAS executive was given the task of finding a suitable alternative.

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[68] *Southern Africa*, New York, Vol. 11, No. 5, May 1969

Arrests and Imprisonment of NUSAS Leaders

Of much longer duration than the confrontation between NUSAS and the English-language universities has been the confrontation between NUSAS and the Nationalist Government. One major method of attack by the Government has been an attempt to destroy the leadership of NUSAS. The Government also tried to intimidate potential members by attacking the organisation. In July 1964, several students, including the immediate past President of NUSAS, were detained under the "90-day" law and placed in solitary confinement. In September of the same year, the then NUSAS President, Jonty Driver, was also arrested - the day before he was to leave South Africa to study in the United Kingdom. He was later released without being charged. One of the students arrested, David de Keller, was seized while attending the annual NUSAS conference. By the end of 1964, there had been several "sensational" trials of students for belonging to unlawful organisations and for being involved in acts of sabotage. De Keller, for example, was charged and found guilty of sabotage and sentenced to ten years` imprisonment. He was one of several charged with belonging to the African Resistance Movement (ARM). It was alleged during the trials that another NUSAS past President, Neville Rubin, had been one of the leaders of the African Resistance Movement and another past President admitted membership in ARM in court. As already mentioned, the NUSAS President at the time, Mr. Driver, was released from detention without charges being laid. When he was released the Security Police informed him that "there was no suspicion at all that NUSAS had been involved in any extra-legal activity."

This latter "assurance" from the Security Police did not prevent Mr. Vorster from renewing his attacks on NUSAS. The run of "unlawful organisations" trials had given him sufficient fuel to feed his electorate and at a Nationalist Party meeting in the Transvaal, he is reported to have said that there would be no remission of sentences for persons convicted of political offences except perhaps for those who had been misled by the four past Presidents of NUSAS. "Because of my sympathy for them and for their parents, I will, if their parents can prove to me that they were misled by these offspring of snakes, give them a remission of their sentences." He again stated that NUSAS had become the mouthpiece of leftists and liberals and that, as always, the organisation was tainted with communism.

The newly-elected President of NUSAS, M. Osler, emphatically rejected the suggestion that NUSAS could be held responsible for the individual political activities of all the students at its constituent centres and challenged Mr. Vorster to openly investigate the activities of the organisation. Contrary to Mr. Vorster's wishes, at the general student elections held at all the universities soon afterwards, NUSAS candidates won all the key positions.

Prisoner Education

As a number of students had been arrested and convicted, NUSAS initiated a programme to help prisoners with sentences of longer than a year to study in prison. The response to this programme was overwhelming, particularly as study services in South

African prisons barely exist, with many prisoners having no access to study materials at all. The original programme included collecting books for prisoners and campaigns to this end were conducted on many campuses in the United States and the United Kingdom. The programme had no sooner been successfully launched than the authorities put a stop to it by refusing to accept any second-hand books, insisting that prisoners order direct from the publishers. NUSAS promptly started a fund-raising campaign to cover the vastly accelerated costs involved. In an attempt to thwart this programme, the authorities refused to accept any payments sent by NUSAS on behalf of a prisoner; only payments direct from "relatives" were acceptable. NUSAS continued to raise money for the relatives, devoting a large section of the programme to assisting many prisoners who had been tried *en masse* in little known districts. NUSAS also started a Students` Defence Fund which over the years has made possible legal defence for many students charged with political offences. In both these programmes, the NUSAS legal adviser, Miss Ruth Hayman, was instrumental in assuring their success. Like many other NUSAS advisers, she was banned by the Government in 1966 and left the country some time later.

Security Branch Harassment

Attempts to smear NUSAS publicly were coupled with more insidious attempts to undermine the organisation, mostly through the activities of the Security Branch. The evidence of police spying on the campuses has consistently been revealed for many years. In 1957, a student at the Rhodes University admitted that he had been paid to pass information about the faculty and students to the Security Police.[69] In the same year, in a letter to the Minister of Justice, the NUSAS President listed eleven known spying incidents at universities (six at the University of the Witwatersrand, three at the University of Cape Town, and one at the University of Fort Hare). In 1959 wide press coverage was given when a student at the Witwatersrand University admitted giving information on the activities of the students` council to the Security Branch. During the same year, many newspapers carried articles on spying. A faculty member at the Witwatersrand and former NUSAS President, Professor Philip Tobias commented: "There is a widespread network of spies at South African universities, informing on the staff as well as the students."[70]

On August 11, 1961, the NUSAS President stated that he had information that two South African students studying at Cambridge in the United Kingdom were spying on their fellow South Africans. During the student trials of 1964, more cases of spying were reported. At the university in Durban a student was asked to give information about the Student Council President, Peter Mansfield, and another student at the same university told the Student Council that he had also been approached to do the same. A headmaster at a Natal school was asked to give information about one of his teachers, Anthony Levy, a former Student Council President. The editor of the student newspaper at Natal University was interrogated and threatened by the Security Police. At Rhodes, the girl

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69 *The Star*, Johannesburg, September 6, 1957

70 Report of the President to the 1964 Congress of NUSAS

friend of one of the NUSAS Committee members was questioned by the police and was told to tell him that he had better drop politics or his "father's business might suffer." Also at Rhodes, one of the students active in student politics was several times approached by the Security Police and offered bribes to give information; she refused and informed the University Principal.

The 1964 Report of the NUSAS President contains the following account of police activities at Fort Hare: One of the professors at Fort Hare had invited his students to tea on a Sunday afternoon. The local chief of the Special Branch, Sgt. Hattingh, came to the tea party uninvited. He told the professor that it was incidents like this that created a feeling of equality in the Fort Hare students. The professor replied that that was precisely his aim. During the argument that followed Sgt. Hattingh declared that the students present were in a prohibited group area and demanded reference books from them... Those who did not have them were instructed to bring them to his office the following morning. After this the tea party broke up."[71]

Bannings

Security Police intimidation was coupled with numerous "banning orders" on both students and faculty members. Between 1960 and 1967, the banning of some thirty faculty members led a member of the University of Cape Town Council, Leo Marquard, to remark that "the Special Branch has the final say in the university appointments in South Africa. By banning orders and by refusing people visas, the Special Branch can prevent qualified people from either accepting or continuing in academic posts."[72] To further restrict the spread of "liberalistic" ideas at the English universities, the Government introduced legislation forbidding faculty members who had been "listed" as communists by the Government from teaching at the universities, effective the beginning of 1965. At the time, only two faculty members were affected by the legislation, Dr. Edward Roux, Professor of Botany at the Witwatersrand University, and Dr. Jack Simons, Professor of Comparative African Government and Law at the University of Cape Town. A third university lecturer, Dr. Margaret Kalk, was not in the country at the time. Although the legislation had been announced in the latter half of 1964, the university authorities had been unwilling to organise any public opposition to the legislation, hoping to persuade the Government to change its mind.

It was again left to students to protest the legislation and NUSAS organised country-wide protests. A meeting of 2,500 students at the Witwatersrand University heard Student President Alan Murray say, "If it was necessary to ban a professor of botany, if it was necessary to go to such lengths, then neither the Government nor the system of apartheid is worthy of preservation."[73] Dr. Edward Roux was forced to relinquish his post at the university. He died in Johannesburg a year later. Professor Jack Simons left the country.

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71 *Ibid*., p. 25

72 *Varsity*, August 9, 1967

73 *Wits Student*, March 22, 1965

NUSAS office bearers were among the many who received severe banning orders from the Minister of Justice. In 1964, Thami Mhlambiso and Miss Gillian Gane were among several other students who were also banned. The latter had narrowly missed serious injury the week before when her car was blown up by a petrol bomb.

The Ian Robertson Case

In July 1965, Ian Robertson was elected NUSAS President. A somewhat detailed study of his experience well illustrates what NUSAS is up against. He assumed office at the beginning of December 1965. For the following few months, he began to collect and document known incidents of police intimidation of students through bannings and interrogations, as well as information regarding interference with NUSAS mail, students being followed by the Security Police and parents of students being visited by the police. At the beginning of May 1966, Mr. Robertson conducted a tour of all the NUSAS-affiliated universities and training colleges, one of his specific intentions being to gather first-hand information of police activity on the campuses. During the course of his tour, he spoke to large student audiences, making public the findings he had at his disposal. On the day following his return to his office in Cape Town, he was visited by members of the Security Police and served with a banning order. This order contained a specific clause prohibiting him from publishing any material.

The banning of Mr. Robertson on May 11, 1966, hardly came as a surprise to students. Soon after his election the previous year, Mr. Vorster had said, "The leaders (of NUSAS) are again playing with fire. I am surprised that the heads of universities concerned have not taken action."

However, the reaction of students to the Robertson banning took South Africa by surprise. Before this there had been more than 500 banning orders issued to restrict South Africans with scarcely a murmur of protest. Banning orders had become so common that newspapers had stopped reporting them in any detail. When the Minister of Justice was given the power to ban without trial, there had been opposition to the principle involved, but by 1966 bannings were an accepted part of police totalitarianism, or so it seemed.

The banning of the President of NUSAS, however, was viewed by students as a direct attack on their own organisation. Within hours, protest action committees had been formed at all the English universities. (The Student Council at the Afrikaans University of Pretoria sent an open letter to Mr. Vorster congratulating him on the action that he had taken against NUSAS.) The English Student Councils adopted resolutions which *inter alia* reaffirmed their dedication to the principles of human freedom and pledged themselves to the realisation of a new South Africa based on justice and respect for human rights.[74]

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[74] See, for example, Minutes of the Emergency Meeting of the Students` Representative Council at the University of Cape Town, May 11, 1966.

In Johannesburg, students started a week-long 24- hour-a-day vigil. The day after the banning, some 7,000 students in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Pietermaritzburg, and Grahamstown marched through the streets to protest the banning. At all the centres, the Security Police took photographs of the demonstrators. Outside the house to which Mr. Robertson had been confined by the ban, they took the names and car registration numbers of all his visitors. The NUSAS Head Office received several abusive phone calls and the acting NUSAS President, John Daniel, was followed constantly.

There was also a certain amount of tension between the students and the university administrations. None of the University Councils openly supported the students and at Cape Town, where Mr. Robertson was a part-time student, the Principal, Mr. Duminy, refused to condemn the banning. Referring to Mr. Vorster and the Government, he said that they were "responsible and sensible men who have the welfare and good name of their country at heart." Only in Johannesburg did student leaders gain support from the administration.

Letters of support for NUSAS poured in from individuals overseas. The English press in South Africa and many foreign newspapers condemned the ban, and the London *Observer* editorialised: "NUSAS has kept a tiny candle burning in the apartheid State."[75] Inside South Africa numerous opposition groups which had been dormant for some time gave their support to the students. In Johannesburg, for example, a meeting of 1,500 citizens called on the Minister to revoke the ban. Mr. Vorster was pressed to give his reasons for banning Mr. Robertson. In previous cases he had emphatically refused to do this. In a statement on May 13, he again declined, but invited the Opposition to raise the matter at the following Parliamentary session. Mr. Robertson himself wrote asking for the reasons for the ban. The Minister replied that he was satisfied that since 1964 Mr. Robertson had been engaged in activities that would further the aims of communism, but that the information that he had about these activities could not be revealed without detriment to the public interest. The NUSAS executive cabled Mr. Vorster, demanding an interview which they hoped would lead to an explanation. The demand was widely publicised and eventually Mr. Vorster agreed to meet a NUSAS delegation. This was unusual as he had consistently refused to meet with representatives of opposition groups.

Three senior members of the NUSAS executive met with Mr. Vorster on May 25. They took with them a petition signed by 9,000 students and faculty, which Mr. Vorster dismissed. During a heated meeting which lasted two hours, he told the delegation that Mr. Robertson did not have to be a communist to be banned under the Suppression of Communism Act. He did not contest that NUSAS was a legal organisation involved in legal activities, but when asked to make a public statement to this effect he said that he was not prepared to "whitewash" NUSAS. During the course of the interview, he strongly attacked NUSAS on three grounds: first, because it had elected Chief Albert Luthuli as its Honorary President (a position that had been accepted); second, because of its multi-racial character, something abhorrent to the Nationalist Party; and, finally, and most vehemently, because NUSAS maintained contacts with and had alliances with overseas

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75 *The Observer*, London, May 22, 1946

bodies which were hostile to the Republic. In regard to the matter for which the delegation had sought the interview, he refused to disclose any information, saying that it was not in the public interest to do so and further that it would endanger the security of the State.

At the conclusion of the meeting the student leaders stated that they had not been satisfied with the Minister's replies and a new wave of student demonstrations broke out. All night torch vigils were held in Cape Town and Johannesburg, supported by mass meetings of students. But Mr. Robertson remained banned. Throughout the protests, the Security Police made their presence felt.

At the Transvaal College of Education, Asian students were refused permission to be absent from lectures to take part in one of the marches: 250 Indian students courageously defied the College administration and joined the march. Two days later the Director of Indian Education visited the College and announced that NUSAS had been banned from the College and the Student Council suspended. Any student who joined NUSAS in his private capacity would have his Government bursary withdrawn. The Director announced that a new student constitution which specifically excluded NUSAS from campus would be drawn up.

The following day a mass meeting of students voted their support for the old SRC and decided to refrain from voting on the new constitution or for a new SRC. A large number of students made their defiance even clearer by applying individually for NUSAS membership. No action was taken against them at the time, but the following year the SRC President was banned and several of the students were suspended from the College and forbidden to teach in any Indian school.

At the white Johannesburg College of Education, the Principal was asked to supply a list of the names of all the students who took part in the march. (All the students at the College are there under government contract.) In Pietermaritzburg, student marchers were attacked by a gang of white thugs who threw bottles, water and sand. Police who were watching the march refused to intervene as they "had not received any orders."

At the new Parliamentary session, Mr. Vorster was subjected to heavy questioning by members of the Opposition, in particular Mrs. Helen Suzman (Progressive Party). He implied that some of the reasons that had led to the banning of Mr. Robertson were that he had been a member of the Defence and Aid Committee (since banned)[76] and that he had visited Swaziland and Basutoland for some ulterior political motive. In reply, Mrs. Suzman drew the Minister's attention to the fact that Mr. Robertson had been an *ex officio* member of Defence and Aid Committee and had never in fact attended a meeting of the committee. He had visited Basutoland for a holiday (and had affidavits from friends who accompanied him to the effect that he had attended no political meeting of

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76 "I will go so far as to say that no person who has had any dealings with that organisation can be unaware of the fact that one is dealing with a communist front organisation." *House of Assembly Debates*, (Hansard), August 3, 1966, col. 98.

any description). Finally he had never set foot in Swaziland. Mr. Vorster said that he had made a mistake when he said "Swaziland"; he had in fact meant Bechuanaland. The following day Mrs. Suzman said that she had checked with Mr. Robertson and he had stated that he had never set foot in Bechuanaland. The result of the debate was that hundreds of students were confirmed in their lack of confidence in the practice of arbitrary banning without trial. Mr. Vorster's later statements that he had "three fat files" on Mr. Robertson, and that "I was mindful of the fact that I had to prevent a second Leftwich affair, and that is why I took action" did little to restore their confidence.[77] Mrs. Suzman voiced the opinion of many when she said, "I feel that the explanation that he (Mr. Vorster) gave to this House as to the reason for the banning of Ian Robertson ... is one of the flimsiest and most fatuous explanations I have ever listened to."[78]

The Robertson affair occupied the front pages of the newspapers for weeks and the NUSAS executive used the opportunity to draw attention once again to the erosion of liberty in South Africa, especially to bannings in general, to the people who had been detained without trial, first under the "90-day" law and then the "180-day" law, to those who had been "house arrested" and to the many hundreds who had been "named" or "listed" as communists. NUSAS appealed constantly to overseas students, universities and organisations for support, and it was this that most angered the Nationalist Party. In its desire to project an image that is acceptable to the outside world, it is absolutely intolerant of any group which makes known the real conditions in South Africa.

The Visit of Robert F. Kennedy

NUSAS again hit the headlines weeks later when their invited guest, Senator Robert Kennedy, arrived in South Africa. Mr. Kennedy had been invited by Mr. Robertson, and most political commentators had linked the invitation to his banning order. Senator Kennedy may have been an embarrassment to the South African Government, but he drew record-breaking crowds wherever he spoke. In Cape Town he was the guest speaker at the Annual NUSAS Day of the Affirmation of Academic Freedom, where over five thousand students and faculty heard him say, "NUSAS has stood for and worked for the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, principles which embody the collective hopes of men of goodwill all around the world... Your work at home and in international student affairs have brought great credit to yourselves and your country."[79]

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77 "The Leftwich Affair" refers to A. Leftwich, a former NUSAS President, who admitted to membership of the African Resistance Movement. For the full parliamentary debate, see *House of Assembly Debates* (Hansard), August 2, 1966, cols. 27-28; August 3, 1966, cols. 97-98, 122-23, 144-47; August 4, 1966, cols. 175-76; September 22, 1966, cols. 2720-23.

78 See for example, the speech of J. A. Marais, M.P., *House of Assembly Debates* (Hansard), August 3, 1966, cols. 122-23.

79 See *Robert Kennedy in South Africa*, edited by J. Chisholm and published by *Rand Daily Mail*, Johannesburg, 1966.

If Mr. Vorster had hoped to break the spirit of NUSAS by banning its President, the annual conference in July, 1966, proved him wrong. With renewed strength the delegates outlined policies for the coming year which indicated that far from swinging to the right as had been anticipated, the Assembly made clear its opposition to apartheid. There was considerable press speculation as to who would take over the post of NUSAS president, offering as it did almost certain retaliation from the Government. To succeed Mr. Robertson, the Assembly elected Miss Margaret Marshall.

Other Forms of Attack

It is impossible to list all the ways in which the South African Government has attempted to destroy NUSAS. Direct and indirect methods of attack continued to be employed. Nevertheless, NUSAS held to its principles. Students felt the hidden pressure of the Government. At the University of Rhodes, delegates to the NUSAS Congress were refused permission to make use of the university's facilities because of the multi-racial composition of the delegates. The University announced that non-whites would not be allowed to eat in the university's dining halls, nor could any multi-racial social functions be held on the campus. Prior to the Congress, the NUSAS President had been informed that all the delegates would be able to use all the facilities. The University explained its change in attitude as caused by a ruling that it had received "from the Government." The NUSAS President sought legal advice and that advice directly contradicted the interpretation of the University. But the University refused to alter its decision.

Far from receiving support from its own universities, NUSAS had again been sacrificed to Government pressure. NUSAS Assembly delegates boycotted university dining halls and held social gatherings at the homes of sympathetic faculty members off campus. Throughout the Congress, Security Police were in evidence. Students arriving for the Congress were questioned by police at the railway station, and security men were placed outside the homes of people housing some of the delegates. Families who had agreed to receive non-white students were visited by the police and told to refuse to accommodate them. Several NUSAS executive members were told that they were "heading for trouble" and were warned that their parents would be warned to stop them from continuing their NUSAS affiliations. Indian and African delegates were molested by the police and were threatened with expulsion from their universities if they continued to take part in politics. For some months after the conference, delegates and other NUSAS personnel were frequently interrogated by the Security Police.

During the later half of 1967 there were renewed Government reprisals against NUSAS personnel. The Chairman of the NUSAS advisory board, Dr. Raymond Hoffenberg, was served with severe banning orders. The occasion was marked by renewed student protests. Dr. Hoffenberg was a senior lecturer and researcher at the University of Cape Town. His banning orders specifically prevented him from continuing to teach after the end of the academic semester. Students were again dissatisfied with the reaction from their university administration. The Council decided to send a deputation to the Minister to ask for an explanation of the banning, but refused to stage any protests until after the meeting as this might prejudice their reception. At the meeting, the

Minister failed to give a satisfactory reason and the Council then found it too late to protest the banning as the Minister seemed to have convinced them that there would be no possibility of the ban being lifted. Nine months after his banning, Dr. Hoffenberg decided to leave South Africa. Despite the fact that he was one of South Africa's most respected scientists and a valuable asset to the University, the administration attempted to stop students from holding any meetings and the final protests took place without its support or approval.

John Sprack was elected in 1967 to succeed Miss Marshall as President of NUSAS. He was visited by the Security Police in August and told that although he held Rhodesian nationality, he was by birth a South African citizen and his citizenship was being revoked because he had used a British passport to travel the year before. Mr. Sprack was deported two weeks later. His successor, John Daniel, had been unable to leave the country because of the withdrawal of his passport, no reasons being given. At the completion of his term of office, Mr. Daniel left South Africa on an exit permit. He later had his citizenship revoked.

The Mafeje Affair

One of the principal occasions for conflict between students and State in 1968 concerned the appointment of Archie Mafeje, an African lecturer, to the faculty of the University of Cape Town. The Minister of Education, Arts and Sciences objected to the appointment and threatened to take steps to ensure that the University conformed to "the traditional outlook" of South Africa. The University Council rescinded the appointment.

Students returned to the university in mid-August and a mass meeting of some 1,200 students deplored the action of the Council and demanded that the University Council and the faculty join the students in a 24-hour strike. About 500 students then marched to the administration building and staged the first "sit-in" demonstration in South Africa while waiting for negotiations with the Council to begin. The administration refused to call an emergency meeting of the Council. The students responded by refusing to leave the building until this had been done. From the beginning, Security Police were present, taking the names of the strikers. At no stage did the University officials ask them to leave the campus.

The following day some 200 faculty members signed a petition of support for the students and some of the faculty joined the students in the administration building. One of the professors resigned his post with the following statement: "Now it is quite clear... that everybody who has a job here has it with the tacit or explicit approval of the Government. The present situation at the University of Cape Town is absurd. On the one hand you have the Minister manufacturing a `tradition' for us of which we have no knowledge at all. It is laughable and unreal."

Students at the other universities came to the support of the Cape Town students. In Johannesburg, a petition collected some 5,000 signatures, mostly of students and faculty, and was personally presented to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor in Cape Town. After a mass

meeting, about 600 students formed a picket line along one of the major highways in Johannesburg, having been refused permission by the city management to march through the city. The Prime Minister had telephoned the Johannesburg Council and told them to refuse the request. The demonstrating students were pelted with paint, eggs and other objects thrown by students from a nearby Afrikaans university. A group of students who travelled to Pretoria to try to seek an interview with the Prime Minister were seized by students of the Afrikaans University there (under the observation of the police who refused to offer any protection) and were beaten, shaved and splattered with paint.

True to form, Mr. Vorster resorted to threatening tactics. Speaking at a large Nationalist meeting, he said: "I want to make it quite clear. I and the Government will not tolerate this... I want to make use of this opportunity to tell the councils of the universities concerned, 'I will give you a reasonable time for solving the things going on at the Universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand yourselves, but if you do not do it, I will do it thoroughly and effectively.'" To this the students replied that Mr. Vorster was vastly underestimating them if he thought that this kind of threat would deter them from doing what they knew was right.

Protests were held at the Universities of Natal and Grahamstown.

As in the past messages of support for the students poured in from overseas and student leaders said that these had meant a great deal to the demonstrators. Speaking in London, Professor Robert Birley, a former visiting professor at Witwatersrand, said: "It should be realised that, while there is very little danger in organising a 'sit-in' in Britain, it needs great courage to do so in South Africa in the face of a Government very ready to act vigorously against its opponents... Only someone who has lived in South Africa can realise how difficult it is to struggle against the dead weight of public opinion which tacitly supports apartheid, and the ever-present sense of fear inevitable in a police State. It is quite extraordinary how the students at the English universities have maintained their stand against the Government's racial policies."[80]

The reprisals against the students were severe, and more than ever before, the police indicated their intention to finally call a halt to student opposition to the Government. Within a week of the "sit-in" in Cape Town, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Police and the Commissioner of Police had all stated their intention of "bringing the days of student protests to a close." The Minister of Police said that Communist sympathisers had fomented unrest at certain universities and that the matter would be discussed at Cabinet level. He added it was clear that if he was to maintain law and order, he could not allow student unrest to develop further. The Prime Minister said that student demonstrations were influenced by Germany and France and that it was the right and the duty of the State to stop these if the universities failed to do so.

A week later, the Minister of Education, Senator Jan de Klerk, announced the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry with a wide mandate to investigate the

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80 *Manchester Guardian*, August 27, 1968

activities of the "white" universities. The terms of reference included an inquiry into student relations in general and in particular the role students could play, in co-operation with the academic authorities, "in maintaining a healthy spirit and code of conduct on the campuses." No students were appointed to the Commission which has only two English members, one of whom is a known Government supporter.

Meanwhile the Security Police started to take action against the student leaders of the demonstrations. Both the NUSAS President and another student "sit-in" leader had their passports withdrawn. (Both had stated their intention to travel overseas to take up scholarships which had been offered to them). The NUSAS Vice-President and another executive member were told to leave South Africa by the end of 1968. Both were Rhodesian students studying at South African universities. (In the past, Rhodesian students had automatically been allowed to stay in South Africa.) The Students` Council President at Rhodes University was interrogated by members of the police and was later informed that his citizenship had been revoked. A number of foreign students at the University of Cape Town were interrogated and told that their visas would be terminated.

Another NUSAS executive member in Johannesburg was asked by the Security Police to act as an informer on the campus in return for money and the opportunity for further study. He refused and divulged the information to the press despite the fact that he had been threatened with serious consequences if he were to do so. A member of the Students` Council in Johannesburg was threatened by members of the Security Police, and repeatedly questioned about his political activities. He was twice attacked by "thugs" and lost his job as a result of police pressure. In Natal, an executive member was interrogated and ten students informed the Students` Council that they had been asked to act as spies, with offers of financial reward. In reply to this, the head of the Security Police said, "I think these students are just seeking publicity. If we had 12 failures recently, as reported in the press, then we could assume on the law of averages that we had had 100 successes. This is really becoming amusing."[81]

Indian students at the University of Natal were also asked to act as spies. One was told that he would never have any difficulty in getting a passport if he wanted to go overseas. Another said that he had been warned by the police that if he disclosed that he had been approached to act as an informer, it would be considered a "breach of confidence" and the police would meet him again "in different circumstances."

Consistent Opposition to Apartheid

This account of NUSAS events in recent years is by no means complete. Only some of the broad patterns have been discussed. The reasons why white students, who form the bulk of NUSAS, continue to oppose apartheid as strongly as ever is one of the peculiarities of South Africa. NUSAS is banned from all the non-white campuses and

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[81] For more complete information on police intimidation of students, see statements issued from the NUSAS Head Office: Nos. P/101, September 30; P/110, October 22; P/116, October 25; P/118, November 4; and P/121, November 11, 1968.

reprisals against Africans and Indians who take an active part in NUSAS are swift.

Analysts of NUSAS have always anticipated that the organisation would grow increasingly conservative as it was exposed more and more to Government pressure. But if anything, the reverse has been the case. At a crucial stage in the movement's history, the NUSAS leadership decided to maintain NUSAS as a broad-based organisation in open opposition to the Government, rather than to close the ranks of NUSAS and involve it directly in the "liberatory movements." It is debatable whether NUSAS could in any case ever have fulfilled any function in the latter capacity.

Whatever the historical reasons, NUSAS is one of the most outspoken critics of the policies of the Government from within South Africa. Whether the issue be the "Terrorism Act" or the implementation of Christian National Education, more often than not the leaders of NUSAS have found themselves out on a limb in their opposition to apartheid. As this account has shown, the English-language universities have become increasingly hesitant about directly opposing the Government. They have consistently tried to bargain with the Government, despite the fact that they have quite as consistently lost in the process. The present regime blatantly favours the Afrikaans universities, allocating large funds and advantages in their direction. Wherever possible, they have tried to stifle the English universities, but the administrations refuse to see this, succumbing again and again to Government pressure, particularly with respect to the control of students. NUSAS students know this and feel themselves caught between an oppressive Government on the one hand and weak-kneed university administrations on the other. Nevertheless NUSAS has held to its principles. One can only expect that it will continue to be a prime target of Government attack as long as it continues to stand for an open society.

III. AFRICAN "UNIVERSITIES" AND THE UNIVERSITY CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT

A survey of student activity in South Africa would be incomplete without at least mentioning the protest of students at the African "university colleges," even though it is somewhat outside the organisations being reviewed. NUSAS and the University Christian Movement are banned from the African campuses. However, African students are related to both organisations.

The Fort Hare Situation

In 1968, Fort Hare University College was the scene of a major confrontation between African students and their administration. A somewhat detailed account of the action at Fort Hare illustrates well the situation of the African student in South Africa.

In order to understand the Fort Hare situation, it is important to know that the students at the college had refused to appoint an SRC for a number of years. The reason for this

was that student leaders appointed to the SRC had unfailingly been acted against by the university authorities, who had often expelled or refused to re-admit duly-elected student leaders without giving reasons, and by the police who had interrogated such students.

In the absence of an SRC, the only means of communication between the students and the authorities had been through elected deputations. There had been similar consequences for the members of deputations. On one occasion, a written guarantee from the authorities that no action would be taken against a deputation was not adhered to. Thus there was an understandable reluctance on the part of the students to appoint representatives for consultation.

On August 16, 1968, Professor de Wet was installed as the new Rector of Fort Hare and Blaar Coetzee, the Minister of Bantu Education, was the guest speaker. The vast majority of the students boycotted the ceremony. Following this, certain offensive remarks concerning Professor de Wet, Mr. Coetzee, Mr. Vorster and Dr. Verwoerd were painted on the walls of various university buildings. On Sunday, August 18, seventeen students received notices instructing them to meet with the Rector at 9.00 a.m. on Monday. It is not known how the seventeen names were selected. They were accused of being either directly or indirectly responsible for the painting on the walls, and when they denied all knowledge of who was responsible, they were told that they were known to be student leaders, and therefore must be implicated. They were warned that should there be any further student disturbances on the campus, they would be held responsible and sent down. Thus without having any administrative, disciplinary or legislative powers, they were made responsible for maintaining student order at the cost of their careers.

Subsequently, the Security Police were called in and most of the seventeen were taken to the charge-office for interrogation, and their rooms were searched. It was this action on the part of the Rector and the police against students whose guilt of any offence had not been established that led to reaction from the student body.

Two requests to hold a student body meeting to discuss the matter were refused by the Rector, and his approval to hold such a meeting on the evening of August 27 was given late that same afternoon. At this meeting a resolution outlining the student grievances and requesting the Rector to address the whole student body on the matter was passed. The students decided to gather the next day outside the administration buildings and to remain sitting until the Rector addressed them. The Rector left for Pretoria on university business early the next morning. In accordance with the resolution, the students did not attend lectures on August 8, but staged a quiet sit-in near the administration block. During the day, a notice was posted in the hostels saying that if the demonstrations were continued until Friday, the 30th, the College would be closed. This notice carried the authority of the Rector who was still in Pretoria. As Thursday was the first day of the short vacation, the students had not, in any case, intended to make any demonstration after Thursday noon. On Thursday, another notice appeared on the official notice boards stating that the University Christian Movement had been banned from the campus. This arbitrary and authoritarian action intensified the resentment of the students. Thursday noon, the College closed for the vacation during which the Rector returned.

On September 4, the eve of the new term, the chaplains of the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational students approached certain members of staff and asked them to request the Rector to meet a deputation of students.

On Thursday the 5th, the students recommenced their sit-in. During the morning there were two communications from the Rector. In the first, the students were warned that if they did not return to lectures by noon, further action would be taken. In the second, they were informed that they had until 4.00 p.m. to send a deputation of students to meet the Rector. The chaplains tried to persuade the students to meet the Rector, but they refused fearing that members of any such deputation would be victimised. They would not accept any assurances that this would not be so, saying that such assurances had been given before and could not be trusted. Finally, the students decided to appoint two members from each house committee to present a written statement to the Rector, outlining the student grievances and again asking the Rector to meet the student body. The Rector merely maintained his decision that a deputation must meet him by 4.00.

On Friday, the sit-in continued. During the morning, the Rector communicated the following statement to the students:

> "Seeing that the students of the University College of Fort Hare have contravened regulations by staying away from lectures for three days and have persevered in doing this even after their attention was drawn to the contravention, and seeing that students have not availed themselves of the normal channels that existed, and will always exist, and have turned down the invitation of making known their problems through a deputation, I feel myself compelled, after a full and serious discussion with the Advisory Council, to restore normal conditions by taking the following steps: Students who are desirous of continuing their work for the year and who undertake to submit to the discipline of the college, must in the course of the morning cease their demonstration, and must indicate their intention of doing so by signing the lists which will be available for this purpose at their respective hostels before noon today.
>
> "The admission of students who have not ceased their participation in the sit-down strike or any other form of demonstration, and who have not signed the mentioned list at their respective hostels before twelve noon, will be cancelled forthwith, and such students will have to leave the hostels and the campus of the University College before 4.30 p.m. in the vehicles which will be available for the purpose.
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> "Students who have signed the undertaking at their respective hostels and who at any stage during the rest of this year stay away from lectures without the permission of the warden or the head of the relevant department shall be considered to have broken the agreement and shall be subjected to the same measures as are mentioned above."

After the appearance of this notice, the students appointed a deputation of five students which then attempted to meet the Rector. Permission for such a meeting was twice refused, on the first occasion because the Rector was busy and on the second occasion because the deadline for the delegation had already expired. After the failure of the deputation, the students signed the lists signifying their readiness to continue their lectures and to abide by the College regulations, but stated that they would continue to sit-in until the Rector agreed to meet their request to address them.

When the sit-in reconvened after lunch, the following statement was communicated to them:

> "All students still in front of the administration block must please note that they have been suspended as students of this University and are contravening regulations by their presence there. This is a final warning, and if students are still there at 3.00 p.m., steps will be taken against them."

At 3.00 p.m. over 300 students were still gathered in front of the administration block. At 3.05, large numbers of police, who had been in Alice from mid-morning, arrived at Fort Hare. At least ten police vans and an estimated thirty policemen arrived. The vans were used to block entrances and roads. The police, with six dogs and equipped with tear gas bombs and gas masks, surrounded the demonstrating students. The students were then addressed by the commandant who stated that they were under arrest for trespassing, and that they had only two options open to them, either to be imprisoned in the local police cells, or to pack their belongings and return to their homes under "protective police custody." They were advised that the matter would be referred to the Attorney-General for his decision on further action. None of the students was formally charged, but police, seated at tables, took the names of all the students and their home addresses. They were then taken under police escort to their various residences to pack their belongings. They were not permitted to go into town to withdraw any money for the journey, nor were they allowed to collect articles of clothing from the laundries.

Under frightening circumstances, which some students felt could easily have led to panic and drastic police reprisals - especially with the dogs present - the students remained calm and orderly, and at no stage resisted the police. They sang "*Nkosi Sikelele Afrika*" and "We Shall Overcome" before moving off to their residences.

Some students, who had not been in the sit-in at 3.00 p.m., saw the police action, joined in with their fellow students and accepted suspension and removal. The students never really believed that the Rector would take such drastic action against them for their simple request and orderly demonstration.

By 7.00 p.m., all the suspended students had been put onto the railway buses provided for the purpose and sent to Amabele junction and Cookhouse station to await trains to take them home. Students who did not have tickets for the journey were not given tickets, and they were not given an opportunity to make arrangements to get from

the terminus to their respective homes. They were provided with neither food nor money for the journey, and some had to wait at the stations for a considerable length of time before being able to get connections or seats on the available trains. Attempts were made by individuals to contact the students at the two railway junctions to provide them with food and money. However, large numbers of police were present at both stations. At Cookhouse, the police threatened with arrest those who attempted to contact the students, took the names of individuals and prevented any communication with the students. At Amabele, there was no police interference and it was possible to talk to some of the students and to give them some money.

Shortly thereafter, the authorities at Fort Hare communicated with the suspended students, indicating that they could be readmitted if they agreed to sign admissions of guilt. All but twenty students were readmitted. A short while later, unprovoked by students or demonstrations, police raided the campus. The Rector refused to intervene on behalf of the students, saying that it was a police matter that did not concern him. Seven students were interrogated and beaten by the police. The police later refused to say whether the arrested students had been moved to another location, and the Chief of Security, Brigadier Venter, said that it is not policy to disclose the whereabouts of persons arrested, no matter what the reason for their arrest.

As could be expected, students at the English universities demonstrated in support of the Fort Hare students. The role of NUSAS in such a situation is indirect, as it has been prohibited on the non-white campuses. There was, however, a new movement of students in South Africa that was more directly involved in that members of the movement were among those suspended from Fort Hare, and the movement itself was banned from Fort Hare in the midst of the trouble. That was the University Christian Movement.

The University Christian Movement

The University Christian Movement (UCM) was founded on convictions which directly contradict the policies of the Nationalist Government. However, the UCM did not come into being to oppose the Government. It came into being because of the belief on the part of its founders that there was a crucial need in South Africa for a new student Christian movement. The factors which characterise the UCM are these: it is a university movement, not a student movement, which is to say that the total academic community, faculty and students, participate. Secondly, the UCM is an interdenominational movement, being the expression of the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches at the university. Finally, the UCM insists that it is open to all Christians and that despite the segregated nature of South African universities, members of all races must join in the same movement.[82]

The inauguration of the UCM took place in Grahamstown in July 1967. Attended by

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82 Cook, Calvin, "From Breakwater to Open Sea", *Pro Veritate*, Vol. VI, No. 5, September 15, 1967, p. 10

students, faculty and chaplains from all of the English and non-white universities and colleges, the movement was clearly interracial from the very beginning. The discussion that led to the following motion was perhaps the critical discussion of that first conference. The motion captures the mood of the meeting:

> "That we, members of the UCM, as Christians, and citizens of our various countries,[83]
>
> (1) Having discussed the problems such as:
>
> -the nature of separate educational facilities;
> -the banning without trial of many of our fellowmen;
> -the vilification, in the press and on radio, of friends and foes;
> -administrative action taken against ministers, priests and members of the Church;
> -war and violence in many parts of the world,
>
> (2) Confess:
>
> -our share and hence our guilt in the creation of societies based on acts of violence and injustice;
> -our lack of concern for the suffering of our fellowmen;
> -our lack of information due to our lack of concern;
> -our shame at our lack of acceptance of our guilt,
>
> (3) Wish to:
>
> -commit ourselves to self-examination and study,
> -commit ourselves in humility and obedience to God to bring about a more equitable and just society, in accordance with the obligations imposed on us as Christians and the opportunities, resources and liberty given to us and all men by the Gospel of Christ."[84]

Following this meeting, there was very cautious hope for the growth of the UCM. No one could be sure if it would be able to survive and live out its stated commitments. However, the second conference, held at Stutterheim in July, 1968, strengthened the hopes for the UCM. At this conference workshops were held on a number of topics, the most popular one being, "The Church and Social Change." One question emerged in all the groups which demanded attention: What does the Church do, what do individual Christians do, to change an intolerable social situation? There was not unanimity in the discussion. Some saw only violence in the future. Others were still hopeful that non-

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83 From the beginning, the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland was represented in the UCM.

84 Report of the Grahamstown Conference, July 1967, Inauguration of the UCM, Motion 18/67

violent change was possible. But this is where the discussion focussed.[85]

Perhaps the crucial factor in this conference was the presence of a majority of non-whites. Thus, for a few short days, one could experience the true nature of South Africa, a nation with a large majority of non-whites, and escape the unreal world created by white domination in all areas of life.

The annual conference has continued to be of great importance to the UCM. In addition to this large meeting, effort is going into "formation schools" or leadership training, into work camps, and into attempts to continue contact with UCM members after they leave university. Predictably, the more the UCM grows and acts, the more attention it receives from the State. It has experienced many of the same problems that have plagued NUSAS. There is the inability to find meeting places for multi-racial gatherings. There is police intimidation, many members being visited by the Special Branch. In August, 1968, Prime Minister Vorster announced that he was going to investigate the UCM. He said, "It will not be my fault if steps are taken against this movement when I am finished."[86] The first President of the UCM has had his passport confiscated, and two issues of *One for the Road*, the magazine of the organisation, have been banned.

Perhaps the most serious action against the UCM has been its being banned from all the African "tribal colleges." In spite of this, Africans continue to be active; the present President is an African. The UCM does have the backing of the major churches in South Africa with, of course, the exception of the Dutch Reformed Churches. As Father Colin Collins, General Secretary, has stated, "Any attempts to intimidate or destroy the UCM are direct attacks against those churches."[87] Nevertheless, the UCM must function within the South African State. As the first President of the UCM, Basil Moore, has stated, the Government of South Africa has "assumed authoritarian powers far in excess of what one usually expects in a country that likes to call itself a democracy. Under the shadow of this State authority we all live in a perpetual uncertainty, especially if we happen to hold views which are contrary to those of the governing powers".[88]

He further outlined UCH's position:

> "UCM is engaged in a life and death struggle between freedom and authority and, I hope, our churches are engaged with us... Many of us have been afraid to meet because we fear that there is legislation against what we are doing - and

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85 Robertson, R. J. D. "UCM in Action", *South African Outlook*, October 1968, Vol. 98, No. 1169, p. 161

86 *The Star*, Johannesburg, September 7, 1968

87 *The Star*, Johannesburg, September 7, 1968

88 Moore, Basil, "Whither UCM?" *South African Outlook*, October 1967, Vol. 97, No. 1157, p. 153

because we know that even if it is not illegal, we can be acted against in terms of very sweeping powers - the powers to ban, to imprison without trial, to remove passports and to dismiss from institutions of higher learning."[89]

The UCM is highly aware of the tensions with which it must live. The UCM "must not assume martyrdom for martyrdom's sake and so commit suicide by foolish and petty acts of defiance... At the same time (the UCM) dare not sell its liberty by meekly bowing before the big-guns of authority. This liberty becomes a farce if members are only prepared to talk about it behind locked doors."[90]

The present President of the UCM, Chris Mokoditoa, states with great clarity the situation of the UCM and what can be expected in the future:

"The question remains whether this year will see further and more consequential student activities. And this question becomes, among white students, a question about the depth of commitment to radical change in South Africa. What change do they envisage? Would they be prepared to accept a black Prime Minister in a truly democratic South Africa? So often in the past, the white students have shown concern only for things in the academic world - the Mafeje issue, for example, was more academic than social. Where did these genuine seekers after change challenge the social evils publicly in a comparable way?

"Among non-white students the question becomes whether the authoritarian, repressive measures of governing bodies and fear of student informers will force them into their shells. It is an uncomfortable fact that the intensity of oppressive response varies directly in proportion to the darkness of the skin pigmentation of the protester. This places a further inhibiting factor on non-white protest, for protest can and does jeopardise careers and even freedom. Can we expect noble suicide to continue among non-white students? And suicide it must be, until the student lead is backed by open, mass support. And that is unlikely to be forthcoming while non-white, like white, student protest focuses publicly on what are essentially academic and university administration affairs.

"So what we can expect is continued, sporadic and not very consequential protest (in terms of social change) to continue among students. We have to wait for the man with the message and the means to mobilise the resources for change into effective action. Until then man cannot live on bread alone, nor can students live on visions stagnating in inactivity. For their own sanity they must do something, even though they have no illusions of grandeur about what they do."[91]

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89 Report of the President to the University Christian Movement of Southern Africa, 1967-68

90 Moore, *op. cit.* p. 154

91 Mokoditoa, Chris, editorial, *One for the Road*, March 1970

The University College of the North

It is appropriate to mention in closing the action of 400 students at the University College of the North in May, 1969. This college is heavily infiltrated with informers and, in the past, political discussion of any kind was understood to be extremely dangerous. Thus it was a surprise to many that these students had the courage to march on the Rector's office to protest the refusal to allow them to affiliate with NUSAS or UCM. This demonstration clearly gave the lie to all those who still claim that the Africans are satisfied, even happy, with the tribal colleges.[92]

CONCLUSION

The student organisations in South Africa are a testimony to two major forces in the Republic of South Africa. One is the authoritarian nature of the State, a State that cannot endure even non-violent protest on behalf of the fundamental freedoms of human life as embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Christian faith. The State is prepared to harass, imprison, and otherwise silence any opposition. Thus one can only fear for those courageous individuals and movements which have continued to live in opposition to the State. The other reality illustrated by South African student movements is that in spite of intimidation and attack, NUSAS has not been destroyed and the UCM has been born. There is a durability to those few within South Africa who still fight for justice and freedom. Belief in equal rights for all, faith that all men are brothers, persists despite the continued efforts to destroy both the belief and the faith. This paradoxical reality is both a source of fear and a source of hope for the future of South Africa and indeed for all mankind.

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92 *Rand Daily Mail*, May 8, 1969

WOMEN IN THE APARTHEID SOCIETY[93]

by

Fatima Meer

INTRODUCTION

No significant change has occurred in South Africa in the last decade. Apartheid and racism continue their tyranny and the South African society is as far away from equality, peace and development as it was in 1975. In a society where the fundamental criterion for discrimination is race, it is unreal to consider the position of the one sex in isolation of the other. The enjoyment of the privileges of apartheid by white women differs only marginally from that of white men: likewise, while black women suffer more than black men from the violations of their rights, the violations are gross in respect to both. It is this reality that accounts for the very peripheral impact of feminism on South Africa.

The International Year of Women opened in South Africa with new introspection on the part of black and white women in their relations with each other and in their commitment to society. Despite the fact that black politics of the time was heavily underlined by black consciousness, black and white women met and discussed prospects of working together on some community projects. In Natal, I.W.Y.N. came into existence; other similar groups emerged in other parts of the country. But the honeymoon was short-lived. The children of Soweto, straining against inferior education set a new pace, and black women were drawn into the tragedy that pursued their children. White women could not empathise with black women and most were openly hostile, blaming the violence that erupted on the children.

In 1976, the police shot and killed schoolchildren, arrested and imprisoned hundreds on allegations of terrorism, many in solitary confinement. The officials of the Black Women's Federation were imprisoned without trial and the Federation itself was banned. State repression against the people's legitimate demands for a greater share in the country's resources continued unabated. Lamtonville in Durban has been in a ferment of unrest for the last two years due to high rentals. In the Transvaal, the protests of township residents against high rents, including electricity and transport costs and rising prices in basic commodities resulted in police shootings and 31 deaths during August 1984. The first legal strike by African mineworkers on the gold reef was similarly repressed with police fire leaving six dead. Mass funerals follow such killings, the Government sees them as further threats, police move in, there are the inevitable clashes, more deaths, more funerals... the cycle of violence continues. The press, already warned against "emotional" reporting, is blocked out altogether when temporary proclamations bar all whites from entering affected townships.

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[93] From "Notes and Documents", No. 4/85, April 1985

In August 1984 the Coloured and the Indian population were inflicted with a constitution they rejected. Faced with a poll so low as to question the legitimacy of the new tricameral parliament the Government was bent on inflicting on the people, it unleashed a new spate of detentions without trial. Six of the accused succeeded in avoiding arrest, sought refuge in the British Consulate in Durban and focussed world attention on the lack of freedom in South Africa.

In South Africa, the United Nations Decade for Women has in fact been a decade of increasing repression, increasing unemployment and increasing underdevelopment, with 13 per cent of South Africa's landmass allotted to the African people and carved into homelands. Land allotment per rural family has declined in size, livestock has diminished, and subsistence from the land has almost disappeared. This affected women directly, for they remained the last of the rural peasants and despite rural bankruptcy today, they are mainly responsible for the maintenance of the unemployable, returned to the homelands.

"REFORM"

There has been no shrinking in the gap between black and white in wages, education, or in social and welfare services. Minor reforms, such as extending home ownership to Africans on 99-year leases, licensing some hotels and theatres to admit all races, or quietening down on arrests of racially mixed couples for immorality, are quite inconsequential. They represent a response to the concerns of the white public opinion in Europe and in the Americas, as does in part the new tricameral constitution which was rejected by over 80 per cent of Indians and Coloureds who qualified for communal votes.

Sport in South Africa continues to be segregated and unequal; players may not share common accommodations. There were two multiracial golf clubs in the country up to 1983 - now there is only one. Ninety-nine per cent of South Africa's swimming pools are reserved for whites only. While white children have all the sporting amenities they could possibly desire, black children have token facilities. In 1984, 49,000 African pupils in Port Elizabeth had only seven rugby fields and one cricket ground; 26,020 white pupils had 84 rugby fields, 35 hockey fields and 176 tennis courts. The government expenditure on sport for white children is 240 times higher than that for black. Beaches, hospitals and transport continue to be segregated.

Some changes have occurred in the statutory position of women in respect to marriage and divorce laws, but these do not extend to African women. Rape laws and maintenance claims against unmarried fathers continue to be skewed in favour of men and the vast majority of women avoid laying charges rather than suffer the humiliation of cross-examination and insinuations of sexual promiscuity. Although the last decade has been marked by a growing consciousness of the flagrant violations of industrial health in South African factories, no reforms have been effected.

Labour

The law legalising African trade unions was an important event. It has helped substantially in the organisation of labour. Whereas there were no registered integrated black (African, Coloured and Indian) or non-racial trade unions up to 1979, in 1982 there were 40. Membership of registered unions rose from 637,480 in 1972 to 1,226,454 in 1982. Total union membership, registered and unregistered, was 1,500,000, representing 15 per cent of the economically active population. However, agricultural and domestic workers, mainly women, still remain outside the fold of registration. In recent years, the Industrial Court has made judgements against unfair labour practices. These decisions have been beneficial to workers. But the State clearly protects employers against workers, whites against blacks, as police handling of even legal strikes demonstrates.

South Africa has experienced considerable economic growth since 1975, and foreign investments, particularly by firms from the United Kingdom, United States and the Federal Republic of Germany have increased, but so has unemployment and surplus labour.

The growth of the labour surplus, which began during the 1960s and 1970s steadily continues. Some economists argue that this surplus has in fact been fostered by economic growth. In particular youth and women who wait for jobs have been affected. Unemployment is likewise on the incline. It doubled between 1970 and 1977; economists estimate that at present between 10 and 22 per cent of the work force is unemployed and project that the unemployment will rise to between 19 and 26 per cent in the next decade. The Government responds to the unemployment by increasing the control over the movement of workers, particularly women workers, and by more stringent attempts to block urbanisation. The rate of African urbanisation in South Africa is calculated to be 60 per cent slower than in other developing countries. Arrests due to pass laws violations increased by 28.3 per cent between 1981 and 1982 and fines paid by Africans so arrested increased by 45 per cent. A study of the activities of one court alone - Langa Commissioner's Court - revealed that only in 1982 it had passed sentences totalling R250,000 in fines or 684 years in imprisonment on Africans (mainly women) who had attempted to live and work together with their spouses in the Cape peninsula.

Having substantially destroyed African family life, the State has proceeded to define it out of the South African system, legally and socially: that is the import of hardening influx control, increasing shortage of township homes, and persistent raids and arrests of those who strive to lead a family life in improvised shack settlements outside the homelands.

Foreign investors, faced with a need to square within their own consciences, argue that they are a force for change and find support for this from liberal economists. Records show, however, that racism, State oppression and economic deterioration in the reserves have coincided with their entry into the South African market. The post World War II South African infrastructure which boosted the country's manufacturing industry was substantially financed by the United Kingdom and the West. It has bloated Afrikanerdom and apartheid and brought practically no improvement in the conditions of workers who

continue to be exploited miserably whether working in foreign or in local firms. Reform measures, as expressed by special codes, such as the American "Sullivan Principles," bring insignificant amelioration precisely because they touch an insignificant sector of the population. Foreign companies are usually capital-intensive, and have the effect of increasing unemployment among the unskilled and semi-skilled ranks. The educational structure is pointedly geared to keep Africans under-educated: almost half of the African children leave school within the first three years. In 1983, there were only 72,168 African matriculants (excluding Transkei) and only 9.8 per cent attained university entrance passes. White matriculants in the same year totalled 56,000 and well over half qualified for university entrance.

Health

Motherhood, often without adequate financial and emotional support, continues to be a source of great pain for most South African mothers. The country as a whole has one of the largest infant mortality rates in the world, 90 per 1,000 live births.

Reported cases of some diseases[94]

	1977	*1978*
Cholera	0	4,967
Trachoma	127	1,109
Typhoid	2,624	3,913
Tuberculosis	45,298	51,828

Regulations against abortions have been tightened. In 1982, a total of 454 legal abortions were allowed, 324 for white women. As against this, social welfare workers estimated at least 75,000 illegal abortions performed on black (African, Indian and Coloured) women. The South African Medical Research Council reported 33,421 incomplete and septic miscarriages in the same year.

Cholera, hypertension and mental illness are on the incline, being particularly concentrated among the African people, and being highest in the homelands. It is estimated that two and four per cent of the population of Ciskei and the Transkei respectively have tuberculosis.

Medical personnel and services are particularly inadequate. There is one doctor for every 330 whites, 730 Indians, 1,200 Coloureds and 12,000 Africans. Moreover, there is one nurse for every 14 whites, 549 Coloured, 707 Africans and 745 Indians.

Only 5 per cent of the doctors are practising in rural areas where the incidence of diseases is ten times higher than in urban areas. A total of 27,205 hospital beds in urban areas are available to whites (18 per cent of the population), as against 43,935 for

[94] The source of these statistics on health is the South African Department of Health and Welfare

Africans, Indians and Coloureds. Average bed occupancy rate for whites is 59 per cent, while for Africans it ranged between 90 and 100 per cent. King Edward Hospital in Durban with 2,000 beds often has 2,600 patients.

Health facilities break down completely with forced removals and forced resettlement. A four-year-old camp in the Orange Free State with an estimated population of 200,000 to 300,000 had six doctors, one dentist, 38 country health workers, and three health centres.

Malnutrition and related diseases are on the incline. The Bureau of Economic Research in Stellenbosch estimated in 1983 that 2.9 million children in the country were malnourished. Other agencies reported dramatic increase in pellagra, and a 200 to 300 per cent increase in kwashiorkor among rural families in the Transvaal.

In relation to national income, South Africa continues to have one of the highest infant mortality rates in the world. The rate for whites is 13 per 1,000 live births; for Africans it is 80 per 1,000 live births overall, and as high as 240 per 1,000 live births in some homelands.

Welfare

Discrimination in welfare grants and services remains unchanged, and in some areas State subsidies and grants to African institutions have actually declined. Not only are blacks paid less per person than whites, but the number of persons covered in proportion to the total population is also very much lower. The fact that welfare is administered by 24 uncoordinated regional and racial boards aggravates discrimination. The extent of such discrimination is reflected in the following comparisons for 1982-1983:

	Whites	*Africans*
Monthly per capita state grants for foster homes	R106	R36
Number of children covered	40,897	17,164[95]
Subsidies to day care centres per day, per child (withdrawn in 1983)	80c	7.5c
Number of centres	45	4[96]
Maintenance grants per month	R179	R60
Registered places of care	869	195
State pensions per annum, per person	R1,467	R429

Non-governmental Organisations

[95] Outside "homelands"
[96] Outside homelands

The Government is very cautious about non-governmental organisations and the Special Branch of the police keeps a close eye on them. There is constant suspicion that they are fronts for "subversive" activity. Organisations have to be registered under the Welfare Act to canvass for public funds. Eighteen black consciousness organisations, many of them engaged in valuable community work, were banned in 1977 and their assets, estimated at approximately R l million were confiscated by the Government. This, however, has not deterred voluntary work and there has been no decline in interest and activity, both by blacks and whites.

It is against this background of repression, non-development, and in many areas almost planned underdevelopment, that one must view the position of South African women.

SOCIAL AND LEGAL STATUS

South Africa's women of all races take their positions within the framework of male domination in the family, in the polity, economy, and society in general. It is difficult to assess which of the component cultures, African, Indian or European, was the most repressive before the advent of industrialisation.

Coloured and white women share a common cultural system, which appears to be less repressive of women than the Indian and African ones. Coloured women, however, are not as liberated as white women are in their relations with men. The difference is largely due to the economic factor. White women attain a very much higher standard of education and are able to reach out to a far more varied and relaxed life. The "patriarch" plays his role in moderation and even if overbearing at times, compensates by his effective role as "provider" and "protector."

Coloured and African women appear generally to experience male domination without its compensating and complementary services; increasing numbers of Indian women are facing the same problem. Failing to find adequately paid jobs and therefore unable to fulfil the positive aspects of their patriarchal roles, they lean on the negative, aggressive part. Women often make equal cash contributions to the household and at times even greater than men, yet are all too often ignored when it comes to major issues.

Traditional African society accepted women as equal producers in the self-subsistent economy. Married women possessed land and livestock and controlled the products of their labour. Though subordinate to men, they were no more dependent on them than men were on women. The rights of both were in the final analysis entrenched in their undeniable claims to family and tribe.

Modern capitalist society, underpinned by materialism, defines rights in terms of accumulated property. The fact that women have poorer access to property than men places them at an immediate disadvantage. African women, the bottom of the pile, have the poorest reach in this respect, that reach being further attenuated by the law which places their property right in the custody of men.

South African law and/or tradition defines a woman as subordinate to a man. This definition reaches its penultimate excess in the 1891 Bantu Code which until a few years ago was operative throughout the Natal province. It has now been replaced by the KwaZulu code.

The black working class family, not having the intellectual reach to trace its problems to their roots outside of itself in society, often locates them within itself, and aggravates the physical ravage with the emotional. Women blame the men for depriving them of their "rightful" roles as mothers, and the men burdened with their role as breadwinners, and unable to win the whole loaf, blame their failure on "natural" bad luck and retreat into the bottle. The rate of alcoholism is very high among Coloured and African men.

Conflict of Law and Custom

South African law and custom founded on European principles substantially modified African and Indian definitions of the rights of women. While the general impression prevails that this has improved their status, the reality is far more complex.

The legal position of African women is finally made all that more complicated because they are positioned between the two systems, white and African, and it is left to the discretion of the "Bantu Court" to determine which will be applied in a particular instance.

Up to 1983, all marriages in South Africa, excluding customary unions, were in community of property, unless preceded by an ante-nuptial contract. This implied that whilst becoming joint owners of the estate, administration was vested in the husband and the wife's status was reduced to that of a minor. The new law accords equal status to the husband and wife but it does not apply to African women.

Islamic law has always protected a woman's right to property; she moreover retained her identity on marriage and kept her own name. In South Africa this is subsumed by State law. Muslim women who do not register their marriage, however, are subject to the local interpretation of the Islamic divorce procedure. It is the husband's prerogative to set aside a wife by pronouncing, "I divorce thee", three times. Women in such cases, as well as in the case of Hindu marriages that are not registered, may sue only for seduction and expenses incurred for the wedding.

The new law simplifies divorce, but it is still expensive. Since most women are not economically independent and rely on their husband's salaries, they are unable to institute and conduct the proceedings themselves. Moreover, divorce still continues to be regarded as a slur on the woman. Women are far more vulnerable to emotional and physical deprivation because of the socially cultivated dependence on men that exists in all South African cultures.

Women, particularly the poorer, under-educated and unskilled ones, are vulnerable to

a range of sexual exploitations, rape being the extreme. In cases of both paternity and rape claims, the law operates to protect the male, and women undergo humiliating cross-examinations in court and are often required to establish impossible evidence to succeed.

Polygamy is traditional in both Indian and African societies: South African law recognises only one legal marriage, and neither the second non-legal marriage nor the children of a non-legal marriage have any legal status. This creates severe problems for the women who have been taken as second wives when their husbands cannot cope with additional responsibilities and abandon them.

Unmarried African women are further pauperised through the high incidence of pregnancy. It is rare to find a teenager who has not borne a child: it is common for school girls to fall pregnant and to have their babies, and quite uncommon for the fathers to maintain them.

Interviews with 212 girls in a recent Durban study revealed that damages (not maintenance) was paid in only 14 per cent of the cases and 54 per cent of the fathers blankly refused to bear any responsibility.[97]

As a result, the girls often leave school and look for employment in order to raise their babies, having neither the training nor confidence for anything else. Some eventually marry and gain some level of stability and security, but just as many go through a series of short-lived affairs and as many children; most never recover from the debilitating effects of an early, unmarried motherhood.

Pregnancies of unmarried women were matters of abject disgrace in the traditional African society, imposing cleansing ceremonies on peer groups, and equal opprobrium on both partners. The close supervision of relations implied that there was little opportunity for fathers to escape their responsibilities. In the urban environment, however, African women have been deprived of their traditional protection.

All South African women are grossly disadvantaged by the prevailing law, but black women, and African women in particular, are the worst sufferers. It has become customary not to sue for maintenance. The State will make an order for the maintenance of the child if the mother can establish paternity, which is difficult under existing law: the State, however, can rarely compel the errant father to pay maintenance and looking for him is an ordeal imposed on the mother.

Subjugation of African Women

The perpetrators of apartheid have grasped in some insidious way that the foundation of their system finally rests on the subjugation of the African woman. Her isolation in the reserve where she becomes conditioned to bearing and raising children and caring for the

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[97] Craig, A.P. and Richter-Strydom, L. M. "Unplanned pregnancies among urban Zulu schoolgirls" in *South African Medical Journal,* Vol. 63, March 1983

aged and ill, abandoned by industry and forced back into the homeland by law, is imperative to the monopolistic accumulation of wealth and power in the white sector. The only differential in the South African economy that yields the high profits essential to attract capital, foreign and local, which in turn sustains apartheid, is the uninterrupted flow of cheap labour - South Africa's black gold, as one homeland leader puts it. That kind of labour is in the final analysis dependent on the continued subjugation of women, not only through law, but through the manipulation of traditional attitudes of sexual dominance and subservience.

Large numbers of African women in Natal continue to be subjected to the 1891 Bantu Code, which makes them perpetual minors and lifelong wards of men - their fathers, husbands and in the absence of these the closest surviving male relations, including sons. The women may not marry, continue in employment, defend nor bring any action in court without their authority. Their male guardians can claim their earnings and control their property. Upon marriage, the wife's assets automatically revert to her husband, but she does not acquire any right over his property. On his death, the family estate, including her contributions to it, automatically goes to the closest surviving male relative, and she becomes his ward.

African women throughout the country are more severely restricted from entering urban areas than African men are. Laws dating back to the 1930s made such entering dependent on the qualifications of their "guardians" - husbands. Wives of men who qualify for urban rights through ten years of continuous service with one employer or 15 years in one area, as well as their children under l6, may live in locations outside the homelands provided they have acceptable accommodation. Women never acquire these rights on their own and are forced to send their children to the homelands.

The result of such stringent controls over the urbanisation of women has meant that there has always been an imbalance in the male/female ratio in both urban and rural areas - women outstripping men in the reserves and men outstripping women in the towns. But the imbalance is declining due to the conjugation of economic and legislative factors. Whereas in 1936 the male/female ratio in urban areas was 3:1, in 1981 46 per cent of the total African male population as against 43 per cent of the female was residing outside the homelands. Increased pressure on the land, compounded by the "dumping" of labour tenants and so-called "squatters" who had lived for generations on white farms as labourers and part-time cultivators, has compounded that pressure. It is estimated that by 1981, 13 million people had been uprooted by the Nationalist Government in order to entrench racism.

In Natal, land holdings per family declined from 100 acres in 1846 to between 2 and 5 acres in 1980. Official estimates consider 3 to 8 hectares, depending on the availability of water, as the minimum requirement for subsistence. Two sample surveys conducted by the Institute for Black Research in 1973 and 1978 respectively in the KwaZulu area of Nqutu revealed that 25 per cent of the 150 families interviewed in 1973 had no land; that in 1977 the proportion of the landless had risen to 30 per cent (200 families interviewed).

Land holdings of those with land averaged seven acres in 1973 and five in 1978.[98]

While today rural survival is almost wholly dependent on the cash remitted by migrant workers from the cities, the surveys revealed that approximately 17 per cent of the sample families in 1973 received no cash remittance and those who did received R15 per month on average to support families averaging six members. In 1978, average cash remittance had increased to R30 per month, but the cost of living had also risen proportionately. Sustenance raised through gardening, sale of poultry, eggs and handicrafts had an average value of R2 per month. Interviews with 200 migrant workers living in single men's compounds established that after meeting their own subsistence needs in the cities, they could spare only 20 per cent of their earnings for families in the homelands.

African women must work and subsidise family incomes to save the family from starvation. Primarily on white farms, they find work as agricultural labourers or as domestics: 18 per cent and 50 per cent respectively of all gainfully employed African women in 1982 had that kind of employment.

WAGE LABOUR IN SOUTH AFRICA

Until the discovery of mineral wealth in the last century most South Africans, white or black, tribalised or Christianised, pursued a self-subsistent agricultural economy, the blacks depending on their own labour, the whites on highly exploited slave labour, and the labour of the tribes they conquered and displaced from the land. Wages were rare: the conquered tribespeople invariably worked as family units for white farmers in return for the privilege of being allowed to continue living in their ancestral kraals.

With the development of mining, wage labour became prevalent. Rapid industrialisation during the Second World War resulted in rapid "urbanisation" of the African people in response to the demand for cheap unskilled labour. The 1960s saw a reversal of this process with mechanisation and concentration of monopoly capital. The demand for unskilled and semi-skilled labour declined and unemployment increased.[99] The young job seekers entering the labour market for the first time and women were the chief casualties, predominating in the "surplus" population redundant to the organised economy.

Black Women in Wage Labour

African, Indian and Coloured women worked as farm hands and domestics until the Second World War. Indian women were imported as indentured field labourers, and paid 5 shillings a month, half the wage paid to indentured men. Non-slave African women were often paid in kind alone; they were given rations and the right to live on farms.

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[98] Meer and Mlaba, *Apartheid, our Picture*, Institute for Black Research, 1982

[99] The unemployment increased from 1.25 million in 1960 to 2.25 million in 1977.

The trend has been for both men and women of all races to move away from agricultural and domestic work to production, and then to commercial and professional work. Today whites predominate in the latter two areas as well as in managerial and technical jobs, while African men, Indians and Coloureds prevail in production. Africans, and especially African women, have been the least successful in escaping the stranglehold of menial and poorly paid jobs under conditions of unprotected employment. Their employment is dependent on other races not being available for the work at the offered wage rate.

According to official estimates, South Africa's population was approximately 25 million in 1980, of which just under half (12 and a quarter million) were women. Of those, 66.6 per cent were African, 18.3 per cent were white, 10.7 per cent were Coloured and 3.3 per cent were Indian.

Whites had the highest rate of gainful employment: 56 per cent of all white men and 27.8 per cent of all white women were gainfully employed. Employment ratios for Indian and Coloured men were slightly higher (46.5 and 44 per cent respectively) than for African men (43.5 per cent). Indian women had the lowest employment rate amounting to 15.9 per cent, as against 21.2 and 26.8 per cent respectively for African and Coloured women.

Whites do not only have the lowest dependency rate but they also have substantially higher income, both being the functions of apartheid which constitutes the white population into a clearly observable privileged class.

The 1981 Manpower Survey[100] records a total of 1,331,052 women employed in industry. Almost half, 47.3 per cent, were white women; 30,7 per cent were African, 17 per cent were Coloured and approximately 9 per cent were Indian. The highest concentration of black women was in clothing industry, followed by textile and footwear industry; 78 per cent of the labour force working in the clothing industry, 43 per cent in textile industry and 41 per cent in the footwear industry was made up of black women.

In 1921, 98.6 per cent of African, 67.9 per cent of Indian and 90.4 per cent of Coloured women in gainful employment worked in agriculture and domestic service, by far the greater proportion of African and Indian women being in agriculture (88.4 and 41 per cent respectively). By contrast, 23.1 per cent of white women worked in these categories. Agriculture has in fact never involved Coloured and white women substantially. In 1921, 5.5 per cent of Coloured and 4.8 per cent of white women worked in agriculture. In 1980, the proportion of gainfully employed African women in agriculture and service had declined to 57.2 per cent but these lowliest and practically unprotected fields of employment still accounted for over half of the employed African women. By contrast, only 7.8 per cent of Indian and 6.2 per cent of white women were recorded to be working in these categories.

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[100] *Manpower Survey*, No. 14-24-04-81

In 1980, production engaged only 10.7 per cent of the employed African women, as against about 40 per cent of the Indian and 27 per cent of the Coloured women. The proportion of white women in production had declined to 2.8 per cent, white women being concentrated in the sales and clerical sector (65.4 per cent) and in professional categories (20.8 per cent). Indian women participated in high proportion in the sales and clerical sector, both in 1921 and 1980 (41 and 45 per cent respectively), primarily because of the relatively high presence of small, family run shops among them.

Profile of Black Women in Industry - Durban 1983

The Institute of Black Research interviewed 988 women in industrial employment in the Durban-Pinetown region in 1983.[101] The following is a summary of some major findings.

Seventy-four per cent of the women were in their working prime, between 21 and 44 years of age. Fifty-four per cent had a lower secondary school education, standard 6-8. They lived in the main in council housing where the right to receive visitors, take in lodgers and have married sons live with parents was formally controlled.

Their day began long before sunrise with household chores, and continued well into late night with cooking of suppers, washing of dishes and minding of children. They put in an average of 8 to 10 hours in the factory, and spent an average of five hours travelling to and from work.

Their job routine was dull and exhausting, they complained of headaches and backaches and refusal on the part of management to allow them time off to see a doctor. Less than half were covered by a medical aid scheme, and only half by any pension fund. They experienced little job satisfaction or security, many were pressurised to produce stipulated rates, forbidden to talk while working, and watched for time while going to the toilet. Maternity leave was inadequate, and sick leave depended on too many formalities requiring proof.

Promotions were few and far between, firing and retrenchment a constant anxiety. Few were able to remain in continuous employment, and practically all married women had interrupted their careers to take time off to have babies and care for them.

Yet many preferred working to staying at home, particularly the single women, since the alternative - household drudgery and family control over their movement - was worse.

Their work relations were generally good. Most believed that their working had not changed their relations within their family and in the neighbourhood. They were most worried about their children who remained without care, and complained about

[101] Included in the survey were 452 African, 428 Indian and 108 Coloured women.

demanding husbands. Few had access to crèches, most were obliged to depend on relations, older children and neighbours to keep an eye on their children, and most returned home to cook dinners for exacting husbands.

Poor family income and overbearing husbands whose hostility was often aggravated by drink, were their main problems. A fair number complained of torment by other men, thugs and rapists, and sexual harassment.

They had little free time and when they did, they usually used it in family activities. A minority belonged to trade unions, but even these had little understanding of their organisation and functioning. They did not attend workers` meetings and believed that management alone could improve working conditions and wages. They had little time or inclination for community activities, though most agreed that women could unite to constitute a power for reform.

They identified a whole range of problems in the work situation, ranging from low wages to too much control and work overload, yet they saw little possibility of redress. Only 26 per cent thought that workers should exert pressure for improved conditions, 33 per cent thought management could be prevailed upon to institute reforms; the majority thought nothing could be done. Yet most of them took their problems to shop stewards rather than to the management.

Most had made friends at work and about half of the friendships extended beyond the workplace. Yet sex and race remained an inhibiting factor. Few friends were made across the sex lines; and while most Indian and Coloured workers were positive about relations across race lines, almost 70 per cent of the African women were inhibited about contact between themselves and Indian and Coloured women.

South Africa’s black women in wage labour are driven into wage labour by the poverty of their families. Their contribution to the family income makes the difference between starvation and subsistence. Young girls leave school early, partly because their parents can no longer afford to keep them there, but primarily because the family desperately needs the money they can earn, or help to earn while their mothers work and they take care of the house and younger children.

The State’s educational policy has been deliberately manipulated to ensure a large supply of unskilled and semi-skilled workers, much larger than required by industry at any particular point. This surplus helps to keep down the price of black labour and to ensure against major industrial dislocation through labour unrest. At the same time, it maintains a chronic state of unemployment, the real rate being much larger than the official recorded one since the latter excludes the vast numbers of youth and women in the reserves prevented from seeking employment.

Education is far from being free and compulsory for the mass of black South Africans. African parents have to provide the first half of school buildings themselves and employ their own teachers to some extent. Up to 1960, 80 per cent of Indian schools were

community schools. The principle of free and compulsory education has only recently extended to Indians and Coloureds, and its application with regard to Africans is very much in its infancy. Black parents, particularly African, are consequently forced to withdraw their children early from school. Over 40 per cent leave by the time they have reached the second standard, in an illiterate or semi-literate state. The level of education attained by girls is even lower than that attained by boys.

Black women consequently enter the labour market even less educated than black men. Moreover, taught to accept the concept of subordination to men, they appear on the market with greater diffidence and lower self-evaluation. They are thus even more exploitable than black men. South Africa's low wage structure persists not only because labour is black, but because it is underpinned by what black women will tolerate.

If the family implanted equivalent expectations in children of both sexes, black women would not constitute an alternate and even cheaper supply of labour. Moreover, this attitude has for a consequence an even more depressing effect on the overall price of wage labour. But the working class black family is trapped in a vicious circle; because it is trapped in poverty, it cannot afford to educate its children, still less its female children, and so it continues to perpetuate sexual inequalities even though these react against its economic interest.

Employers will pay the minimum that labour will bear. Labour cannot be exploited beyond the point of subsistence because that would result in the elimination of labour itself. But women are prepared to accept lower wages because they are nurtured in the family to see themselves as inferior to men. Generally speaking, they cannot see their labour as supporting their families, only subsidising them. They enter the world of men, but they do not by that fact become "men". Their admission into the labour market is a result of the capital's need for an even cheaper and more exploitable labour force than the one they already have access to.

In addition to their new vocations in the labour market, women remain responsible for family and child care. The entire weight of tradition, nurtured in the family, ensures that they do so.

Men and women do not constitute a single class. Both biology and tradition conspire against this. The women's reproductive, child-caring and housekeeping functions, whilst fundamental to the perpetuation of family and society, are devalued in a money economy. In the traditional African society women were actively involved in production; their economic role was substantial and at least equivalent to that of the men. They had access to land, owned livestock, and had control over their produce, as well as of that which the men brought in from the hunt. The ruin of the tribal economy reduced women to consumers dependent on their men's cash wages; it made them valueless, since value in a money economy is derived from the cash earned. Incongruously, the very work deemed valueless when performed at home, gains value when performed outside of the home because of the wage earned.

Whatever the value placed on "woman's work" in African society, industrial society deems it inferior and transfers this concept to the work place, so that even when women do the same work as men, and with equal competence, it is considered inferior because they do it, and they are accordingly paid less. When such discrimination is challenged, the rationalisation offered is that women do not have the same need for money, since they are not responsible for the maintenance of the family. The tragedy is that women themselves internalise and perpetuate these values. A third of the black women working in factories believed that men should be paid higher wages; 70 per cent of the 988 women interviewed in the Institute of Black Research survey stated that unemployment was worse for men; 56 per cent felt that men and women should not do the same work and felt they should not get the same pay. Sixty-nine per cent said men needed jobs more than women.

The tyranny of the traditional patriarchy is compounded by that of the Western, industrial, capitalist. Many black women continue to experience gainful employment as "unnatural", and to suffer feelings of guilt for "deserting" the home. They hand over their wages to their husbands or elders as if they had no right to them, as if atoning for the desertion.

WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS AND ORGANISED WOMEN

Women are not organised along sexual lines in South Africa. Feminism is almost entirely absent from the social fabric, and this is primarily due to the race factor. White women share with white men in the exploitation of blacks. The wages and incomes brought in by their men and the social security provided by the State afford them comfortable to affluent lives. While sexual discrimination exists, it is offset by the fact that the status of whites is infinitely higher than that of the black men; and this not only invalidates an anti-male movement, but underlines the fact that to preserve their existing privileges white women must close their rank with white men as a class.

Black women, on the other hand, have an intuitive understanding of the exploitation and devaluing of their men which rebounds upon them. Their wages are too low to both maintain them and their families; they are drawn into the cities where often they are lost to them, and in the final analysis, the Government, not their men, prevents them from joining their menfolk and seeking employment outside the homelands. Black women support and join black men, even when they appear to be attacking them, as when they raid the beerhalls: it is to shake them out of their "collaboration" with the system by spending their money in municipal outlets.

Women's organisations in South Africa must be viewed in terms of this dichotomy which inhibits sex or simple class fraternities and reacts against feminist coalitions. Even when women focus on disabilities peculiar to women, they interpret them as due to some malfunctioning of the social process rather than blame the men.

Women have a far lower propensity for organisation than men and this is due to their subservience, both imposed and internalised. As a rule, black women need the permission and approval of fathers, husbands and other guardians to step outside the family for practically any reason, and may feel in themselves that it is against the nature of women to belong to groupings other than the kinship unit. In a sample survey of 1,000 black women (African, Coloured and Indian) in industrial employment in the Durban metropolitan area, approximately 80 per cent had to seek permission for doing practically anything apart from their domestic duties and their wage labour. Sixty-two per cent believed that this was right and proper - a further 17.5 per cent felt that it was right and proper for some things, not all. It can be safely assumed that the subservience of other women, those in domestic and agricultural labour and those confined to the house, is even greater.

Only 32 per cent of the 1,000 black women belonged to any community or women's organisations, most (70 per cent) belonging to religious organisations. While 52 per cent belonged to trade unions, only 13 per cent attended meetings. A small minority, 3 per cent, expressed a desire to join existing community organisations though 59 per cent (the African response being the highest, 78 per cent) desired to join a women's organisation, and 85 per cent believed that there was a need for women to organise.[102]

It is therefore hardly surprising that women are conspicuous by their absence from the executives of welfare, educational, political and labour organisations, that the South African Parliament has never had more than four white women at any particular time, and there are no women on the recently "elected" Indian and Coloured chambers of the Parliament; and when active in public life, they tend to support and follow programmes and policies introduced and implemented by men.

In some sectors, such as the garment industry, employees have become overwhelmingly women, yet managerial and supervisory posts and the executive positions in trade unions are filled predominantly by men. Women undergird political campaigns and have often given them their most volatile expression, yet few hold executive positions. Their exclusion from the main power blocks and the sense of inadequacy this cultivates in male company has, in the final analysis, driven the more enterprising and relatively less repressed women to form women's organisations. Many of these are in fact subordinate wings of male dominated bodies, encouraged by the men to provide tea-making, fund-raising or some similar services.

While such organisations involve a minority of South Africa's women, the impact of some is considerable. They may be classified broadly as those serving the recreational needs and developing the skills of members, those focussed on welfare work, and those that are overtly or apparently political and engaged in protest activities. Middle class and white women's organisations are usually of the first two types, whereas the last are predominantly African.

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[102] Institute for Black Research, *Black women in industry 1983*.

The Influence of Religion

Religion, in particular Christianity, is an important factor in bringing women together. The more progressive denominations have in recent times succeeded in bringing about some racial integration.

The Christian Women's Movement formed in 1982 under the auspices of the South African Council of Churches is overtly anti-apartheid and faintly feminist in outlook. It has stated:

> "Our vision and our dream is to work for the realisation of a new community of women and men in the church and for the total liberation of all people in South Africa. We have made a commitment to work for the eradication of apartheid and all structural inequalities in the church and society... Our struggle for equality therefore cannot be separated from the political liberation of all people."

On the feminist level it asserts:

> "We are concerned about the church's reluctance to allow women to participate fully in the life of the church. We are recognised as fund-raisers and tea-makers but the gifts and skills we can bring to policy-making bodies of the church are seldom recognised."

This "Movement," however, has yet to make an impact on South Africa's women.

The older church organisations go back to the beginning of the century. They include upper class white church groupings helping the poor, at first the white poor, but later including blacks. The church has also cradled the most prolific African women's organisation, the *Manyano*. The *Manyano* bonds African women in the urban areas drawn from a diversity of tribes giving them an identity manifested in the distinctive uniforms of members, self-confidence and security. In the depressed townships where men as the main bread-winners often have neither the means nor the will to respond to needs defined by women, and the State turns its back on them, the *Manyano* serves as a welfare pool. It organises *stokvels* or saving clubs, rotating among members the benefit of the capital accumulated each month to help with such emergencies as payment of school and university fees, down payments and demands from creditors.

Non-political on the face of it, the *Manyano* has a potential for quick politicisation inherent in a non-tribal, Christian, but intrinsically African grouping. It funnels grievances which though not intellectualised are expressed "intuitively" as rooted in racism. "White people do these things to blacks"; "They happen because whites make them happen."

Manyanos have converted temporarily into protest groups against apartheid. They

defended women's right to brew beer in the 1940s, resisted the extension of passes to women in 1913 and in the 1950s, and agitated against the expropriation of African-owned property and forced removals in 1954, as well as against statutory inferiorisation of African education in 1955. The *Manyano* remains the most authentic African women's organisation and it undergirds women's activities in the overtly political organisations. The African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL), for instance, appears not only to have been modelled on the *Manyano*, but to a considerable extent to have been supported by it. The success of the 1956 Pretoria pass demonstration likewise was largely due to *Manyano* networks.

The Young Women's Christian Association is the other side of the coin of the African churchwomen. Where the *Manyano* represents the relatively uneducated, unskilled worker, largely in domestic employment, the Young Women's Christian Association represents the relatively educated and economically better-off African churchwomen.

Beginning as a body of white women concerned primarily with the problems of white girls entering industrial employment, the Young Women's Christian Association began incorporating black chapters towards the middle of the present century. By the 1940s, the African component was the largest, composed almost entirely by the *Zengele* clubs. Their president, Mrs. Xuma,[103] who was simultaneously president of the National Council of African Women and the African National Congress Women's League, encouraged this incorporation. The large black membership provoked tension and eventually split the body into two: white and non-racial. The latter, largely African-dominated, is affiliated to the world body and is by far the more important.

The Young Women's Catholic Association has never taken a direct political stance because its members prefer to use other organisations for such purpose; its main contribution lies in the educational and welfare service it provides in the townships. It is a well organised national body with regional and local committees throughout the country.

There are numerous groups related to the white, Coloured and Indian churches; most are consciously ethnic. Some groups extend services to other communities, some are self-centred attending to their own needs, raising funds for new amenities, etc.

Other religions inspiring women's groups are Hinduism and Islam. The first involves Indian women, the second Indian and Malay women. The groups are small and their interests range from the purely ritualistic and theological (studying of the Scriptures), to education and welfare. Women are largely responsible for running extra school classes in language and religion. The Women's Cultural Group, primarily Indian and Muslim in membership, organises lectures, has published a best-seller cookbook, raises funds for welfare services for all races, and has established an educational foundation which

[103] She was the wife of Dr. A. B. Xuma, President of the African National Congress of South Africa in the 1940s.

provides bursaries for young black women. Radical forces within Islam are also challenging the Muslim women to take political positions.

Social Groups

The better known, non-church linked, white dominated women's bodies in South Africa are the National Council of Women, the Housewives League, the Business and Professional Women, the Women's Institute and the Toast Mistress. Most of these groups are affiliates of international organisations. Apart from the National Council of Women, all other organisations until very recently excluded blacks from membership. Today, most organisations allow for separate black affiliates. Their interests are centred around improving the competence of members in housewifery, gardening, crafts and public speaking.

The National Council of Women in South Africa, established in 1913, is an affiliate of the International Council of Women. In recent years, it has adopted a clear stance against apartheid. Its 47th conference in 1981 affirmed that "South Africa is one country and one people" and rejected racial discrimination as "morally unsound and a dangerous obstacle to the peaceful development of our country."

Though racially integrated today, this was not the position of this organisation in earlier years. In 1936, African women founded their own National Council of African Women. By 1953, this organisation had four branches on the Reef and one each in Pietermaritzburg and Durban. The National Council of African Women, like the Young Women's Christian Association, differed markedly from the *Manyano* both in its Western orientation and in its upper class membership. Considering itself as a parallel to the white "Council", it emulated white women and tended to see African problems as due to ignorance and illiteracy. It was up to the African women and to the African people to liberate themselves from tribalism and take their position alongside the whites.

The Daughters of Africa and the *Zengele* (Home Makers) Clubs were similar in approach. The *Zengele* Clubs became integrated into the Young Women's Christian Association.

The oldest Indian organisation is the Indian Women's Association, operative since the time of Gandhi in the early part of the century. Clearly political at the time of its founding in Durban and Johannesburg, and supportive of Gandhi's passive resistance campaign, it toned down into a small group of middle class Indian women in Durban, with educational and welfare interests.

Political Groups and the Mass Protests

It is the political arena that has drawn the most volatile response from South Africa's women. White women, English and Afrikaner, have joined their menfolk in their conflicts with each other and against indigenous blacks, and some have been

enshrined as heroines in white annals. Generally speaking, white women defend the apartheid system and resist change. The Women's Enfranchisement Association of the Union, established soon after the Union of South Africa came into existence in 1910, finally won the franchise for white women in 1930, but it did so mainly to stir up the white franchise against the blacks and gain in this way the necessary two-thirds majority to abolish the Cape Native vote.

The most impressive white political group is the Black Sash, founded soon after the Nationalist Party took power in 1948, specifically to protest against the excesses of the system against human rights. The organisation has grown in stature and work and it now runs valuable advice bureaus to assist black women.

The most spectacular records are those of the mass resistance of black women, African, Indian and Coloured. In 1912, all campaigned against passes: Africans and Coloureds as a single body in the Orange Free State against residential passes; Indians in Natal and in the Transvaal against provincial barriers and poll taxes.

The resistance in the Orange Free State was provoked by an 1893 law which required all African and Coloured women to produce work permits on request by the police in order to establish their "right" to be in the area. The women, supported by the menfolk, pleaded for years with the authorities to abolish the law which humiliated them, and obliged young girls to leave school and seek employment or be removed to other areas. Their pleas ignored, they finally formed the Native and Coloured Women's Association and openly defied the law, marching on the local administration offices, dumping their passes and facing arrest. Over a thousand were arrested. In 1918, the movement spread to the Transvaal: in 1923, the passes were finally withdrawn.

At the beginning of the century, Indian women in Natal and the Transvaal virtually made Gandhi, and proved the efficacy of the new liberation dialectic of *satyagraha* that he introduced. The South African Indian resistance movement remained by and large an elitist protest, until the women *satyagrahis* from the two *ashrams* in Natal and the Transvaal, the Phoenix Settlement and the Tolstoy Farm respectively, converted it into a mass movement. In 1913, they defied the anti-Asiatic law, crossed the provincial border from both ends and provoked the miners of Newcastle to lay down their picks and strike. Two thousand workers thereafter began the epic march, led by Gandhi, across the Natal border into the Transvaal and the entire Indian labour force of Natal went on strike, bringing industry to a standstill. Arrests and imprisonment followed, and the Government was forced to modify some of the hardships against the Indians. The great figure of that struggle was not Gandhi, but the emaciated young Valliamma, who refused to surrender despite her fatal illness that developed as a result of imprisonment. She died in the struggle.

In 1946, the Indian women again took the lead in launching the second passive resistance campaign against the anti-Indian Land Act: at the end of that campaign, almost 2,000 Indians had been imprisoned for defying segregatory laws.

Persecution of African Women 1940-1960

The militancy of the African women has moved in a continuous stream throughout the century. This is hardly surprising since they have been the hardest hit by the system. Their movement, however, has been severely restricted by two elements: traditional patriarchy and State's influx control legislation, since they are the last component of the South African population to be considered for jobs even of the most menial type. Yet, at least a third are the sole supporters of their families because of the high incidence of children born out of wedlock (about 50 per cent of all African births) and because of the system of migrant labour and wages that ignore the needs of worker's families. The vast volume of racist laws that have accumulated since the Nationalist Party came into power finally attack the family and its welfare for which women find themselves personally responsible. Educational laws condemned their children to servitude; laws that reduced African land-holdings took away land traditionally allotted to women; laws against urban "squatting " resulted in women being arrested because they attempted to join their husbands, or to seek employment in the towns.

In the face of such persecution, African women have taken desperate measures to force the authorities to concede to them the basic right to protect their children. Sample surveys conducted by the Institute for Black Research in Butterworth and Durban reveal that a third of the African women in industrial employment are the sole supporters of their families.

African women in urban areas began constituting a problem for the white system in the late 1940s and 1950s. The reserves ceased to be productive about this time. They no longer provided an economic base due to the declining fertility of the land, and due to increased density aggravated by government legislation.

Economic recession, and mechanisation on the other hand increased unemployment and piled even a greater burden on the homelands and on the women living there. Women therefore began moving in greater numbers to the cities in search of work in order to relieve rural distress. When they moved to the cities, however, and congregated on rented plots, restructuring family life in urban slums, the authorities clamped down upon them, declaring such settlements illegal and subjecting the women and their families to constant police raids and heavy fines. And, being "illegal," civic authorities ignored them and provided no amenities. Night soil and refuse accumulated, rodents scavenged the gulleys between the houses, and the people became exposed to disease and death. The situation continues today. In the 1940s on the Reef, the anger of the women burst bounds: they organised resistance and marches, and clashed with the police in numerous townships. They demanded houses and better living facilities.

A 1908 law prohibiting the domestic brewing of beer, a traditional right of African women, was another issue which enraged the women. In the urban townships, brewing and selling of beer provided the women with a source of income and the family savings, since beer bought at the municipal beerhalls was so much more expensive. Women boycotted the beerhalls and picketed the men. They also demanded that the

municipalities use the profit from the sale of beer for housing and developing other amenities in the townships. Attacks on beerhalls and demands for reinstituting the right of women to brew beer broke out fairly consistently throughout the country during the 1940s and 1950s and only subsided after 1960, when the liquor laws were somewhat relaxed.

Transport was another major issue. Poor and costly transport promoted boycotts in which women played a prominent part.

All the issues were basic, the response spontaneous, and it was left to the affected people, as continues to be the case today, to do whatever they could to protest this situation. When outsiders assisted, the gesture was in the final analysis symbolic. The *Manyanos* and the African National Congress Women's League were the important inspirational elements.

In 1952, passes were extended to African women throughout the country. Up to 1918, when they had been withdrawn in the face of stringent resistance, they had been applied to African and Coloured women in the Orange Free State alone. The intention was to contain the women in the reserves, to leave them there to starve with their dependents, the unemployable young, the sick and the old. There was spontaneous resistance to the imposition of passes throughout the country and the resistance continued for eight years. Thousands of women
were repeatedly imprisoned. In 1954, 2,000 were arrested in Johannesburg, 4,000 in Pretoria, 1,200 in Germiston, and 350 in Bethlehem. In 1955, 2,000 women marched to the Native Commission's office in Vereeniging.

The African National Congress Women's League founded in 1943 played the most important role among women's organisations in consolidating these issues and in giving them national prominence. The League set up branches throughout the country and identified its membership through its own distinctive uniform.

Durban and District Women's League

Women from the Natal Indian Congress and the African National Congress joined their forces and established the Durban and District Women's League in 1952. In doing so, they went ahead of their parent bodies, the African National Congress and the Natal Indian Congress which operated in consultation but not as a single body. The League had taken stock of the manipulation of Africans against Indians in 1949, and saw its prime object as that of restoring mutual confidence. It therefore concentrated its activities in Cato Manor, the area worst hit during the disturbance. A crèche and milk distribution centre was established in a church hall and League members were bussed out daily to administer and to teach. The League was actively engaged in the 1952 Campaign of Defiance of Unjust Laws. When passes were introduced for African women, it organised a vigorous protest movement culminating in a mass march on the Department of Native Affairs in Pietermaritzburg and the arrest of 600 women, mainly African, but including a significant number of Indian women and a few white members

of the Liberal Party.

League representatives were among the founding members of the Federation of South African Women in 1954, and Natal sent a deputation of 156 members to the historic march of 20,000 women on Pretoria in 1956, organised by the Federation of South African Women.

In 1960, the League organised a protest march of the women and children of those detained in Durban during the state of emergency. Some 60 women with their children were arrested and charged, the charges being withdrawn after a short spell in prison and an appearance in court. The League organised a weekly vigil outside the prison to keep the public mind focussed on the inequity of detention without trial. This was the last of League's activities. The banning of its secretary in 1954 and the detention of its chairperson in 1960 had weakened the organising committee, but it was the banning of the African National Congress and of key members of the Natal Indian Congress that spelt its demise.

Federation of South African Women

The Federation of South African Women was founded in 1954 in Johannesburg in an environment of seething discontent and country-wide protests against passes, inadequate housing, high transport costs and inferior education. A number of regionally-based African women's organisations had emerged and the African National Congress Women's League, considerably strengthened by the Defiance of Unjust Laws campaign, provided a national unitary base. There was a need, however, to draw in women of all races throughout the country and the Federation was conceived for this purpose.

The initiative for the establishment of the Federation of South African Women came from the white women of the Congress of Democrats. It was inspired by the Women's International Democratic Federation established at about the same time. Its success was indisputably due to the activities of the African National Congress Women's League. If there were ideological differences, they never touched the rank and file. Even the fact that most members of the organising committee were white and that there was no general white membership did not produce any tension that was not contained within the structure of the organisation. With the African National Congress as its mainstay, with support from the women of the Coloured, Indian and white Congresses and from the Food and Canning Workers` Union, the Federation focussed above all on the current issue of passes. Its activities, unlike those of the more local and spontaneous groups, were strictly within the framework of the law. In 1955 it led a protest of 2,000 women to Pretoria, and in 1956 another one with the participation of 20,000 women. Apart from these two momentous events, and the preparation of a women's charter identifying the fundamental demands of South African women for complete equality in colour and sex, the activities of the Federation were relatively low key, supportive of the Congress Alliance and protesting against high rents and poor amenities.

The pass issue was particularly an African issue, concerning both men and women. In 1958 the African National Congress questioned the advisability of protests organised by women only and grew alarmed at the increased victimisation of African women suffering imprisonment and fines. In 1960, both the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania took up passes as a national issue. The massacre of Sharpeville followed, emergency was proclaimed, and the two African organisations, as well as the Congress of Democrats, were banned. This development led to the end of the Federation.

The arrest of five members of the Federation on a charge of treason in 1956, following the Federation's participation in the organisation of the Congress of the People, had already dealt a blow. It held its third and last conference in Port Elizabeth in 1961.

The weakness of both the Natal League and the Federation was that, organisationally, they were much too centralised and did not develop sufficient grass-roots responsibility. More serious, however, was the fact that neither were independent women's organisations. Both relied on the African National Congress Women's League, which in turn was a unit of the African National Congress. Apart from other implications this had on their activities, it was inevitable that both would collapse with the banning of the African National Congress unless they organised in the underground, which neither did.

Federation of Black Women

In 1972, Natal began organising the women anew on a non-racial political basis with the founding of the Women's Federation, Natal. There were, however, strong feelings against the inclusion of white women and when the Federation became national in 1975, it did so as the Federation of Black Women. The national three-day conference in Durban focussing on the black family drew 300 delegates representing over 100 women's organisations and groups. Ministries were organised into such key areas as education, franchise, housing, women's disabilities, etc. Branches began to be set up in rural areas, and a blueprint for a black women's magazine was mapped out. The Federation became actively involved when violence erupted in Soweto in 1976.

An open air mass rally planned in Durban was stopped by the Government by placing a blanket ban on all outdoor meetings, a ban which continues to be operative to this day. The President of the Federation was banned within six months of its founding and then imprisoned without trial, together with five executive members. The Federation itself was banned following its second conference, and its monies were confiscated.

New Initiatives

United Women's Organisation in the Western Cape and the Natal Organisation of Women in Natal have been inspired by and trace their roots to the Federation of South

African Women. They have been in existence for the last two or three years and are growing in organisation and membership. As their goals, they identify the elimination of race and sex discrimination, as well as the organisation of a joint general campaign for full and equal democratic rights for all in South Africa. United Women's Organisation significantly includes a "consumer committee", "workers` support committee" and "9 August committee." The Federation, which was never actually banned, has been revived and if the Government does not come down heavily on the present black organisations as it is threatening to do, new developments on the women's front can be expected.

Whereas past political organisations drew membership from older married women, the new initiative is coming in the main from younger women. Though the focus remains broadly liberatory, there is consciousness of ideological issues of feminism, class and race. While these have as yet not been significantly articulated, the chances are that they will give to the new movement the intellectual dimension that the organisations lacked in the past.

Women and Liberation

Exploitation is unbridled in a racist society because oppressors can isolate themselves from those they oppress. In a class society isolation can never be complete. The lines of class distinction are forever mixing and mingling, and the upper class can never hope to remain uncontaminated by the lower. Moreover, where the classes share common political rights, the demands of the lower classes for redress and a more equitable share in the accumulated goods and services cannot be ignored. Consequently, capitalism is modified by socialism as is the case in the United Kingdom and other European countries.

In South Africa, those in power as a white class have effectively quarantined the blacks into homelands and group areas. They can therefore tolerate to a very high extent the social aberrations wreaked by economic deprivation. The fact that blacks have no power whatsoever to influence legislative procedures and obtain redress for their condition secures that quarantine.

But no quarantine lasts forever. The ghettos today seethe with discontent, resistance is high, and revolution is a matter of time. The women are a fundamental part of it, because they suffer the consequences of apartheid in a way men never can. They are trained to care, to bear responsibility and guilt, and when they cannot care, and cannot be responsible, then the guilt is too overwhelming to be locked within themselves. That guilt explodes, it is externalised, and placed where it rightly belongs, in the system that suppresses and oppresses. The liberated women become the driving force for societal liberation.

As long as racism continues and a people, not a particular sex, is the object of oppression, the women will continue to overlook their own discrimination and dedicate themselves to the liberation of their people.

NOW YOU HAVE TOUCHED THE WOMEN[104]

African Women's Resistance to the Pass Laws in South Africa 1950-1960

by

Elizabeth S. Schmidt

Introduction

The decade of the 1950s was a decade of turmoil in South Africa. In the urban areas, a strong alliance was being forged between racially oppressed groups and sympathetic whites. As a united front against apartheid, the non-racial Congress Alliance,[105] formed from previously organised racially-based and worker groups, defied unjust laws and conducted campaigns against forced removals under the Group Areas Act and against inferior "Bantu" education for African children. The alliance organised bus boycotts, stay-at-homes, and rent strikes in the African townships. Perhaps the most significant Congress campaign of the decade was the campaign against the pass laws, and in particular, the extension of reference books to African women. No other campaign was carried out on such a massive scale or was sustained over as many years. No other campaign struck at the very root of the apartheid system.

Protest against the pass laws was not an innovation of the 1950s. The African National Congress (ANC) had been organising opposition to the legislation since its founding in 1912. The significance of the campaigns of the 1950s lay in the adoption of new strategies for bringing about fundamental change. For the first time, anti-pass protesters employed techniques of mass action, strikes, boycotts, and civil disobedience on a wide scale, abandoning the appeals, petitions and deputations that had characterised ANC protests for more than forty years. Efforts at gentle suasion and pleas for patient waiting were cast aside as remnants of a bygone era. The degree of popular involvement in the anti-pass actions and the level of spontaneous activity in the rural areas was unparalleled in any other period of South African history. Finally, in the 1950s, the primary catalysts

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[104] From "Notes and Documents", No. 6/83, March 1983

[105]2. The earliest alliance was formed between the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Indian Congress (SAIC), which together organised the Defiance Campaign against Unjust Laws in 1952. In 1953, the South African Coloured People's Organisation (SACPO) and the Congress of Democrats (COD) were founded. The latter was composed primarily of white supporters of the Congress movement. The non-racial South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) was founded in March 1955. On June 25 and 26, 1955, these organisations came together in Kliptown for the historic Congress of the People. It was at this Congress that 2,884 delegates of all racial groups from all parts of South Africa adopted the "Freedom Charter".

of the anti-pass protests were not the traditional male leaders, but thousands of African women, many of whom had never before been involved in political protests or demonstrations.

In the urban areas, the women's campaigns were primarily organised by the ANC Women's League and the non-racial Federation of South African Women. In the rural areas, resistance was largely spontaneous. Although the Government charged that the unrest was due to the work of "outside agitators", the rural women were, for the most part, acting on their own initiative and according to their own understanding of how the extension of the pass laws could affect their lives. While women who worked in the urban areas brought home new tactics, insights and information when they returned to the reserves, they were contributing to a momentum that had gathered on its own.

The militancy of the women, their level of organisation in the urban areas, and the ease with which they discarded their expected subordinate role came as a shock to many of the men and even to some of the women. Although women were deeply involved in all of the Congress campaigns of the 1950s, the leadership of the Congress organisations was dominated almost exclusively by men.[106] As the women's campaigns gathered strength, the ANC National Executive Committee pointedly acknowledged the role of women in the liberation struggle. It was obvious, from the wording of its statements, that the importance of women to the struggle had not previously been assumed. In its report to the Annual Conference of December 17-18, 1955, the ANC National Executive Committee remarked that the ANC Women's League, which was formed in part to "take up special problems and issues affecting women", was not

> "just an auxiliary to the African National Congress, and we know that we cannot win liberation or build a strong movement without the participation of the women..."[107]

African women played a leading role in the resistance to pass legislation because of the particular way in which influx control measures, implemented through the pass system, affected their position in society as well as African family life. On the basis of race, African women suffered the same disabilities as African men. Because of their sex, however, they carried a double burden. At the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy, African women were predominantly employed in low-paying, unskilled jobs. Because of the tenuous nature of their employment - largely in the domestic service and

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[106] In December 1956, Lilian Ngoyi, national president of both the Federation of South African Women and the African National Congress Women's League, became the first woman ever to be elected to the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress.

[107] "Report of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress", African National Congress Annual Conference of December 17-18, 1955. Document 13(c) contained in Thomas Karis and Gwendolen M. Carter, eds., *From Protest to Challenge, A Documentary History of African Politics in South Africa, 1882-1964*, 4 vols. (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1973), Vol. 3.

informal sectors - African women were particularly vulnerable to removal from the urban areas as "idle" Africans or "superfluous appendages". Legal constraints made it far more difficult for African women than men to acquire urban residency rights, accommodations in the urban areas, and land in the African reserves. Influx control laws, and by extension the pass system, were intentionally used by government officials to bar African women from the urban areas and to confine them to the African reserves.

Life in the reserves was an existence of poverty and hardship for the vast majority of the people. Enforced landlessness had transformed African men from self-reliant peasants to migrant labourers in the white areas. Influx control laws meant that their families were forced to stay in the reserves, where the men could visit them once a year. The burden of raising children under such conditions, which fell almost exclusively on the women, became increasingly arduous. As the soil lost its fertility and landlessness became more acute, the reserve economy deteriorated. The women's role as cultivators and providers eroded, and with it, women's social status. Rather than being major contributors to the families` livelihood, women became increasingly dependent upon male earnings. However, these earnings were neither large nor secure. In many cases, money from the "white" areas came sporadically or not at all.

During the period that women were free from pass law restrictions, some had been able to skirt the influx control regulations and join their husbands in the urban areas. Some found menial jobs which, although low-paying and insecure, were more lucrative than subsistence farming. These women knew that the extension of passes to women would increase the effectiveness of the influx control system. No longer would there be an exit from the reserves, a way for women to earn money to feed their children or to live with their husbands in the urban areas. As a result, when in 1952 the Government announced that African women would be forced to carry passes, the women responded with vehemence. Subjection to pass law controls would destroy their last remaining hope - their freedom of movement. Unlike African men, the women who resisted these laws had nothing further to lose. Protesters in the rural areas were not risking the loss of urban residency rights, houses or jobs. They could afford to be bold where men were apt to be hesitant. The women could only gain by their militancy.

Resistance to the pass laws was the overwhelming, but not the only issue of the 1950s. African women became involved in a number of campaigns focussing on issues that affected their ability to care for their children and to keep their family unit together. They protested the pass laws, "Bantu" education, rent hikes, bus fare increases, forced removals of African communities, government-owned beer halls that soaked up their husbands` wages and laws that prevented them from selling home brew, an important source of income for many women. In the rural areas, women resisted the Government's "betterment" schemes, which included the mandatory culling of precious livestock, required women to fill and maintain cattle dipping tanks without pay, and enforced soil conservation measures which dispossessed many families of arable land.

Although the disabilities imposed by apartheid laws were onerous for every African, in many ways the burden fell heaviest on the women. In order to comprehend the forces

that propelled these women into action in the 1950s, it is necessary to understand the social and economic context of their resistance. Perhaps the single most significant factor contributing to their hardship was the deterioration of the economy in the reserves, where the majority of African women were compelled to live. As a result of this economic decline, an increasing number of able-bodied men were leaving the reserves as migrant labourers. The outflow of labour from the reserves and the destruction of the family unit intensified the hardships borne by African women...

Passes for African Women

In 1952, the same year that African women became subject to strict influx control measures, the Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act was passed. Under this Act, the numerous documents African men had been required to carry were replaced by a single document - the reference book - which contained information concerning identity, employment, place of legal residence, payment of taxes, and, if applicable, permission to be in the urban areas. The Act further stipulated that African women, at an unspecified further date, would for the first time be required to carry reference books. In October 1962, the Government announced that all African women would be required to carry reference books as of February 1, 1963. After this date, it would be criminal offence for African women, as well as men, to be caught without a reference book. Moreover, it would be illegal for anyone to employ an African of either sex who did not possess a reference book.[108]

The term "pass" was frequently used to describe any document which curtailed an African's freedom of movement and was producible on the demand of police or local authorities. Thus, residency permits, special entry permits, workseekers' permits, and reference books often fell into the general category of the "pass." Strictly speaking, permits were the documents issued to workseekers and special cases under the terms of the Native Laws Amendment Act of 1952. Reference books, a government euphemism for the consolidated pass documents, were issued under the terms of the Natives (Abolition of Passes and Co-ordination of Documents) Act, also of 1952. Ultimately, all African women in the towns, cities, "white" rural areas and reserves were required to carry reference books, while only certain women in the proclaimed areas were subject to the permit requirements. The issuance of permits in the urban areas began a few years before the issuance of reference books. African women declared that the permits were simply forerunners of reference books and treated them with equal contempt.

The Government's first attempts to force women to carry passes and permits had been a major fiasco. In 1913, government officials in the Orange Free State declared that women living in the urban townships would be required to buy new entry permits each month. In response, the women sent deputations to the Government, collected thousands of signatures on petitions, and organised massive demonstrations to protest the permit requirement. Unrest spread throughout the province and hundreds of women were sent to prison. Civil disobedience and demonstrations continued sporadically for

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[108] Muriel Horrell, ed., *Laws Affecting Race Relations in South Africa, 1948-1976*, p. 175.

several years. Ultimately the permit requirement was withdrawn.

No further attempts were made to require permits or passes for African women until the 1950s. Although laws requiring such documents were enacted in 1952, the Government did not begin issuing permits to women until 1954 and reference books until 1956. The issuing of permits began in the Western Cape, which the Government had designated a "Coloured preference area". Within the boundaries established by the Government, no African workers could be hired unless the Department of Labour determined that Coloured workers were not available. Foreign Africans were to be removed from the area altogether. No new families would be allowed to enter, and women and children who did not qualify to remain would be sent back to the reserves. The entrance of the migrant labourers would henceforth be strictly controlled. Male heads of households, whose families had been endorsed out or prevented from entering the area, were housed with migrant workers in single-sex hostels. The availability of family accommodations was so limited that the number of units built lagged far behind the natural increase in population.

In order to enforce such drastic influx control measures, the Government needed a means of identifying women who had no legal right to remain in the Western Cape. According to the terms of the Native Laws Amendment Act, women with Section 10(1)(a), (b), or (c) status were not compelled to carry permits. Theoretically, only women in the Section 10(1)(d) category - that is, workseekers or women with special permission to remain in the urban area - were required to possess such documents. In spite of their legal exemption, women with Section 10(1)(a), (b), and (c) rights were issued permits by local authorities which claimed that the documents were for their own protection. Any woman who could not prove her (a), (b), or (c) status was liable to arrest and deportation.

Soon after permits were issued to women in the Western Cape, local officials began to enforce the regulations throughout the Union. Reaction to the new system was swift and hostile. Even before the Western Cape was designated a "Coloured preference area", Africans were preparing for the inevitable. On January 4, 1953, hundreds of African men and women assembled in the Langa township outside Cape Town to protest the impending application of the Native Laws Amendment Act. Delivering a fiery speech to the crowd Dora Tamana, a member of the ANC Women's League and a founding member of the Federation of South African Women, declared:

> "We, women, will never carry these passes. This is something that touches my heart. I appeal to you young Africans to come forward and fight. These passes make the road even narrower for us. We have seen unemployment, lack of accommodation and families broken because of passes. We have seen it with our men. Who will look after our children when we go to jail for a small technical offence -- not having a pass?"[109]

[109] "Strong Protest against New Pass Law", *Advance*, Cape Town, January 8, 1953

The women's campaign had begun. Throughout the Union, preparations were made for the first non-racial National Conference of Women, to be held in Johannesburg in April 1954.

The Federation of South African Women and the Marches on Pretoria in 1955 and 1956

One hundred and forty-six delegates, representing 230,000 women from all parts of South Africa, attended the first National Conference of Women.[110] It was at this conference that the Federation of South African Women was formed. Many of the delegates to the conference were members of the various Congress organisations. Among the African leaders of the Federation, a large number were trade unionists, primarily from the clothing, textile, and food and canning industries. Some were teachers and nurses, members of the small African professional class. Since fewer than one per cent of African working women were engaged in production work in the 1950s, the trade unionists, like the nurses and teachers, represented but a fraction of all adult African women. The involvement of the trade unionists proved to be critical, however. They contributed invaluable organisational skills and mobilising techniques to the women's struggle.

Although the Federation of South African Women included some individual members, it was primarily composed of affiliated women's groups, African, Indian, "Coloured" and white political organisations, and trade unions. According to its constitution, the objectives of the Federation were:

> "To bring the women of South Africa together to secure full equality of opportunity for all women, regardless of race, colour or creed; to remove social and legal and economic disabilities; to work for the protection of the women and children of our land."[111]

The "Women's Charter," written at the first conference, called for the enfranchisement of men and women of all races; equality of opportunity in employment; equal pay for equal work; equal rights in relation to property, marriage and children; and the removal of all laws and customs that denied women such equality. The Charter further demanded paid maternity leave, child care for working mothers, and free and compulsory education for all South African children.[112]

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[110] Ken Luckhardt and Brenda Wall, *Organize or Starve: the South African Congress of Trade Unions* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1980), p. 301; "Report of the Second National Conference of the Federation of South African Women", August 11-12, 1956, reel 19B of the Carter/Karis Collection of South African Political Materials, housed at the Centre for Research Libraries, Chicago, Illinois.

[111] "Constitution of the Federation of South African Women". Reel 19B of the Carter/Karis Collection, *op. cit.*

[112] "Our Aims", from the Women's Charter, First National Conference of the Federation

Although the Federation acknowledged that the primary task at hand was the struggle for national liberation, it warned that the struggle would not be won without the full participation of women. Applying a distorted version of "tribal" law, which had governed pre-industrial African society, South African courts continued to regard African women as perpetual minors under the permanent tutelage of their male guardians. Women's property rights were severely limited and control over their own earnings minimal. The authors of the "Women's Charter" did not hesitate to deal with these issues. According to the Charter, laws governing African marriage and property relations had "lagged behind the development of society (and) no longer correspond to the actual social and economic position of women." As a result, "the law has become an obstacle to the progress of the women, and therefore, a brake on the whole of society". The blame for "this intolerable condition" rested in part with "a large section of our menfolk" who refuse "to concede to us women the rights and privileges which they demand for themselves." The Charter concluded:

> "We shall teach the men that they cannot hope to liberate themselves from the evils of discrimination and prejudice as long as they fail to extend to women complete and unqualified equality in law and practice... freedom cannot be won for any one section or for the people as a whole as long as we women are kept in bondage."

The demands laid out in the "Women's Charter" were ultimately incorporated into the "Freedom Charter," adopted by the Congress of the People in Kliptown on June 25-26, 1955.

A major task of the Federation in succeeding years was the organisation of massive protests against the extension of pass laws to women. Together with the ANC Women's League, the Federation organised scores of demonstrations outside Government offices in towns and cities around the country. The first national protest took place on October 27, 1955, when 2,000 women of all races marched on the Union Buildings in Pretoria, planning to meet with the Cabinet ministers responsible for the administration of apartheid laws. The Minister of Native Affairs, Dr. Verwoerd, under whose jurisdiction the pass laws fell, pointedly refused to receive a multiracial delegation.[113]

Less than a year later, the Women's League and the Federation of South African Women organised a second major demonstration - this time focussing exclusively on the pass laws. On August 9, 1956, 20,000 women from all parts of South Africa staged a second march on the Union Buildings. Prime Minister Strijdom, who had been notified of the women's mission, was not there to receive them. In lieu of a meeting, the women left bundles of petitions containing more than 100,000 signatures at the Prime

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of South African Women, April 17, 1954. Reel 19B of the Carter/Karis Collection, *op. cit.*; "Women Act in Transvaal", *Advance*, July 8, 1954.

[113] Helen Joseph, *Tomorrow's Sun, A Smuggled Journal From South Africa* (New York: The John Day Co., 1966), p. 73.

Minister's door.[114] Outside the Government building, they stood silently for 30 minutes, their hands raised in the Congress salute.[115] The women concluded their demonstration by singing freedom songs, including a new one composed especially for the occasion:

> *Wathint` abafazi, Strijdom!*
> *Wathint` imbokodo uzo kufa!*
>
> Now you have touched the women, Strijdom!
> You have struck a rock
> (You have dislodged a boulder!)
> You will be crushed!

African women fought the pass laws as they had fought no other issue. Passes were the symbol of their deepest oppression. It was through the pass laws that the influx control system was enforced. It was influx control that turned their husbands into migrant workers and made them into widows in the reserves. Passes deprived them of the basic right to live with their husbands and to raise their children in a stable family unit. Throughout the 1950s, an average of 339,255 African men were convicted each year for pass laws violations. If passes were extended to African women, that figure would more than double. If mothers were arrested as well as fathers, the women asked, who would care for the children?

The call-to-action flyers of the Women's League and the Federation described in vivid detail the plight of the African people under the pass laws. A flyer printed in 1957 carried the following challenge: "Who knows better than any African woman what it means to have a husband who must carry a pass?" The flyer continued:

> "Passes mean prison; passes mean broken homes; passes mean suffering and misery for every African family in our country; passes are just another way in which the Government makes slaves of the Africans; passes mean hunger and unemployment; passed are an insult..."

The extension of passes to women constituted an "attack on ourselves, our mothers, sisters, children and families", the flyer concluded, an attack that would be fought with all the women's strength.[116]

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[114] Without reading the petitions, the Prime Minister handed them over to the Security Police. They were later presented as evidence in the Treason Trial of 1956-61. Mary Benson, *South Africa, the Struggle For A Birthright* (Minerva Press, 1969), p. 185; Anthony Sampson, *The Treason Cage: The Opposition on Trial in South Africa* (London: Heinemann, 1958), p. 26.

[115] Benson, *op. cit.*, p. 184; Luckhardt and Wall, *op. cit*., p. 302; Joseph, *op. cit.*, p. 93; United Nations Department of Public Information, *The Plight of Black Women in Apartheid South Africa* (New York: United Nations, 1981), p. 24.

[116] "Repeal the Pass Laws... A Great Demonstration to Parliament" - flyer issued by the Federation of South African Women and the African National Congress Women's League

Other documents were written in a similar vein. The petition left with the Prime Minister on August 9, 1956, described how the pass laws had brought "untold suffering to every African family." Generations of women had experienced the meaning of the pass laws as they witnessed their husbands become victims of "raids, arrests, loss of pay, long hours at the pass office, weeks in cells awaiting trial, forced farm labour". They had seen their men subjected to "punishment and misery - not for a crime, but for the lack of a pass." The extension of passes to women would mean the further destruction of family life, that children would be "left uncared for, helpless, and others (would be) torn from babies for failure to produce a pass." The petition concluded with a warning to the Prime Minister:

> "(African women) shall not rest until ALL pass laws and all forms of permits restricting our freedoms have been abolished. We shall not rest until we have won for our children their fundamental rights of freedom, justice and security."[117]

Male Reactions to the Women's Campaigns

Few of the men were prepared for the women's militancy. According to Mary Benson, Walter Sisulu, former Secretary-General of the African National Congress, witnessed the march of 20,000 women on the Union Buildings in Pretoria. Afterwards, he asked in zest: "How could they dare?"[118] Moses Mabhida, a leader of the African National Congress and an executive of the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU), felt that because of traditional male attitudes which perpetuated the subordinate status of women, "the society didn't expect women to participate in the way they did."[119] Benson writes that the men were taken aback because women were protesting on a scale and with a spirit they had not begun to achieve. In her view, the women's militancy and the men's reticence could be explained by the different circumstances of their lives under the apartheid system. To illustrate her point, Benson quotes Lilian Ngoyi:

> "Men are born into the system, and it is as if it has been a life tradition that they carry passes. We as women have seen the treatment our men have - when they leave home in the morning you are not sure they will come back. We are taking it very seriously. If the husband is to be arrested *and* the mother, what about the child?"[120]

In spite of their hate for pass regulations and all they connoted, African men had

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(Cape Western), June 13, 1957. Document 24, contained in Karis and Carter, *op. cit*.

[117] "The Demand of the Women of South Africa for the Withdrawal of Passes for Women and the Repeal of the Pass Laws". Petition presented to the Prime Minister on August 9, 1956. Reel 19B of the Carter/Karis Collection, *op. cit*.

[118] Benson, *op. cit.*, p. 182

[119] Luckhardt and Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 305

[120] Benson, *op.cit.*, p.l83

grown used to carrying the pass documents. For men, passes were just one more aspect of the despised apartheid system. For women, the carrying of passes imposed a new restriction on their freedom, a freedom that men had never had. Women had more to lose by acquiescing to the new system and more to gain by fighting it.

If the men were slow to recognise the women's contribution, they had staunch supporters of their efforts. Albert Luthuli, President-General of the African National Congress, paid tribute to the women in August 1956. "When the women begin to take an active part in the struggle as they are doing now, no power on earth can stop us from achieving FREEDOM IN OUR LIFETIME," he declared.[121]

In November 1956, the South African Congress of Trade Unions wrote to the Transvaal Provincial Conference of the Federation of South African Women, strongly supporting the women's actions:

> "It is the women of South Africa who have demonstrated to all progressive forces the true meaning of militancy and organisation and we in the trade union movement are determined to follow your courageous example."[122]

The National Executive Committee of the African National Congress, after paying tribute to the women's anti-pass campaigns, criticised the men for not playing a more active role in that struggle:

> "The National Executive Committee regrets that men, who are even more affected by the pass laws, play the role of spectators while women were vigorously campaigning against the system. Men are called upon to enter this campaign unreservedly. The tendency of regarding this as a women's struggle must be forthwith abandoned."[123]

The National Executive Committee also directed the men to be more supportive of the women and their efforts. It was the duty of the men to:

> "...make it possible for women to play their part in the liberation movement by regarding them as equals, and helping to emancipate them in the home, even relieving them of their many family and household burdens so that women may be given an opportunity of being politically active. The men in the Congress movement must fight constantly in every possible way those outmoded customs which make women inferior and by personal example must demonstrate their belief in the equality of all human beings, of both sexes."[124]

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[121] Karis and Carter, *op. cit.*, p. 74, quoting *New Age*, Cape Town, August 16, 1956

[122] Luckhardt and Wall, *op, cit.*, p. 306

[123] "Resolution in Support of the Federation of South African Women and the African National Congress Women's League", National Executive Committee of the African National Congress. Reel 3B of the Carter/Karis Collection, *op. cit.*

[124] "Report of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress

By 1959, four years after the beginning of the women's campaigns, the men in the African National Congress had become ardent supporters of the women's efforts. For the Annual Conference of the African National Congress, held in December of that year, the men made a special banner which read, "*Makabongwe Amakosikazi*" - "We thank the ladies".[125]

The Local Campaigns: Women Revolt in the Towns and Cities

Just as they had forty years before, the women's anti-pass protests of the 1950s began in the Orange Free State. The first actions were taken against the permit system. In June 1952, in the mining town of Odendaalrus, residents of the location were told that African women who had not registered with the local authorities would be liable to arrest for violation of the Urban Areas Act. If women could not prove that they were employed, they could not remain in the Odendaalrus area. The authorities were acting illegally. While women could be issued residence permits or permits of identification, under the terms of the Urban Areas Act, only African men were required to register their service contracts or status as workseekers. African women were exempt from these regulations.[126] Few of the residents were aware of this fact. When the authorities tried to enforce their decree, rioting broke out. Stones were thrown. The car of the location superintendent was burned. Police fired into the crowd, killing one man and critically wounding a woman. Two days later, the location residents went out on strike, most of them failing to appear for work. Police from eight near-by towns raided the location with sten guns, pistols, batons and tear gas, rounding up participants in the disturbances. By the end of the week, 71 men and women had been detained. Forty-four women and three men ultimately stood trial.[127] By 1954, the issuance of residence permits to African women was taking place in towns and cities throughout the Union. In February, a crowd of 700 women gathered outside the administration building in the New Brighton township of Port Elizabeth, demanding that the manager of Native affairs take back all the residence permits he had issued. When he refused, l00 women burned their permits, declaring that no more New Brighton women were willing to carry them.[128] In October 1955, while 2,000 women were marching on Pretoria, 1,000 were protesting in front of the Native administration building in Durban. In Cape Town, hundreds of women marched through the streets in protest of the permit regulations. The Minister of Native Affairs, Dr. Verwoerd, chose this moment to announce that reference books would be issued to African women beginning in January 1956. In response to the Government's actions, the African National Congress resolved in December 1955 to launch a massive campaign against the pass laws. The goal of the campaign would be to

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Conference of December 17-18, 1955. Document 13(c), contained in Karis and Carter, *op. cit.*, p. 237

[125] Luckhardt and Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 305.

[126] "Passes for Women Leads to a Riot", *The Clarion*, Cape Town, June 26, 1952; "Odendaalrus Municipality Acted Illegally", *Ibid.*, June 31, 1952

[127] *Ibid*.

[128] "Women Burn Passes", *Advance*, March 4, 1954

educate people throughout the country concerning the implications of the pass system, and in particular, its effect on African women. In a letter to a provincial official of the African National Congress, Secretary-General Oliver Tambo described the extent of the African National Congress effort:

> "A systematic intensive organisation must be undertaken; house to house, yard to yard, location to location, factory to factory, in the towns and likewise in the country."[129]

In early 1956, the Government began issuing reference books to women in the remote rural areas, intentionally shying away from the larger towns and cities where the influence of the African National Congress was strongest. The authorities focussed on the most vulnerable women - those in the reserves and on the white farms, and domestic servants isolated in the white urban areas. Only after the majority of African women had reference books would the Government attack the African National Congress strongholds. The African National Congress was not blind to the Government's tactics. At the annual Conference of the African National Congress (Transvaal) in November 1956, President E.P. Moretsele warned that

> "plans are afoot to introduce reference books on the farms and country dorps. The plan of the Government is perfectly clear. Alarmed by the resistance it is encountering in the cities and being aware of the weaknesses in the countryside, they have decided to isolate and encircle the areas where resistance is most effective. At present the passes are being introduced to women in the countryside and thereafter the cities will be attacked with all viciousness and brutality for which the Nationalists are famous."[130]

It was not until March 1956 that the first reference books were issued. The first recipients were again women in the Orange Free State, this time in the town of Winburg. In April, hundreds of Winburg women marched to the magistrate's court and charged that many of those who had taken reference books had been tricked into accepting them. They proceeded to dump a sack containing 141 reference books on the ground and burned them. All of the women were arrested. Although it was not yet mandatory for women to carry reference books, it was illegal to destroy them.[131] Protests spread throughout the country. Twelve hundred women demonstrated in

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[129] Letter from O. R. Tambo, Secretary-General of the African National Congress, to a Provincial Secretary of the African National Congress, January 8, 1956. Reel 3B of the Carter/Karis Collection, *op. cit*.

[130] "Presidential Address by E. P. Moretsele", African National Congress Transvaal Annual Conference of November 3-4, 1956. Document 17 (a), contained in Karis and Carter *op. cit.*

[131] Karis and Carter, *op. cit.*, p. 74; Benson, *op. cit.*, p. 183; "Protests and Petitions against the Extension of the Pass Laws to Women and Pass Burning by Women". Reel 7B of the Carter/Karis Collection, *op. cit*.

Germiston, 2,000 in Johannesburg, 4,000 in Pretoria, and 350 in Bethlehem.[132] In Durban, a deputation of more than 300 women marched to the Native Commissioner's office.[133] Seven hundred Port Elizabeth women deposited more than 4,000 protest forms with the Native Commissioner - all of which were promptly turned over to the police.[134] The people of Evaton were in the sixth month of a bus boycott to protest fare increases when the women's protest began. Rather than break the boycott, 200 women marched seven miles to the Native Commissioner's office, where they left 10,000 protest forms.[135] On 9 August, while 20,000 women were descending on the Union Buildings in Pretoria, thousands of women were demonstrating in other parts of South Africa. In Cradock, 300 women assembled in front of the magistrate's office while a deputation presented the magistrate with a memorandum. Later in the day, a meeting of more than 1,000 people was held in the location to protest the pass laws. In Queenstown, women congregated outside the magistrate's court, while a deputation met with the Native Commissioner. An African policeman who witnessed the Queenstown demonstration later gave evidence in court. After providing the particulars of the meeting, Native Detective A. Moxambuza remarked:

> "Passes not popular amongst Africans. I myself have a wife and children, and if wife were to face same dangers of arrest as average African male, I would be most unhappy. I am aware that when first suggested that African women would carry passes, this caused resentment and heat amongst African women and their men-folk."[136]

Throughout the rest of the year, demonstrations against the pass laws took place in dozens of towns, cities, and rural villages. At its Second National Conference on August 11-12, 1956, the Federation of South African Women announced that 50,000 women had taken part in anti-pass demonstrations to date.[137] In November, more than l,000 women marched through the streets of Lichtenburg singing "*Nkosi Sikelele i Afrika*", the African national anthem, and shouting: "We do not want your passes!" When the police ordered them to disperse, the women refused. The police baton-charged the crowd. The women responded with stones. The captain ordered his men to fire, and two Africans were shot dead.[138] On 2 December, the Transvaal Regional

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[132] Benson, *op. cit.*, p. 183

[133] "The African National Congress Anti-Pass Campaign". Reel 3B of the Carter/Karis Collection, *op. cit*.

[134] "Protests and Petitions..." *op. cit*.

[135] Benson, *op. cit.*, p. 183; "Protests and Petitions..." *op. cit*.

[136] As abbreviated in the court record. "Protests and Petitions..." *op. cit*.

[137] "Message from the African National Congress", Second National Conference of the Federation of South African Women, August 11-12, 1956. Reel 19B of the Carter/Karis Collection, *op. cit*.

[138] "Ignored Order to Disperse", *The World*, Johannesburg, January 12, 1957; United Nations, World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women. "The Role of Women in the Struggle for Liberation in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa", A/Conf.94/5 (July 1980), p. 20.

Conference of the Federation of South African Women resolved to organise a final mass protest at the Union Buildings in Pretoria. Anticipating the passage of legislation that would outlaw such demonstrations, the women had to act quickly. However, their plans were abandoned three days later when 156 people were arrested and charged with high treason in a massive country-wide swoop. Among the detainees were leading members of the African National Congress Women's League and the Federation of South African Women. Although there were no more national demonstrations, women continued to organise local protests against the pass laws. On January 14, 1957, the African women of Potchefstroom went on strike. Assembling in the location before dawn, they marched to the office of the location superintendent, singing and shouting as they went. At issue was the requirement that women carry permits stating their right to be in the area and the duration of that right. The women complained that visitors were arrested as soon as they stepped off the bus, before they could go to the superintendent's office where temporary permits were issued. Even adults who were visiting their parents had to get permits to enter the location - or they were liable to arrest.[139] In early February, one hundred teenage girls walked out of the Ventersdorp Secondary School when the principal announced that they were to be issued reference books. When the reference book team arrived, the school was nearly deserted. Of the 110 pupils, only 10 remained. By the end of the week, only 16 girls had returned to school.[140] Later that month, women in the Randfontein locations refused to go to work in protest of the permit requirement. Police armed with sten guns patrolled the locations while women sang Congress songs.[141]

In May 1957, the Government began issuing permits of identification to women in the "Western Areas" townships of Johannesburg. As these townships were slated for removal under the Group Areas Act, the authorities explained that they were trying to identify the women who had the "right" to be rehoused in the Meadowlands location. The removal scheme had been hotly protested by many of the residents, and the permit requirement was one more slap in the face. On 12 May, 2,000 people attended an anti-permit meeting in the Sophiatown location. Four days later, 20,000 people met to send a delegation, escorted by 6,000 people, to the Johannesburg City Hall. The delegation met with the mayor and protested the issuance of "permits of identification" to African women. According to the Institute of Race Relations, the mayor agreed to "investigate the possibility of issuing exemption certificates to women who qualified for these".[142] In the Northern Transvaal, the town of Pietersburg experienced uprisings throughout a five month period. In March, 2,000 women stormed the office of the Native Commissioner, protesting the issuance of residential permits. In June, 2,000 women stoned the officials who came to register them. When the officials returned in July, they were met by a crowd of 3,000 women who again forced their retreat. That same month,

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[139] "Potchefstroom Women Angry at Permit System", *The World*, January 19, 1957
[140] "Angry Girls Storm out of School", *The World*, February 16, 1957

[141] "Women on 'Strike'", *The World*, March 2, 1957
[142] Muriel Horrell, ed., *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, 1956-1957*, (Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations, 1958), pp. 69-70

61 Uitenhage women were convicted for holding an illegal procession against the pass laws.[143] A crowd of 914 women in Standerton were intercepted and arrested on their way to see the mayor. However, the Institute of Race Relations reported, the women were all released on bail "as the white population would otherwise have been practically bereft of women servants."[144] In October, women in Nelspruit attacked the car of a magistrate who had come to introduce the reference books. Five women were arrested, and 300 marched to demand their release. The police charged the crowd with batons, then opened fire. Four people were wounded. The following day, the women organised a strike that was 95 per cent effective. Again the police fired on the protesters, this time wounding eight. The location was raided and 140 people arrested.[145]

In October 1958, teams of officials from the Native Affairs Department arrived in Johannesburg to issue the first reference books to Johannesburg women. During the week of 21 to 28 October, 3,000 women protested, leading a procession to the City Hall. More than 2,000 were arrested. As the women climbed into the police vans, some of them shouted to the bystanders: "Tell our madams we won't be at work tomorrow!" Of those arrested, 1,300 were convicted and sentenced to fines of R3 or R50 or one to three months in prison.[146] By the end of 1958, 45 anti-pass protests and demonstrations had taken place in South Africa.[147] In its report to the Annual Conference of December 13-14, 1958, the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress paid tribute to the women protesters: "Everyone knows today that the African women are in the front line in the struggle against passes... We have been highly inspired with the courage and determination of our women folk."[148] To the men, the National Executive Committee also made a special statement:

> "We proudly salute the women freedom volunteers from Winberg, Lichtenberg, Zeerust, Sekhukhuniland, Uitenhage, Standerton, Durban, Pietermaritzburg and two-thousand Johannesburg women. Men must prepare themselves '*Amadoda Makazi lungiselele kuba engayazi imini neyure*.' (Men must prepare themselves because they do not know the day and hour)."[149]

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[143] Horrell, *A Survey of Race Relations... 1956-1957, op. cit.*, p. 72; *Golden City Post*, August 4, 1957.
[144] Horrell, *A Survey of Race Relations... 1956-1957 op. cit.*, p. 6
[145] *Ibid.*; United Nations, "The Role of Women in the Struggle..." *op. cit.*, p. 21.
[146] Benson, *op. cit.*, p. 206; United Nations, "The Role of Women in the Struggle..." *op. cit.*, p. 22; Muriel Horrell, ed., *A Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, 1957-1958*, p. 54; "Memorandum on the Pass Laws and the issuing of reference Books to African Women", submitted by the Federation of South African Women to the Non-European Committee of the City Council of Johannesburg, 1958. Reel 19B of the Carter/Karis Collection *op. cit.*
[147] "Memorandum on the Pass Laws..." *op. cit.*
[148] "Report of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress", submitted to the Annual Conference, December 13-14, 1958. Document 31, contained in Karis and Carter, *op. cit.*, p. 454.
[149] *Ibid.*, p. 447

Revolts in the Lefurutse Reserve

While the Federation of South African Women and the African National Congress Women's League organised protests in the larger towns and cities, revolts in the rural areas were largely spontaneous. Irrefutably, the women's campaigns in the urban areas had some impact on the rural revolts. When workers in the towns and cities returned to the reserves, they took with them a new sense of political consciousness and militancy. Moreover, as news of the African National Congress activities spread, men and women who had had no prior contact with the organisation frequently identified themselves with its resistance to apartheid laws. Nevertheless, even the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress admitted:

> "Nobody doubts that the activity of the people has in many areas been spontaneous. This is not something to be regretted. It should be looked upon as a challenge to the political movement to bring organisation to the people's struggle."[150]

Throughout the 1950s, the National Executive Committee continually reiterated its warning that the African National Congress neglected the rural areas. In 1954, it cautioned that "there is a danger of the African National Congress becoming an urban-based and urban-oriented organisation." Contacts made with Africans in the reserves and white farming areas had not been "sufficiently strengthened by concretely and actively taking up the demands of the people of these areas and by incorporating into the programme of the Congress the immediate demands of the peasants and the farm labourers."[151] The following year, the National Executive Committee again remonstrated the organisation:

> "The Congress of the People showed clearly that the great gap in our organisation is on the farms and in the reserves. We pass resolutions on the need to organise the peasantry, but fail to follow them up. The question of organising the peasants must be tackled with resolve and energy."[152]

Throughout 1957 and 1958, as supporters of the African National Congress and of the Federation of South African Women protested in the towns and cities, the rural areas in the western Transvaal were in utter turmoil. In close proximity to South

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[150] "Report of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress", submitted to the Annual Conference, December 12-14, 1959. Document 33, contained in Karis and Carter, *op. cit.*, p. 476.

[151] "Report of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress", submitted to the Annual Conference, December 16-19. 1954. Document 7(b), contained in Karis and Carter, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

[152] "Report of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress", submitted to the Annual Conference, December 17-18, 1955. Document 13(c), contained in Karis and Carter, *op. cit.*, p. 235,

Africa's major mining and industrial centre, the Witwatersrand, the Lefurutse reserve of the western Transvaal was a source of migrant labour for South Africa's industries, farms, and mines. Prior to the extension of reference books to African women, the reserve had been an area without previous disturbances. By the end of the ordeal, the reserve and surrounding district had become a virtual military camp. Thousands of refugees had fled the area. Whole villages had been destroyed and deserted. The people who remained were subjected to nightly terror by police and the "bodyguards" of collaborating tribal authorities. The disturbances began in March 1957 when the Reference Book Unit came to Zeerust, the largest town in the Marico District. Only eight women, from an African population of 4,000 bought reference books. The vast majority refused to purchase the new documents.[153] The Reference Book Unit moved on to Dinokana, the village of Chief Abraham Moiloa. The Native Commissioner had presented the chief with an ultimatum -- either he tell his women to accept reference books or be deposed.[154] In the years preceding the issuance of reference books, Chief Moiloa had fallen from favour with the South African Government. He had delayed in signing the Bantu Authorities Act, which parodied tribal Government, making chiefs and headmen instruments of the white regime, rather than leaders who acted with the consent of their people.[155] In 1955, the chief had been requested to persuade the villagers of Braklaagte and Leeuwfontein to abandon their homes and move to a new location. The area surrounding the two villages had been declared "white", and the Government was determined to move all "Black spots" within it. Chief Moiloa's half-hearted efforts at persuasion had failed completely.[156] It was rumoured within government circles that the chief actually opposed the removal policy, the Bantu Authorities Act and the introduction of "Bantu education" for African children.[157] Although Chief Moiloa informed his people about the reference books, he refused to order the women to buy them. When the Reference Book Unit arrived, only 76 out of 4,000 Diokana women purchased the books - less than one in 50. Most of the 76 were school teachers, employees of the Government or wives of men who had been threatened with dismissal from their jobs if their wives did not co-operate.[158] Government retribution was swift. Chief Moiloa was summarily deposed and ordered to leave the reserve.[159] In the towns and cities of the Witwatersrand, the Bafurutse workers heard that trouble was brewing. Within days, the women had returned home and organised boycotts against a white trader sympathetic to the Government's efforts and against government schools where teachers had taken out reference books. Out of 1,200 students, less than 150 continued to go to classes. All of the boycotters were expelled and blacklisted. Their names were circulated by the Native Affairs Department to

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[153] Hooper, Charles, *Brief Authority* (London: Collins, 1960), p. 146; "Chief Told: 'Your Women Accept Passes or Else`", *The World*, April 13, 1957.
[154] "Chief Told..." *op.cit.*
[155] Hooper, *op. cit.*, p. 149
[156] *Ibid.*, p. 146
[157] *Ibid.*, p. 276
[158] *Ibid.*, pp. 151-52
[159] *Ibid.*, p. 152; "Chief Moiloa Turns Down 'Advice`: May be Deported", *The World*, April 20, 1957.

prevent them from continuing their education elsewhere. Ultimately, Dinokana's only school was forced to close down permanently.[160] The following weekend, 150 Bafurutse men arrived from Johannesburg. A meeting was held and a decision made: all of the reference books were to be destroyed. The women went from door to door, collecting the documents. On Sunday, the reference books were brought to the public square and burned. Several thousand people gathered around the blaze, singing as the passes went up in smoke.[161] That evening, as the men made their way to Zeerust to catch the train back to Johannesburg, they walked into a police cordon. One hundred men were arrested. To avenge the arrests, the women in the village began to burn the huts of people loyal to the Government. The loyalists included a school principal, members of a church whose leader had advocated the acceptance of reference books, policemen and other employees and beneficiaries of the South African Government.[162] On Monday, large-scale arrests began. By the end of the week, the jail in Zeerust was full. The unrest that began in Dinokana quickly spread throughout the reserve. The women of Lekgophung took matters into their own hands and told their chief to be absent when the Reference Book Unit arrived. Although it was unheard of for women to give orders to a chief, the chief obeyed them. When the government officials arrived, the women informed them that they did not want passes. The authorities left without issuing a single reference book.[163] In the village of Supingstad, the women suddenly discovered that they had urgent business elsewhere. When the Reference Book Unit appeared, the village was deserted. In Braklaagte and Borakalalo, the books were refused without ceremony. The Reference Book Unit returned to Motswedi three times without issuing a single book - in spite of the chief's command that the women co-operate.[164] Only a handful of books were accepted in Leeuwfontein, where villagers speaking against the books were arrested.[165] In Gopane, the chief applied pressure, and approximately one-third of the women purchased reference books. When the village men came home for the Easter holidays, they were livid. The chief had no right to take action on an issue of such importance without consulting them. The reference books had to be destroyed. Immediately, police reinforcements were sent from Pretoria. A mobile column of police armed with automatic weapons entered the village with orders to arrest some 20 women suspected of burning their reference books. A crowd of more than 200 women surrounded the suspects and challenged the police to arrest them all. Two hundred and thirty-three women were arrested, and 400 offered themselves for trial. Mired in confusion, the case was finally abandoned.[166] In the white farming district surrounding the reserve, the acceptance of reference books was predetermined. Unlike workers in the urban areas, farm labourers lacked protective support networks. They could not organise trade unions or form community organisations, uniting in their efforts to protect their rights. They could not initiate economic boycotts against

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[160] Hooper, *op. cit.,* p. 157
[161] *Ibid.,* p. 165; "Chief Moiloa Turns Down..." *op. cit.*
[162] Hooper, *op. cit.* pp. 166-67
[163] *Ibid.,* p. 173
[164] *Ibid.,* pp. 174, 296
[165] *Ibid.,* pp. 176-77
[166] Wall, Mary Ann, *The Dominee and the Dom-Pass* (Cape Town: Insight, 1961), p. 28

discriminating or otherwise unfair merchants who, more often than not, were their own employers. Unlike the more fortunate peasants in the reserves, farm labourers did not possess the means of production; they had no land, tools or livestock of their own. They were completely at the mercy of their employers for their economic security and well-being. When reference books were introduced into the farming area near the Lefurutse reserve, the farmers frequently transported their female workers to the Reference Book Unit and waited while they purchased the books. In many instances, girls as young as 12 and 13 were issued reference books, even though they were three and four years under the minimum age of 16. Their employers then confiscated the books, informing the girls that if they ever left the farm, they would be hunted down by the police and put in jail. Without knowledge or means to challenge their employers` actions, these girls were often tied to the land for life.[167] As time wore on and relatively few women purchased reference books, the authorities increasingly resorted to coercion. Medical services became restricted in the reserve. Civil marriages could not take place if both partners could not produce reference books. Married men who attempted to pay their taxes were turned away if their wives had not purchased reference books. Unless their wives complied with the authorities, these men were liable to arrest, imprisonment, fines and compulsory farm labour for non-payment of taxes.[168] Women pensioners who had not purchased reference books were no longer allowed to collect their pensions in the villages. Instead, they were forced to make the long journey into Zeerust to pick up their payments. Suddenly, the bus service in Dinokana was discontinued. Villagers who had to travel to Zeerust were compelled to walk more than 30 miles to Zeerust and back. The Dinokana post office was closed down. No more telegrams could be sent or money received from relatives working in the cities.[169] Collaborating chiefs, whose wives were usually among the first to take out reference books, refused to let women defiers reap their crops. Their land and farm implements were confiscated.[170] Although it was not yet mandatory for women to carry reference books, those caught without them were subject to stiff - and illegal - fines. The chiefs claimed that the fines were "for Congress offences - African National Congress crimes", although many of the villagers did not know what a "Congress offence" or the African National Congress was.[171] Women who could not pay the fines fled to the hills, abandoning their homes and leaving their fields and animals untended. Throughout 1957, the police mobile column moved from village to village, criss-crossing the Lefurutse reserve. In its wake were mass arrests, night raids, and brutal beatings of those who protested the issuance of reference books. In terror, the villagers left their houses at night and slept in the bush. The mobile column became a virtual army of occupation, camping in the villages, commandeering animals for food and women for domestic service.[172] In November 1957, the mobile column began to extend its protection to pro-government chiefs - against their own people. Contingents of "bodyguards" were organised, composed of

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[167] Hooper, *op. cit.* pp. 177-78
[168] *Ibid.,* pp. 201, 203
[169] *Ibid.,* pp. 204-05
[170] *Ibid.,* p. 176
[171] *Ibid.,* p. 349
[172] Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 53

government sympathisers and police. Village men were forcibly impressed into their ranks. Once they were associated with the "bodyguards", these men could not safely return to their villages. Their only hope of protection was to remain with the para-police units. Communities were thus divided internally, and violence spread. The "bodyguards" conducted nightly raids, searching for pass-burners, whipping and clubbing the villagers. Women were severely beaten, their bodies covered with bruises and deep gashes made from the sharpened edges of strips of tire.[173] Rather than intimidating the people, the police tactics intensified their anger and will to resist. Women were brought to the Zeerust jails by the hundreds, singing "Open wide the doors of the prison, Commissioner. The women of Lafurutse are ready to come in".[174] In response to harassment by police and government sympathisers, villagers engaged in acts of sabotage and counter-attack. In Leeuwfontein, 14 to 15 huts were burned and the chief forced into hiding. Many of the homes belonged to members of the Zion Church women who, together with the chief, had agreed to participate in the Government's removal scheme.[175] In December, riots broke out in Witkleigat. For some time, the "bodyguards" had made a practice of meeting the buses coming into the village and screening the passengers as they descended. They habitually beat people who had paid fines rather than go to jail and those awaiting trial who were out on bail. The "bodyguards" also attacked men whose wives had not taken reference books, parents of those who had fled, and villagers who had helped the families of detainees.[176] At Christmas time, when the Witkleigat men returned from the cities, they were attacked by the "bodyguards" as they stepped off the buses. For the first time, the passengers fought back. A crowd gathered and marched to the home of the pro-Government chief. The chief had fled, leaving his house and car to be burned, his wife beaten, and his "bodyguards" killed. The mobile column from Pretoria arrived on the scene. Ninety people were arrested and charged with murder. By the end of the month, the homes of 36 government collaborators had been burned. Rioting spread to other villages. Large-scale, indiscriminate arrests were made throughout the reserve. In early January, police shot and killed four Africans in Gopane.[177] Massive exodus from the villages began. By January 1958, people were leaving by the thousands, abandoning huts, fields and cattle. They went to the British Protectorate of Bechuanaland, to the Witwatersrand, even to Cape Town, a thousand miles away. In a single week in February, one thousand refugees fled to Bechuanaland, and more than one thousand left for other parts of South Africa.[178] Among the involuntary refugees were political "agitators", banished to remote parts of the Union where frequently they could not speak the local language. In March 1958, the Minister of Native Affairs announced that African National Congress membership, slogans and salutes were henceforth illegal in certain African areas, including the Lefurutse reserve. Africans could not enter the reserve without written permission from the Native Affairs Department. Migrant workers returning from their

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[173] *Ibid.*, p. 5
[174] Hooper, *op. cit.*, p. 219
[175] *Ibid.*, pp. 317-18
[176] *Ibid.*, p. 308; Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
[177] Hooper, *op. cit.*, pp. 329-31, 335
[178] *Ibid.*, p. 361

places of employment were required to take out permits in order to enter their own "homeland."[179] The penalty for breaking these regulations was a fine of up to R300 or three years` imprisonment, plus three years` imprisonment without the option of a fine. A person who raised his hand in a Congress salute could thus be sentenced to six years in prison.[180]

Conclusion

By 1960, an estimated 3,020,281 African women - approximately 75 per cent of the adult female population - had accepted passes.[181] Although it was not yet compulsory for women to take out reference books, they were subject to severe disabilities if they did not have them. Women without reference books could not rent houses in the urban areas, or they lost those that they had. They could not register the births of their children or be married according to common law. Without a reference book, women could not receive old age pensions or maintenance grants. They were not issued driver's licences. Teachers and nurses without passes were dismissed from their jobs. Some women claimed that their rent money was not accepted, and they could not get licences to sell beer until they had produced a reference book.[182] In 1958, many employers began to make the possession of reference books a condition of employment, even though there was no law requiring African women to register their service contracts or to carry reference books.[183] The last anti-pass demonstrations took place in March 1960. On April 8, the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress were banned under the terms of the newly-passed Unlawful Organisations Act. Already weakened by the arrests of their leaders, the remnants of the African National Congress and of the Pan Africanist Congress went underground. As outlawed organisations, they could no longer convene mass meetings and demonstrations. The days of anti-pass protests were over. On October 26, 1962, the Government announced that all African women, aged 16 and over, would be required to carry reference books as of February 1, 1963. By that time, the African National Congress Women's League had been outlawed, and the Federation of South African Women had effectively ceased to exist. Much of their leadership had been banned, banished or imprisoned. The women's anti-pass campaign had lasted for more than a decade. Protests and demonstrations had shaken towns, cities

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[179] *Ibid.*, pp. 374-75; Horrell, *A Survey of Race Relations.... 1957-1958*, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-15

[180] Hooper, *op. cit.*, p. 375

[181] United Nations, "The Role of Women in the Struggle..." *op. cit.*, p. 22

[182] *Ibid.*; "Must Women Carry Passes? We say No!" African National Congress Women's League leaflet. Reel 3B of the Carter/Karis Collection, *op. cit.*; "The Fight against Passes is On!! We Call upon All Men and Women!!" Flyer for National Anti-Pass Conference (African National Congress), Saturday 30 May. Reel 3B of the Carter/Karis Collection, *op. cit.*

[183] Luckhardt and Wall, *op. cit.*, p. 307. In 1959, the Native Labour Regulations Act of 1911 was revised so that, for the first time, the regulations were applicable to African women as well as men. As of January 9, 1959, no one could legally employ an African man or woman who had not registered with a local or district labour bureau. Horrell, *Laws..."* op. cit..

and villages across the country. Tens of thousands of women had participated in the resistance, forcing the Government to delay for eleven years the mandatory extension of reference books to African women. The women had fought the pass legislation with unprecedented militancy. They had resisted the implementation of laws which threatened the very core of their existence - their position in society, their ability to provide for their children, and their capacity to create for their husbands and children a stable and secure family life. The women had clung to their last remaining freedom - the freedom of movement - with a tenacity unparalleled in other struggles. Unlike African men, who had lost this freedom generations before, the women still hoped to avoid the inevitable. Although they were defeated in their immediate objectives, the repeal of pass laws affecting women, the women had won a major victory. They had gained their rightful place in the struggle for national liberation, a place at the forefront, on footing equal to that of men. They had shown that men could not hope to liberate themselves if women were relegated to a subordinate status. For without the women, the men did not know the day and the hour.

APARTHEID AND THE COLOURED PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA[184]

by

Alex La Guma

INTRODUCTION

The indigenous African people, although subjected to the most intense oppression and exploitation, are not the only oppressed group in South Africa. The two million Coloured people, and more than a half-million Asian people, suffer varying forms of race discrimination, humiliation and oppression in the Republic. They are part of the non-white base upon which rests white privilege. As such they constitute an integral part of the social forces ranged against white supremacy. Despite deceptive and often meaningless concessions, they share a common fate with the African people, and their own future in a free South African society is inextricably bound up with the liberation of the African majority.

Minor concessions and dubious privileges, an illusory social superiority over the African population, have been embodiments of attempts on the part of successive Governments of South Africa to woo the Coloured people to the side of the whites in the confrontation with African opposition. However, the advent of the National Party Government in 1948 and its policy of apartheid soon revealed to the non-white population as a whole the true nature of white supremacy. "Separate development" and apartheid meant the final negation of those already much-eroded minor privileges which the Coloured people possessed, culminating in the plans for the destruction of the last vestige of democratic process, the municipal franchise, in 1972. Thus apartheid finds little support in the community, and even those Coloureds who do co-operate with the Government for one reason or another are today finding "separate development" a bitter pill to swallow.

But after more than twenty years of the application of their policy of apartheid, the rulers of South Africa themselves now find that they have arrived at an impasse *vis-a-vis* this community and a pretext for the implementation of the final objectives of apartheid, not only because of the opposition from the community and the basic falsity of the concept of white supremacy, but also arising out of the socio-historic background of the Coloured people, resulting in the difficulty of finding a "solution" to the problem or fitting them into the black and white jigsaw pattern of apartheid. While hoping to use the

[184] From "Notes and Documents", No. 18/72, September 1972

Coloured community to widen the anti-African base,[185] in the face of the people's rejection of apartheid, the racists have instead run aground on the rocks of their own making...

The Cape Liberal Tradition

Participation by Coloured people in the affairs of government, albeit on a limited and conditional scale, has its origins in the early days of colonial settlement. As far back as 1799 Coloured riflemen joined the British in putting down a rebellion of descendants of the original Dutch who turned against the administration for alleged partiality to the Coloured and Xhosa in the Cape.

The British Empire, which backed the emancipation of slaves, generally maintained an attitude of liberalism in the colonies. Cape liberalism, which stood for racial tolerance, however, was not a general characteristic of the white population. British immigrants rapidly absorbed the racial prejudices of the older white inhabitants. Nevertheless, as Simons points out, "liberalism took root in the Western Cape because of the region's peculiar history, relative tranquillity, racial composition and cultural cleavages."[186]

The policy resulted in minor concessions for the Coloured population, but did not manifest itself in any far-reaching uplifting of their conditions, material or political.

The constitution of 1853 gave the Cape a system of representative government and a franchise open to any man with certain economic qualifications. But the constitution was colour-blind only in form. The Coloured people made up the great bulk of the poor and, consequently, few qualified for the vote. Even in later years, when Coloured voters were marginally important in a dozen or more constituencies, they never succeeded in returning any of their own people to Parliament.

In the general election of 1893 an attempt was made for the first time to put up non-white candidates. In Paarl in the Western Cape, moves were made to unite everybody in support of James Curry, the Coloured candidate. In Cape Town the Malay community prepared to nominate A. M. Effendi, who was of Turkish extraction. At that time there

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[185] Early in 1971 the Afrikaans Calvinist Movement suggested a "three-stream" policy patterned on Hertzog's "two-stream" policy for the sharing of political rights by white English and Afrikaners.

At the end of July 1971, ten Transvaal professors and 19 lecturers from the University of South Africa and the University of the Witwatersrand issued a public "declaration of faith", appealing to South Africans to think again, especially about the eventual achievement of full citizenship by the Coloured people. The Coloured people would have to be accepted as a full and equal element in the "Western community" in South Africa, they said.

[186] Simons, R. E. and H. J. *Class and Colour in South Africa 1850-1950* (Penguin, 1969), p. 20

existed in the Cape a form of proportional representation known as the cumulative vote. Certain large constituencies returned more than one candidate and every voter was allowed to cast as many votes as there were candidates, and voters could, if they chose, cast all their votes for the same candidate. To prevent this from happening in the case of the non-white representative, a Constitutional Amendment Act was rushed through Parliament, which abolished the cumulative vote.

In Natal at the time of the Union, there was, as in the Cape, no constitutional discrimination between white and Coloured people from the time of a charter in 1856. There was, however, a hardening of attitudes even before Union and laws in 1865 and 1896 excluded Africans and Indians respectively from political rights.

In the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, the Coloured people had not enjoyed political rights from the time of the establishment of these republics to the time of Union. The Transvaal Republic laid down that no "bastard", up to the tenth generation, could sit in its meetings as a member or judge.

The South Africa Act of 1909, passed just prior to the formation of the Union of South Africa, finally removed the right of Coloureds in Natal and the Cape to stand and serve as elected or nominated representatives in both Houses of Parliament.

Before Union, some Coloured leaders decided that their interests were not fully safeguarded by the white political parties and in 1902, the African Political Organisation (APO)[187] was formed. Despite its name, the APO was composed of an entirely Coloured membership.

At a conference in 1905, Dr. A. Abdurahman, the first Coloured (Malay) member of the Cape Town Municipal Council, was elected President of the APO. In 1906, when the British handed power back to the Transvaal whites, the APO put forward a demand for the vote for Africans and Coloureds, and sent Dr. Abdurahman and two others to England on a deputation to present their case to the British public.

Coloured progressive thought was already turning towards an alliance with African organisations and opinion in the confrontation with the segregationist policies of the proposed Union. Already in 1907 the APO had attended a joint conference of Africans and Coloured people in order to discuss a common attitude towards the Cape elections the following year. An extract from an APO editorial, written on the approval by Britain of the colour-bar Act of Union gives an idea of how far advanced the APO in fact was. The editorial stated:

> "The struggle has not ended. It has just begun. We the Coloured and Native peoples of South Africa, have a tremendous fight before us... No longer must we look to our flabby friends of Great Britain. Our political destiny is in our hands; and we must be prepared to fight with grim determination to succeed..."

[187] Later the African Peoples Organisation

It was of course not in the favour of the white People to see the Coloured people siding with the African majority. The whites meant to ensure that all power remained in their hands and every effort would be made to split the potential forces of non-white opposition. To this end the whites could make use of the Coloured people's history and cultural affinity with them, in order to gain support. Hertzog told Parliament in 1929 that it would be "very foolish to drive the Coloured people to the enemies of the Europeans - and that will happen if we repel him - to allow him eventually to come to rest in the arms of the Native."

On the electoral front the fear of driving the Coloured people to rest in "the arms of the Native" lost intensity as successive measures disfranchised Africans and diminished the relative importance of the Coloured vote. The Women's Enfranchisement Act, which gave the vote to white women, at one blow halved the importance of the Coloured vote. It was further diminished by the Franchise Laws Amendment Act of 1931 which brought the white male franchise in the Cape in line with the rest of the Union by abolishing the property qualification and extending the franchise to every white male over twenty-one years.

Growing Oppression and Resistance

Teachers, students, university graduates, journalists and a handful of artisans produced a new generation of radicals in the Western Cape during the 1930s. Like Dr. Abdurahman thirty years before, they refused to take second place to the whites, but they turned their backs on his policies and strategy. Abdurahman had discredited himself and his organisation by clinging to the white liberals when they followed Smuts into Hertzog's camp. The younger generation disputed his leadership and authority and made a bid to create anew on their own account. By the 1930s, the APO had degenerated into hardly more than a benefit, burial and building society.

In December 1935 the National Liberation League of South Africa was founded, with Mrs. Z. Gool, Dr. Abdurahman's daughter, as president and James La Guma as General Secretary. Coloured radicals looked to Africans for mass support, and they drafted the League's programme with them in mind, although they renewed pleas in the interest of all, black and white, calling on white workers to cut themselves off from the ruling class before it dragged them down to the "degraded position of the non-European."

At that period of its history, the African National Congress was sluggish and steeped in reformism, and it appeared that from then on Coloured radicals would strive to shape aims and strategy of activity in the Cape.

At that time as well, white politicians were preparing for battle in the impending general election and Afrikaner nationalists set the pace. Thundering against aliens, communists, Jews and men of colour they publicised the manifesto that was to form the basis of their legislative programme after 1948. The Government of the day was quickly alarmed and attempted to outmanoeuvre them by getting in first.

The Cape Provincial Council passed an ordinance giving municipal councils the power to enforce segregation in public places and residential areas. Stuttaford, then Minister of the Interior, gave notice of a scheme of "complete and parallel" segregation, a forerunner to the present policy of apartheid.

The Non-European United Front, which had been initiated earlier by the National Liberation League, replied with a massive demonstration of Coloured people in Cape Town on March 27, 1939. The police attacked demonstrators outside the Houses of Parliament and continued to assault the residents of District Six, the Coloured quarter, until the early hours of the morning.

The Government vetoed the ordinance and dropped its own segregation proposals, a victory for the mass militancy of the Coloured people.

With World War II looming on the horizon, the Government also realised that it would need the full co-operation of the entire population, and it therefore shelved most of its anti-colour policies. The Nationalists, destined to become the party in power after the war, did not let up in their racism and pro-Nazism. While several of those who are today rulers of South Africa were interned for siding with the enemy, Coloured men went off to war, hoping for a better deal for their people on their return.

The Apartheid Regime

When the National Party came to power in 1948, many of the subtleties which had attempted to disguise the racial policies of previous administration were stripped away and non-whites were faced with the naked hand of oppression. Apart from the fact that Nationalists were against the enfranchisement of non-whites, it was clear that the vote of the Coloured men in the Cape and Natal had gone against them, and this constituted a danger which in their eyes had to be removed. Likewise the potential strength of the total non-white vote was something Nationalists could not countenance, because it constituted an ominous presence in the body politic; only the white man should govern.

At the very first session of Parliament after the advent to power of the Nationalist Government, it introduced an Electoral Law Amendment Act[188] which provided that Coloured applications to vote must be witnessed and completed in the presence of an electoral officer, magistrate or police officer.[189] The result was of course a serious drop in the Coloured voter registration in spite of the fact that the Coloured community had already acquired an apathy for white-controlled elections.

The next step was the Separate Representation of Voters Act[190] which removed the Coloured voters from the common roll in the fifty-five Cape constituencies. Coloured

[188] Act No. 50 of 1948
[189] Previously a voter could complete a form without supervision.
[190] Act No. 46 of 1951

voters were then placed on a separate roll which would then elect four whites to represent them in the House of Assembly at five-year intervals and two white representatives to the Provincial Council.

The Coloured people replied to these proposals with a massive campaign organised by the Franchise Action Council, a united front of all elements, both white and non-white, who were against the removal of Coloured voters from the common roll.

In spite of widespread protests, including a general strike of Coloured people and court proceedings instituted against the Government, the Bill to remove the Coloured voters from the common roll was passed. This was only accomplished, however, when the Government padded the Senate with its supporters in order to get the required two-thirds majority of both Houses in order to amend the entrenched clauses of the Constitution.

While separate representation in Parliament had been a feature of Nationalist policy since early times, it became clear that even after their common roll "triumph," in the long run they would not be satisfied with even representation of Coloured people by white representatives. At each election under the Act, pro-Government candidates were resoundingly defeated. The Government was forced, therefore, to contemplate another form of "representation" and this led to the Coloured Persons Representative Council.

Coloured Affairs Department

The basis for the present form of representation under the Nationalist Government had indeed been established by the previous United Party Government. It was the latter administration which, while claiming to champion the cause of the Coloured community, brought into being a Coloured Advisory Council (CAC). Instead of finding plans to extend the rights of the Coloured people in return for their services in defeating Nazism, Coloured soldiers returning home discovered that the Government under which they had served was prepared to appease the Nationalists who had sided with the enemy. Shortly before the general election of 1943, Smuts had decided to introduce administrative segregation of the Coloured people. Coloured affairs henceforth would be dealt with by a special section of the Department of the Interior and by a permanent council of Coloured notables.

An immediate and emphatic protest was launched by Coloured organisations, individuals and their supporters. Some 200 delegates attended the first National Anti-CAD conference in Cape Town on May 29, 1943. The conference decided to institute a political and social boycott of the Coloured Advisory Council, and to promote a united front against all forms of discrimination.

The CAC, functioning under the Coloured Affairs Department, was composed of members of the community appointed by the Government. It is supposed to advise on "matters affecting the Coloured people." However, when even these specially appointed "representatives" made urgent appeals to the United Party Government to extend the

Coloured vote to the Northern provinces, they were turned down by the Government.

The CAC continued to function for nearly two years after the victory of the National Party at the polls, in the face of intense attacks from its opponents.

The Nationalist Government, taking over from where the United Party had let off, extended the Council into a Union Council of Coloured Affairs (UCCA)[191] under a complete Ministry of Coloured Affairs which would control the future of the community via apartheid. In order to give this new apartheid institution a semblance of democracy, the Government allowed Coloured people to elect some members but the majority were still appointed by the Government.

Again the Coloured people demonstrated their rejection of this travesty of political rights and boycotted the "elections". "Candidates" who stood in support of this institution were duly declared elected unopposed. They took their seats in spite of bitter opposition from the community, and such was the opposition that the authorities had to refuse public admission to sessions of the UCCA and all its meetings had to be held in private.

Elections to the Coloured Persons Representative Council

The Coloured Persons Representative Council (CRC) was established by the Coloured Persons Representative Council Amendment Act of 1968. It consisted of 60 members - 40 to be elected[192] and 20 to be nominated by the Government. Every Coloured man and woman in South Africa over 21 was compelled to register as a voter under pain of a fine of R 50 ($70) or three months` imprisonment.

The establishment of the CRC gave rise to a spate of political parties among the Coloured community, organised in the main by those who supported the apartheid policy of the Government one way or the other and saw themselves as participating in their own "Parliament." The anti-apartheid Coloured Labour Party had been established by moderates who hoped to fill the vacuum caused by heavy Government repression against such organisations as the Coloured People's Congress and the Non-European Unity Movement (of which the Anti-CAD was a unit). This party had originally been under the leadership of Dr. R.E. Van der Ross. It was formed in order to "use the instruments available to us," because "that was the only way the Coloured people can organise themselves under the present system" and the Coloured people were not "given to working underground."[193]

Even though the Labour Party was speedy in giving assurances to the authorities that

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[191] CCA after the declaration of the Republic

[192] 28 in the Cape Province, 6 in the Transvaal and 3 each in Natal and the Orange Free State

[193] Mr. Van der Ross, writing in *The Cape Argus*, November 14, 1965

everything they did would be above board and that they had no objection to Security Police surveillance, no sooner had it been established than leading members were arraigned before magistrates and warned that they could be banned and proscribed for "furthering the aims of communism." Some of the founders then resigned.

The first election of the Coloured Persons Representative Council was held on September 24, 1969. Six parties contested the election, of which only the Labour Party stood on an anti-apartheid platform. There were contests in only 37 of the 40 seats, three candidates of the pro-Government Federal Coloured People's Party, led by Tom Swartz,[194] were returned unopposed.

Of the little over 600,000 compulsorily registered voters only 48.7 per cent went to the polls. Polling of up to 75 per cent was registered in some of the rural areas, where Coloured voters had reportedly been subjected to great pressure by employers and the police, and permission to address meetings in the Coloured reserves was usually refused to anti-Government candidates. In the Cape urban constituencies, where Coloured people had previously had the vote on the common roll, the polls were low, some areas showing a mere 13 per cent, 16.4 per cent, 19.2 per cent and 20.2 per cent.

Nevertheless, the community's rejection of Government policy was shown by the outcome of the election, in which the anti-apartheid Labour Party topped the polls, winning 26 seats. The Federal Party won 11 seats. The Republican Coloured Party, the National Coloured People's Party and the Independent Federal Party won one seat each.

To secure control of the Council, the Labour Party had to win 31 seats, which it failed to do. The Government then proceeded to appoint Federal Party men to fill the remaining 20 seats of the Council, including 13 candidates who had been defeated in the elections. This gave the Federal Party the necessary votes to control the Council.

Perhaps the worst insult of all to the Coloured electorate and the people at large, was the Government's appointment of Tom Swartz himself as chairman of the Council executive. During the elections Swartz was heavily defeated by the Labour Party candidate and got even fewer votes than the Republican Party candidate who came second. Yet this man is being presented to the world as the so-called Prime Minister of Coloured South Africa.

The CRC is totally subordinate to the central Parliament, and its powers are even narrower than those of the Transkei Assembly. It may draft laws on the limited and specified range of matters entrusted to it, but no proposed law may be introduced unless it has the approval of the Minister of Coloured Affairs. The entire budget of the CRC is voted by the all-white South African Parliament which can for its part legislate on any matter concerning the Coloured people as it sees fit.

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[194] Mr. Swartz had formerly been Chairman of the Council of Coloured Affairs

The then leader of the Labour Party, M.D. Arendse, was not exaggerating when he told the annual conference of the party in Cape Town in April 1970 that the Nationalist Government had by devious means deprived the Coloured people of all democratic voting rights on every level, thus stripping them of the last vestiges of democratic processes. As a result of the new political dispensation that had been engineered by the authorities, he went on to say, "we find ourselves now virtually a voiceless people in the land of our birth."

Campaigns against Apartheid

One of the first campaigns launched by the Coloured people against the Nationalist Government's apartheid policy centred on the introduction of racial separation on suburban trains in the Western Cape. Here again it was discovered that the new Government's implementation of apartheid on local railways was in fact a follow-up of the previous administration's plans. All the technical and organisational wherewithal had been prepared by the United Party administration and it fell to the Nationalists to merely put them into effect. In 1949 widespread protest against this violation of long-standing rights of the people was led by an *ad-hoc* Train Apartheid Resistance Committee. Apartheid on local buses was introduced in 1955 and a massive boycott of buses was organised by the Coloured Peoples Congress (CPC).[195]

After the collapse of the National Liberation League in the late thirties, some of its former members had regrouped after World War II, and had initiated the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) which embraced the Anti-CAD and the Teachers League of South Africa as its main Coloured affiliates. The NEUM pursued an isolationist attitude and relied mainly on propaganda rather than active struggle. With the Government pressing relentlessly on with its apartheid policy and with the most militant sections of the non-white population emerging under the leadership of the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Indian Congress, mass participation of the Coloured community was essential for a united struggle. The Coloured People's Congress provided that participation.

Apart from mass campaigns against the implementation of Group Areas Act,[196] and the Population Registration Act,[197] the CPC also participated in the nation-wide campaign for the Congress of the People in 1955, which formulated and adopted the Freedom Charter. From 1956 to 1960, several of its leading members were among the accused in the notorious Treason Trial which resulted from that campaign.

When the ANC called for a national day of protest following the Sharpeville massacre, the CPC was instrumental in organising the support of thousands of Coloured

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195 The Coloured People's Congress, initially the Coloured People's Organisation

196 Act No. 41 of 1950

197 Act No. 30 of 1950

workers who struck in alliance with the Africans, reiterating their own demands at the same time. The entire CPC leadership was detained during the resultant State of Emergency proclaimed by the Government, the only section of Coloured leadership to be thus imprisoned. Similarly when the National Action Council of the All-In African Conference at Pietermaritzburg called for demonstrations in support of a National Convention for a new constitution, in reply to the establishment of the white Republic, thousands of Coloured workers again responded to the leadership of the CPC. In the Cape Peninsula alone, between 35,000 and 40,000 Coloured workers engaged in commerce and industry stayed home and virtually crippled the clothing, building, engineering, leather and baking concerns. In Port Elizabeth where the second largest concentration of Coloured people lives, 75 per cent of the Coloured labour force supported African strikers. For the first time, Coloured workers participated in the stay-at-home in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, Natal.

In 1961 a National Convention of the Coloured people was called in order to examine their status in South African society and to formulate common demands which would provide for their future in a democratic State. A wide section of the Coloured population, conservative, moderate and militant, joined in the preparations for the Convention through the participation of political, social, religious, sporting, cultural and trade union organisations, as well as a number of personalities. On the night of July 6, the Minister of Justice invoked the Suppression of Communism Act[198] and banned the holding of the Convention within a radius of thirty miles around Cape Town. The organisers moved the assembly to two farms at Malmesbury, just beyond the limits of the Minister's prohibition. In spite of the difficulties entailed by the last-minute ban, all provinces were represented and the Convention proceeded on the 8th and 10th July.

Among its findings it stated:

> "The only policy that can succeed in South Africa is one of complete equality for all people... the total abolition of the colour-bar in every sphere, and full citizenship for all the peoples of South Africa."[199]

Faced with widespread opposition to their policies, the Government resorted to wholesale intimidation of Coloured leaders and organisations. The provisions of the Suppression of Communism Act were invoked in order to ban, confine and house-arrest individual activists. The CPC became practically immobilised by the banning of its most active cadres, and although technically still a legal organisation, today its activities have to be carried on underground.

After dealing with Congress militants, the Minister of Justice turned upon such Coloured bodies as the Anti-CAD and the Teachers League of South Africa, banning their foremost spokesmen. Coloured members of the Cape Town City Council, the only institution of direct representation for Coloured people, were prohibited from attending

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198 Act No. 44 of 1950

199 *Contact*, Johannesburg, August 10, 1961

gatherings. Members of the District Six Action Committee which had been campaigning against Group Areas proclamations, were arraigned before magistrates and warned that they would be dealt with for "furthering the aims of communism" if they persisted with their protest campaign.

The widespread activities of the Security Police and the Minister of Justice have since that period been used in an attempt to eliminate opposition to apartheid.

Hardening Attitudes

The application of apartheid has been seen as the ruthless continuation and development of the segregation and colour-bar policies of past South African Governments, and has emphasised for the non-whites that other parties in Parliament hold no promise of redress for their grievances against the Government, nor agreement to equality for all in South Africa.

The main opposition party in Parliament, the United Party, has for generations made use of the Coloured people's old preference for the British connection, and in the guise of having the interests of the community at heart, exploited the Coloured franchise for its own parliamentary ambitions. The concern over growing Coloured antagonism to white supremacy as a whole must be seen as anxiety of that section of the whites over the imminent loss of support from a large section of the non-African population in a potential front against the black majority.

Sir De Villiers Graaff, leader of the UP, stated in 1965 that the United Party was still "prepared to accept the Coloured people as part of the Western Group in South Africa," but he "prayed that their conduct will not make this impossible for us."[200]

Today the United Party accepts the principle of the system of separate representation first introduced by the Nationalist Government. On June 9, 1971, De Villiers Graaff said:

> "The Coloured people should be represented in the central Parliament by six members of Parliament who could be either Coloured or white persons. They would be elected on a separate roll. The Coloured Persons Representative Council should be transformed into a wholly elected communal council... Coloured people should not be deprived of the municipal vote before adequate alternative rights are available."[201]

The more radical of the Coloured political groups have always warned against the basic racist allegiances of the opposition parties. However, today even moderate elements, as well as those who had favoured United Party policy in the past, have

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200 *Cape Times*, April 24, 1965

201 *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa, 1971*

rejected that party and have come out in favour of full equality for Coloured people. Even the pro-apartheid groups in the Coloured Persons Representative Council (CRC) have stated this position.

The *Rand Daily Mail* reported on March 6, 1972:

> "Coloured leaders of the Labour Party told the United Party in strong terms that their political plans for the Coloured people were unacceptable, i.e., plans for separate institutions like communal councils."

The Coloured leaders were also reported to have told United Party Members of Parliament that they objected to the continual stress on the fact that the United Party stood for white leadership and was in favour of separate Coloured areas.

The United Party's policy was rejected by the leaders of both the major parties in the Coloured Persons Representative Council. Tom Swartz of the Federal Party was reported to have said that the Coloured people would never be satisfied with inadequate measures but that they want "full equality".[202]

Growing Opposition

Outside the deliberations of the CRC and official meetings, the Coloured community has continued to reveal its rejection of apartheid and a hardening of opposition to colour-bar attitudes from all quarters of the white front. This is taking place even in spite of the atmosphere of intimidation by the Security Police and the Minister of Justice.

Among the intelligentsia, scholars and students, opposition and protest have been developing openly. During the Government-organised celebrations for the tenth anniversary of the Republic in 1971, reports revealed that the majority of pupils arranged to participate through their schools, refused to turn out. On another occasion, when the whites only Cape Peninsula Arts Board performed at a high school, Coloured students created disturbances or ignored the performers. At the Coloured University of the Western Cape, students have been consistently resisting a "quisling" Students Representative Council.

The poet and philosopher, Adam Small, has written:

> "Racism is a phenomenon of inferiority. Our blackness is a phenomenon of pride... We can no longer care whether or not whites understand us. What we do care about is understanding ourselves, and in the course of this task, helping the whites to understand themselves. We are rejecting the idea that we live by their grace (i.e., that they have the right to decide our future). We may live by the

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202 *Ibid*.

Grace of God, but we do not live by the grace of the whites."[203]

When Dame Margot Fonteyn, the British ballerina, announced her intention of giving special performances for Coloured people when visiting South Africa, Mr. Small said again:

> "Here it is all over again - the sickening phenomenon of the patronising white man or woman graciously condescending to 'do something for us non-whites.' The business is doubly sickening because it is all happening in the name of art."[204]

The London *Guardian*'s Cape Town correspondent later reported that Dame Margot's action had angered the community and that they were planning a boycott of the performance.

A Coloured Anglican priest has said:

> "The black man in South Africa knew no existence but oppression and incarceration."[205]

The Reverend Clive McBride, speaking at a symposium at the University of Cape Town as part of Human Rights Week, said:

> "I cannot distinguish between Nationalist or Progressive. All I see is that there is manifested against me a power, an evil, stunting power - a white power that mercilessly oppresses."

He went on to say that although the non-white had the aspirations and the appearance of a human being, the dignity that made him a human being was taken away.

After the shooting at Gelvendale, Port Elizabeth, in May 1971, serious unrest continued for about three weeks. Buses were stoned, and attempts were made to set up road-blocks. More than 40 persons were subsequently charged in court with various offences, such as public violence or malicious damage to property. The Gelvendale community also set aside one day on which they wore black rosettes and armbands to "mourn the loss of our people's rights."

In a letter to the Prime Minister, the general secretary of the Trade Union Council of South Africa urged that a top-level enquiry be instituted into the future of the Coloured people. It was evident, he said, that the community was "becoming increasingly resentful of the treatment they are receiving, and their frustration is moving towards an

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203 *Rand Daily Mail*, Johannesburg, July 13, 1971

204 *The Guardian*, London, March 17, 1972

205 *The Star*, Johannesburg, April 1, 1972

explosion point."[206]

Rejection of Apartheid Institutions

The predecessors of the CRC, namely such bodies as the Coloured Advisory Council, the Coloured Affairs Department, the Council of Coloured Affairs and the like, had all been given the cold shoulder by the majority of the Coloured community. As has been pointed out, the majority of the electorate did not participate in the election of the CRC in 1969. In the prevailing atmosphere in South Africa, aggravated by consistent rejection of the demands of the oppressed groups, it is inevitable that those who did believe that redress might be sought within the institutions of apartheid are themselves becoming rapidly disillusioned with this approach. Thus inside the CRC the realisation that nothing can be achieved for the community within the framework of the Government's policy, has been growing.

Sonny Leon was reported to have said in Pretoria:

> "The CRC should be scrapped and replaced by Coloured representation at all levels of Government in South Africa, based on a common roll."[207]

He went on to say that the Council was a puppet of the Government, without real powers and that even some of the nominated members were beginning to see that the Council is little more than a shop window intended to reflect the progress of the Government's separate development policy.

On February 1, 1972, the *Rand Daily Mail* quoted Mr. Leon as saying:

> "The CRC has become an acute embarrassment to the Nationalist Government because its nominated majority had lost control."

Because of defections, Mr. Swartz could count on only 29 votes from among 60 members. At the last session of the Council a resolution requested that the Council be converted into an all-elected body, because the 20 Government-appointed members "do not necessarily represent the views of the Coloured." It stated that the Coloured people had lost confidence and the Council its credibility.

At the proceedings of the Council in 1971, Mr. Curry was reported to have said that the Labour Party considered the Government's policy of separate development to be "pure hypocrisy - a cloak to maintain white political domination. The traditional pattern of South Africa's racial policies," he went on to say, "was not going to be changed by decisions made in the Coloured Persons Representative Council." In addition, at the start of the session Mr. Leon introduced a motion calling for the abolition of the Council

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206 *Ibid*., May 17, 1971

207 *Rand Daily Mail,* September 10, 1971

and the inclusion of its 40 elected members in the House of Assembly as representatives of the Coloured people.

The Labour Party boycotted the official opening of the Council in August 1971 by the Minister of Defence and the Cape leader of the National Party, P. W. Botha. It also boycotted the budget debate after proposing an amendment that the budget was unacceptable because the Council had no power to change it.

Inevitably disillusionment with the apartheid measures must compel their participants to consider complete non-co-operation. Thus a decision to call upon the Labour Party to abandon participation in the CRC was taken by the Transvaal region of the party in March 17. It called on the Labour Party to quit the CRC and to work independently of all apartheid institutions. The national leadership was however not prepared to go so far. The *Rand Daily Mail* reported Mr. Leon as having said that the resolution adopted by the Transvaal region reflected the general consensus of opinion that the CRC was a "meaningless institution." He claimed nevertheless that the Labour Party should remain in the Council to "expose it for what it was" and that their presence was essential as it provided the party with "a legal instrument to express the desires of the people."[208]

Within the ranks of the pro-Government Federal Party, too, disillusionment is taking root. The leader of that party in the Eastern Cape, Mr. P.E. Kievetts, resigned in August 1971, stating that he could no longer join in any defence of the apartheid policy.[209]

Alliance with the African People

The "extra-parliamentary" mass movements and campaigns against injustice and racial discrimination have been the methods by which the whole people demonstrated in uncompromising terms their rejection of the colour-bar and segregation or so-called separate development. The struggles against the destruction of the franchise, against Group areas, against poverty and cultural and educational discrimination, as well as support for the Freedom Charter of the Congress movement, a National Convention and the like - all have registered the Coloured community's rejection of the generations-old system of racism in South Africa.

Most important, these struggles and campaigns were always conducted in co-operation with the African people and emphasised the fact that, in spite of different historical and cultural backgrounds, success for oppressed minorities lay only in alliance with the national liberation movement of the African majority.

In a very real sense, the future of the Indian and Coloured people and their liberation as oppressed groups is seen as being intimately bound up with the liberation of the

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208 *Rand Daily Mail*, March 14, 1972

209 *Ibid*., August 21, 1971

Africans. Coloured and Indian people are increasingly seeing their liberation as an integral part of the liberation movement and not as a mere auxiliary.

Events such as the distribution of underground literature and leaflets from the Coloured People's Congress and the African National Congress among the Coloured people are evidence of the fact that new cadres are emerging within the community to work for strengthening the democratic alliance, following the suppression of known militants. Indeed, the public demands made today by all non-white oppressed groups are reiterations of the demands unfolded by the liberation movement since its inception.

Coloured youths appear to be preparing for and joining the guerrilla movement of *Umkhonto we Sizwe*, the military wing of the ANC. A young Coloured man, Basil February, a member of this armed force, was killed by security forces in Zimbabwe in 1967 while making his way to South Africa. In 1971 another Coloured member of *Umkhonto*, James April, was arrested in Natal while bringing arms into South Africa and sentenced to 15 years` imprisonment.

Generations of experience show that the ruling white minority has no intention of according the Coloured people any genuine democratic rights in South Africa and is rapidly brining about the final acknowledgement that only the overthrow of the racist State can lead to the just participation of all South Africans in an altogether new society.

THE DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE IDEOLOGY AND PRACTICE OF APARTHEID[210]

by
Dr. J. Verkuyl

The political scene in South Africa has long been dominated by the National Party under the successive leadership of Malan, Strijdom, Verwoerd and Vorster. Acceding to power in 1948, the Party has kept a tight grip on the reins of government ever since. Most recently its position as ruling party was reconfirmed by the parliamentary elections of 1970, the results of which were as follows:

National Party.....117 seats

United Party..... 47 seats
Progressive Party..... 1 seat

Non-white groups are simply excluded from the central electorate. Whites hold a monopoly on all power in South Africa, including the executive powers of government, which for more than 20 years now have rested in the hands of a party that has designed the ideology of apartheid as the blueprint for South African society. While the National Party views 1948 (the year of its accession to power) as the beginning of a totally new phase in the development of South Africa, many non-white groups as well as the white opposition see that year as a turning point which in the long run will lead to fatal results.

How is it that so many political and ecclesiastical leaders allied with the National Party, especially of the Dutch Reformed Church (D.R.C.), the *Gereformeede Kerk* and the *Hervormde Kerk* can proclaim so rigidly and self-assuredly that they are on the right path?[211] This is made possible, no doubt, by the fact that the policy of apartheid is shored up by an ideological elan which has gradually taken the shape of a pseudo-religion having its own myths, rites, ethos and cult. We shall attempt to point out a few of the more important building-stones which have gone into the construction of this ideology.

A. The Ideological Influence of the Afrikaner Brotherhood

The Afrikaner Brotherhood (*Broederbond*), which played such an important behind-the-scenes role in the power build-up of the National Party, was founded in Johannesburg as a secret organisation at the end of the First World War in 1918. It is not my purpose here to delve further into the history of the Brotherhood; I wish only to point out that the

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[210] From "Notes and Documents", No. 2/71, February 1971

[211] The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa consists of three separate churches: the *Nederduitse Gereformeede Kerk* (the largest and usually called the Dutch Reformed Church); the *Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk*; and the *Gereformeede Kerk in Suid Afrika*.

gears of this organisation are driven by two basic, ideologically-determined motifs or ideas.

The first of these is called by the Brotherhood the Christian national motif. Analysed, this motif can be reduced to the notion of "a separate Afrikaans nation" identified with "Western Christian civilisation" and appointed by God to play a dominant role in South Africa until the end of time. It is clear from what the Brotherhood says that in this vision ideological and national considerations run roughshod over that which is Christian.

The second motif one finds running throughout all the known views of the Brotherhood is that of white ward or guardianship of the "non-white categories of the population." According to this notion non-white groups are guaranteed, within certain limits, an "*eiesoortige*" (i.e. "their own separate kind of") development. In point of actual fact, this motif works out into a racial caste system which secures continued monopoly of power by whites; this white power monopoly, in turn, forms the basis upon which and the pre-supposition whereby all other groups are assigned a subordinate place at all levels of society.

These are the two basic ideas which explain why the Brotherhood-backed National Party enjoys the support of a large part of the white electorate. With these two notions, the National Party attracts, on the one hand, those groups who are motivated by their rudely egoistic wish to keep the "*kaffir*" or, as he is called today, the "Bantu" in his place. On the other hand, it also attracts those who wish as wardens to do something or even a great deal for the non-white groups but who are not willing to work with these groups in an integrated society.

At present, the Brotherhood is going through a serious crisis. It is being polarised into two opposing camps around the two motifs discussed above. While it is true that the "right-wing extremist approach" ("*verkrampte aanslag*") of the Re-established National Party (led by Albert Hertzog, son of the famous General Hertzog) did not win any seats in the elections of 1970, the members or this ultra-reactionary group have in fact, caused a split in the Afrikaner Brotherhood, which has resulted in a great deal of mutual suspicion and internecine tug-of-war. Further, younger people no longer seek membership in this secret organisation. All in all, one gets the impression that the Brotherhood is undermining itself and before long will die a natural death. Then, too, people are beginning to question the so-called Christian-national ideology. Many have come to realise that Western civilisation cannot be identified with Christianity and that to sanctify the "Afrikaans nation" as a separate entity is to be guilty of placing strange fires on the altar.

Even so, it cannot be denied that the dreams and expectations which have given birth to the pseudo-religious ideology of the Brotherhood continue to exercise a great deal of influence in South Africa.

B. The Ideological Influence of the "Ossewabrandwag"

During the Second World War, white Afrikaners were strongly divided among themselves as to whether South Africa ought to take part in the struggle against Hitler or remain neutral. Many of them joined Field Marshal Jan Smuts in that struggle, often highly distinguishing themselves in battle. Others - among them Dr. Malan - were of the opinion that South Africa should remain neutral. And then there was a third group who belonged to a semi-military organisation called the "*Ossewabrandwag*" which counted among its leaders the present Prime Minister of South Africa, John Vorster. This organisation undertook to sabotage the activities of the troops serving under Field Marshal Smuts in the struggle against National Socialism.

Of course it would be incorrect to assume that all members of the Afrikaner Brotherhood and the nucleus of the National party swallowed the doctrines of National Socialism. From the very beginning, for example, Dr. Malan, leader of the National Party at that time, rejected and warned against the ideological excesses and the practices of the Nazis. Moreover, now that everyone knows about the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis, it is understandable that no South African finds it desirable or pleasant to be reminded of the "*Ossewabrandwag*"; still, it cannot be denied that its ideology was national-socialistic. Neither can it be denied that this ideology played a definite role in South Africa at that time - a role accepted and even honoured by many - nor that a ferment of it continues to work in contemporary South African society.

C. Ideological Ferment in the Policies of the National Party

In our attempt to identify the more important of the building-stones which have gone into the construction of the ideology of apartheid, we shall also have to take account of the speeches and expositions of the architects of that ideology.

As leader of the National Party, it was Dr. Malan who worked out the policy of forced segregation. In April 1938 (ten years before the National Party came into power), at the end of an election evening, he read publicly a document outlining his party platform. This political manifesto envisaged deeply radical changes with regard to the position of the "Natives" (the term which was then applied to black Africans and which was later officially replaced by the term "Bantus"). That manifesto reads as follows:

> "(a) The Party aims at the revision of our existing legislation concerning Natives with a view to eliminating their right to vote for members to the national legislature (*Volksraad*) and the Cape Provincial legislature, at halting the flow of superfluous Natives to urban areas, at effectuating their removal from these areas, and at making the segregation of living quarters in such areas more effective.
>
> "(b) The Party will terminate the present extensive purchases of land made for Natives by the State and allow them to acquire land more on their own initiative and in keeping with their actual needs.

"(c) Further, the Party aims at the consistent application of the principle of segregation in regard to all non-whites, this being in the best interests of the white as well as the non-white races, and undertakes, therefore, to introduce legislation providing for:

(1) separate living areas, labour organisations and, insofar as practicable, separate work areas for whites and non-whites;

(2) the reservation of the right to work in certain occupations for white labour and/or in accord with a set and equitable quota for whites and non-whites;

(3) separate legislation in our legislative bodies for the Cape Colony Coloureds who have voting rights; and

(4) the extension of the 1926 Immorality Law to all non-whites, and the prevention of mixed marriages and the hiring of whites by non-whites."

This is a revealing manifesto; its dependence upon a nationalistic and chauvinistic ideology is clearly evident. Its language leaves no doubt that the goal of National Party policy is the protection and strengthening of the "white race" and that the means to this end will consist of the curtailment of the existing rights of non-whites. Further, it is clear from this manifesto that the National Party desires to develop a racial caste system in which each non-white is granted limited freedom of movement - but only on the basis of a white monopoly of power and subordinated to the interests of the whites.

A decade would pass before the National Party was in a position to translate its manifesto into political practice. When the Party did come to power in 1948, it began forthwith to apply the programme set forth in this document. A change was introduced at one point, namely, in regard to the purchase of lands on behalf of the Bantus. Otherwise, the essential ideological pattern has been carried out relentlessly, especially after the appearance of the Tomlinson Report.

The well-known Tomlinson Commission (named for its Chairman, the agricultural expert Professor T.L. Tomlinson, and appointed by the South African Government in 1950) was given the task of developing a blueprint for the policy of forced segregation on the basis of the ideology of apartheid. The Commission's report was submitted in 1954 as an eighteen-part series of publications. Not all of its recommendations were adopted, but its basic lines were appropriated by the Government.

It was especially Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd who, during his political career, worked out the notion of "*eiesoortige*" (separate or different kinds of) development in greater detail.[212]

The first thing with which one is struck in analysing Verwoerd's views is the extent to which he proceeds from a nationalistic interpretation of history. "Why and for what purpose", he asked, "were whites led to the southern part of Africa 300 years ago? Why have these small groups increased so in number and spread over South Africa? Why have they passed through such a difficult struggle and survived as a people? I believe that all of this has had a purpose, namely, that we should become the anchor of Western civilisation in Africa." Everywhere in his speeches one finds this pseudo-dogma of white supremacy and this smug faith that the maintenance of a white monopolistic superstructure is a divine calling. Recently Professors Wilson and Thompson have shown convincingly that this view of history is full of myth and is unfit to prepare people for responsible participation in political life in co-operation with others.[213]

The second striking thing about Verwoerd's ideas is that he propagates the policy of separate development as a kind of gospel. "The purpose", he said, "must be clearly stated. The policy of separate development is the basis of the happiness, security and stability which are maintained by means of a homeland, a language and a government peculiar to each people - Bantu as well as white. I desire apartheid not only for whites and blacks but also for Coloureds, for Indians, for Chinese and Malayans. And I desire to extend apartheid even further, along the various tribal lines." Over and over again in his expositions he identifies this vision, this ideology of separate development, with the will of God.

D. Attempts at Theological Justification of the Ideology of Apartheid

A few theologians from the three church communions which support apartheid have put forth a great deal of effort to legitimise this ideology via theology. It is often thought that this attempt at theological justification still rests on the idea that the Afrikaners as a people fill a role similar to that of the people of Israel in Old Testament times. Although this notion was undoubtedly very much alive at the time of the great trek to the North and among the founders of the farmers` republics, there is to my knowledge not a single theologian who still defends it (even though it continues to exert some influence here and there in the churches). Neither does the so-called "Ham theology" find any defenders today.

This does not mean, however, that there are no longer any attempts to construct a theological bulwark for the defence of the racial caste system which the policy of apartheid represents. The building-stones of this bulwark are the following:

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[212] Some important elements of the ideological materials contained in his speeches can be found in the work by the Rev. W.A. Landman, *A Plea for Understanding*, (Cape Town, 1968).

[213] *Oxford History of South Africa*, Part I (Oxford, 1969).

(1) Certain D.R.C. theologians maintain - even in official reports - that in the Biblical message there is an emphasis upon the differences between the races which is equally as important as what Scripture proclaims concerning the unity of the human race, reconciliation in Christ, and restoration of human fellowship. This theory is a serious form of pseudo-theology. The concept of "race" in the modern sense occurs nowhere in the Bible. Racial and ethnic differences are not "creation ordinances". They are phenomena which come into being, develop, change and shift in the course of history; and in no way whatever do they destroy the unity of the human race. One who takes his departure from the position that differences between the "races" are "just as important" as human unity and the restoration of that unity will end up with a race-ideology which leads to a separate cult and a racist ethic and creed.

(2) A certain interpretation of the story of the tower of Babel in Genesis 11 represents a second building-stone of the bulwark mentioned above. This interpretation is complete nonsense. Moreover, it overlooks the fact that the Babel episode does not contain the last word concerning God's intentions with men and peoples. God's real intention appears in the vision of the oecumenopolis, the New Jerusalem of Revelation 21, and in His command to begin to build here and now along the lines of this new world-city.

(3) The third building-stone is a certain interpretation of a statement in Apostle Paul's Areopagus speech that God has "determined the boundaries of the habitations of men" (Acts 12:26). If one tries to understand it correctly, however, it will become obvious that the speech on the Areopagus is a powerful attack on the racial rites, myths and ethos of the Greeks. To use it as the foundation of a new racial myth is certainly one of the crassest specimens of pseudo-theology. Moreover, the attempt to justify the arbitrary decisions of white Afrikaners regarding the division of land and the determination of living areas for non-whites with an appeal to this text would be a riddle if the Afrikaners` game were not so transparent.

Systems like the one developed in South Africa, that is to say racial caste systems, are not strange to the history of the world; but it is strange that the South African caste system is defended by some Afrikaners in the name of Jesus Christ and that in this way the integrity is at stake of He who came to break down the walls between the races and reintegrate humanity into one body. This pseudo-theology profanes the name of Christ.

New Developments in the Dutch Reformed Church

In October 1970 the General Synod of the white D.R.C. held its Synod in Pretoria. This gathering was attended by two representatives of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands: Dr. P. Kunst and Dr. A. Kruyswijk. Both these men, each in his own way, rejected the foundation of the ideology of apartheid as un-Christian. They expressed the hope that their presence in Pretoria might nurture the discussion on race relations begun at the 1968 Reformed Ecumenical Synod and continued at the 1970 Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

This hope proved in vain. The committee report on race, drawn up by the ultra-conservatively chaired Commission on Topical Questions and issued only after the departure of the Dutch representatives, was extremely brief. Moreover, since it re-introduced hackneyed arguments dating from the 1950s to prop up the ideology of apartheid, it was in fact retrogressive.

This report was the straw that broke the camel's back. It was especially Professor B. Marais from Pretoria and Dr. W. A. Landman who took advantage of this occasion to air their strong disapproval of apartheid in all its forms.

The executive committee of the Synod headed off a spirited opposition debate by hastily calling a "broad commission" into being, composed of both "conservatives" and "progressives," "*verkramptes en verligtes.*" This commission has been given one year to supply the executive with a report on the principles and attitudes of the white D.R.C. respecting racial matters. Whatever else one might wish to say about it, this decision does point to new stirrings within the old static point of view.

One can ascertain a similar development in the D.R.C.'s attitude toward membership in the Christian Institute (whose director is the Rev. Beyers Naude). The decision to begin church discipline proceedings against D.R.C. members who belong to the Institute was postponed for at least four years since the committee responsible for dealing with the matter has that amount of time to submit its report. It is expected, however, that this threat of ecclesiastical censure will have been lifted long before the four years have elapsed.

Meanwhile the so-called daughter churches are beginning to assume a much more independent stance against the "mother church." At its October 1970 gathering in Worcester, Cape Province, the Synod of the so-called Dutch Reformed Coloured Mission Church adopted all of the resolutions of the 1968 Reformed Ecumenical Synod, which implicitly condemn the ideology and practice of apartheid. It also voiced emphatic

agreement with the vision of the Dutch theologian, Dr. A. Kruyswijk, who rejected as a pseudo-theological bulwark the manner in which apartheid is defended.

A few weeks later, Dr. J.D. Vorster, newly-chosen Moderator of the white D.R.C. Synod and brother of the Prime Minister of South Africa, was interviewed by the *Sunday Times*. On that occasion he announced that "on Scriptural grounds" the D.R.C. would not "budge one inch" from its position on apartheid. Thereupon, for the first time in memory, many influential D.R.C. theologians raised voices of protest; they condemned this dictatorial attempt to clothe apartheid with the authority of God Himself, this attempt on the part of Vorster to absolutise his own personal opinion. Thus, this time, the protest originated not in foreign countries but from within the circles of the D.R.C. itself; and it came not only from the lips of the Rev. Beyers Naude but also from figures such as the Rev. D. P. Botha, the Rev. W. T. Landman, Professor Andre Hugo and others.

There are many signs pointing to the fact that there is a growing minority in the D.R.C. which is not only full of discontent with the existing ideology and practice but also is looking for alternatives. In addition to this, the so-called Bantu Sister Church will hold its synodical gathering next year. Although this "sister church" is directed in a paternalistic way by white missionaries and is to a large extent financially dependent on the "mother church", there are reasons to hope that the former will take up a much more independent position and in their own way take part in ecumenical activities and in the struggle against apartheid. Moreover, a remarkable rapprochement is growing between the "sister churches" and the so-called separatist churches or independent church movements, which, potentially, are very important in connection with the structural changes so necessary in South Africa.

Meanwhile, in December 1970, there was an incident in the church service of a white D.R.C. congregation in Pretoria which suddenly came to the attention of the public and led not only to a hardening of some hearts but also to deep feelings of shame on the part of many members of the D.R.C. A German theologian-sociologist working on a joint research project in Soweto attended a "white church service" with his black colleague. He was requested by the officiating minister, the Rev. P. J. Smal, to leave the service along with his colleague. This incident continues in discussion and has filled many pastors with deep shame. Even the rector of Stellenbosch Theological Seminary gave expression to his feelings of shame. It seems that the conscience of many has been awakened and that the realisation is growing that apartheid should be done away with for good.

Final Observations

In regard to South Africa, it is proper to speak of the necessity of a multiple approach. It is necessary to awaken the public conscience and press for change from every possible platform and by means of every possible course of action. Certainly this must be done on the floor of the United Nations General Assembly and by means of the documentation materials prepared by the Unit on Apartheid; it can also be accomplished via public demonstrations such as the one which occurred last year in the United Kingdom when a visiting South African cricket team was boycotted and picketed; and it can be done from

the forum of gatherings such as those of the non-committed countries and the Organisation of African Unity. But one of the important means of awakening public conscience is the continuation of the dialogue with the D.R.C. (which has its centre at Stellenbosch) and with the Reformed Church (which has its centre at Potchefstroom).

In my opinion, the South African Council of Churches` "Message to the People of South Africa" must be implemented by means of alternative proposals (and forms) in the social and political arenas. But, in any case, dialogue with the D.R.C. and the Reformed Church must be continued and pursued - even if only on a basis of "hope against hope." One ought not to forget in this regard that there are those among the members of the D.R.C. who oppose all forms of apartheid with great spiritual force and from the depth of their hearts.

I think of D.R.C. members such as the Rev. Beyers Naude, Professor Andre Hugo, Professor Ben Marais, Dr. Ben Engelbrechts and Dr. Fred van Wijk, the director of the Institute of Race Relations, with respect. Such men are living proof that it would be wrong simply to write these churches off. We must strengthen the dialogue with them - with humility (because all churches both in South Africa and over the whole world are guilty of racism) but also with complete honesty and without fear.

Time is running out. Let us use the time we still have to exploit to the limits the methods of non-violence. What James Baldwin said at the last World Council of Churches gathering in Uppsala is in many regards true; the D.R.C. in South Africa does have in its hands the keys which will open the doors of structural change in that country. If this church changes, the basis of the practice of apartheid will fall away and work can begin on the road which will lead to the building of a society in which all groups participate in the central exercise of power.

Every responsible person knows that the use of force in the attempt to pave the way to such a society will lead to much bloodshed and tremendous chaos. Let those who are able to exercise influence on the churches we have been discussing do so before it is too late. The D.R.C. faces the same dilemma with which the German churches were confronted in 1933: the dilemma of obedience to God or to certain influential men; the dilemma of the loss of its members, support and money or the "loss of its identity as church."

What will happen in South Africa? Will a schism occur, as it did in Germany in 1933? And if so, will it lead to the rise of something resembling the German Confessing Church? Or will the D.R.C. proceed from compromise to compromise?

There are many in South Africa who have dared to stand up to the thunder of those who hold the reins of power but have no support in Scripture. Let us support those men and women who have shown that they would rather obey God than men - even powerful men!

STATE AND CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA[214]

by

The Rt. Rev. Ambrose Reeves

A casual observer of the South African scene might be pardoned for concluding that there is little difference in relations between the churches and the State in the Republic and that which obtains in many other countries. Churches are free to teach any specifically religious doctrines and their members are at liberty to worship in any way acceptable to the churches to which they belong. And there are no churches "established" by law in South Africa. Further, up to the present there has been no open confrontation between the State and any particular church or group of churches.

However, since the National Party came to power in 1948, there is massive evidence of growing tension between the Government and the churches. As the Government has intensified the implementation of apartheid or "separate development", this tension has been heightened. In earlier years this was not as obvious as it has become recently, but already there were signs that, obliquely if not directly, relations with some at any rate of the churches would become increasingly strained.

Bantu Education Act

As early as 1954 the passing of the Bantu Education Act might have led to an open Church-State conflict. This was avoided because most of the churches agreed, either willingly or grudgingly, to hand over their school buildings to the Government. At that time six-sevenths of all education of African children was in the hands of the churches and missionary societies in South Africa. It was possible that if the churches had stood together in opposing the Government, the implementation of the Bantu Education Act might at least have been halted for a time. But this did not happen.

It is true that the Roman Catholic Church raised a large sum of money to enable it to retain some of its schools as private schools, and the Anglican diocese of Johannesburg, together with certain Anglican religious communities, refused the use of the schools under their control to the Government and closed them. The rest of the churches either gave or rented their schools to the State to be used for "Bantu education."

The result was that however unwillingly, the churches became an instrument for the implementation of apartheid in the most critical field of education. Almost overnight, all that the churches had built up, however inadequately, was destroyed. From 1954

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214 From "Notes and Documents", No. 9/72, March 1972

onwards, African children were to be given the education that the Government (which only represented the white minority) had already decided would fit them to occupy that place in South African society which the authorities had determined should be theirs; in short, education for serfdom.

Tensions Created by Apartheid

Only three years later (perhaps emboldened by its success in the educational field) the Government decided to replace section 9 (7) of Act 46, 1937, by section 9 (6) of the Bantu Laws Amendment Act, 1957. This change presented the churches with grave problems for it meant that churches previously erected would be left unusable or almost unusable when the area in which they were situated was allocated to a racial group other than the one which had previously occupied it. Further, the Native (Urban Areas) Act, taken in conjunction with the Group Areas Act, made the occupation of churches by Africans (whether within or outside African areas) depend increasingly on the unfettered discretion of the Minister of Bantu Affairs who could also cancel the grant made of a site if he considered that any words spoken in that building might encourage or tend to encourage any deterioration in the relations between Africans and governmental bodies.

From all this it can be seen that while there has been no open breach between any particular church and the State authorities, even in the earlier years of National Party rule in South Africa, the churches were from the first exposed to grave pressures exerted on them by the implementation of apartheid. This pressure weighed much more heavily on the English-speaking than the Afrikaans-speaking churches. But none have entirely escaped the consequences of Government policy. In some degree all churches have experienced the tensions and problems created by apartheid.

No Head-on Collision

The remarkable thing is that the growing tensions and problems created for the churches by the implementation of the racist theories of the ruling National Party did not lead even in the first decade of that rule to a head-on collision between any church and the State authorities. We are bound to ask why no such clash occurred.

But before an attempt is made to answer that question it has to be remembered that from the moment that the National Party came to power a number of churchmen in all churches were vocal in their opposition to apartheid, and among them a few were prepared to match their words with their actions. Already in the early 1950s, the Rev. Michael Scott was refused permission to re-enter South Africa. And behind individuals like him there have always stood a number of unknown church members who have supported their actions and who have stood faithfully behind them. Further, it must never be forgotten that in those years the witness of individual churchmen was a great encouragement to non-white church members to remain loyal members of churches which were (and which largely still are) white-dominated. But not only this. There is little doubt that the witness of individual churchmen has caused a few at least of the white members of the churches to examine more seriously the implications for Christians of

Government policy. This has even been true in the Dutch Reformed Churches. While it is true that the great majority of the ministers and lay members of these churches have actively supported apartheid, there have been a few courageous individuals who at great cost to themselves and their families have consistently opposed apartheid.

For example, in 1957, Prof. Keet of Stellenbosch University wrote:

> ***"In our South African situation we have all the injustice of group thinking aggravated by the absurd group formation according to the colour of one's skin. For this difference in pigmentation the individual is held responsible together with his group, as if he had chosen his ancestors. As a consequence we have developed a caste system that surpasses all of its kind; because in others it may be possible to advance to a higher caste, but here there is no possibility of change - the Coloured man stays Coloured even if he becomes the most exemplary citizen of the country. He is one of a group, a mere cipher without any personal attributes or claims."***

Keet only spoke for a very small minority of the Dutch Reformed Churches at that time but he summarised the dilemma in which the churches in South Africa found themselves increasingly after the National Party came to power, and it may well be that the fact that today there is a greater questioning of apartheid in some Afrikaner circles is in part at least due to the few courageous individuals like Prof. Keet who in earlier years exposed the evils of apartheid.

Yet in spite of a succession of opponents to apartheid within the churches, until Sharpeville in 1960 all the churches managed to avoid any open breach with the State. But it has to be remembered that as in South African society all the political and economic power remains in the hands of the white minority so in the churches the white members have retained most of the power and influence. This is even true in churches like the Anglican and Methodist Churches which have a majority of African and Coloured members.

Even more important is the fact that whenever the Government harassed or even persecuted an individual church leader, the State could always rely on some white church members publicly disowning him, and others by their silence consenting to the action

taken against him. The result has always been that no church has ever been able to present a united front against Government action, for both the leadership and the rank and file in any church have been deeply divided. Certainly on every occasion some white church members have rallied to the support of any individual leader under attack, but all too often many have openly ranged themselves on the side of the Government or more commonly by their silence given tacit support to the Government's action.

"Church Clause" of 1957

One of the few exceptions to this was when the Government proposed to replace section 9 (7) of the Natives (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act by section 29 (c) of the Native Laws Amendment Bill in 1957. This new clause which soon became known as the "church clause" virtually gave permission to the Minister, with the concurrence of the local authority, to forbid the attendance of any African at any church, school, hospital, club or other institution or place of entertainment outside the segregated location.

Reaction to this was immediate. The Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, the Most Reverend Geoffrey Clayton, signed a letter on March 7, 1957, to the Prime Minister - his last act before dying suddenly. In this the Archbishop wrote:

> "The Church cannot recognise the right of an official of the secular government to determine whether or where a member of the Church of any race... shall discharge his religious duty of participation in public worship or to give instructions to the minister of any congregation as to whom he shall admit to membership of that congregation.
>
> "Further, the Constitution of the Church of the Province of South Africa provides for the synodical government of the Church. In such synods, bishops, priests and laymen are represented without distinction of race or colour. Clause 29 (c) makes the holding of such synods dependent upon the permission of the Minister of Native Affairs. We recognise the great gravity of disobedience to the law of the land. We believe that obedience to secular authority, even in matters about which we differ in opinion, is a command laid upon us by God. But we are commanded to render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's, and not Caesar's, and we believe that the matters dealt with in Clause 29 c) are among them."

Other churches joined in this protest, the most influential being that of the Conference of the Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa. In an interview with the Minister of Native Affairs their leaders enunciated four principles:

> 1. The gospel of Jesus Christ emanates from God to all mankind and is subject to no human limitations.
>
> 2. The task is laid on the Church of Christ, in obedience to the Head of the Church, to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world and to all peoples.

3. The right to determine how, when and to whom the Gospel shall be proclaimed is exclusively in the competence of the Church.

4. It is the duty of the State, as the servant of God, to allow freedom to the Church in the execution of its Divine calling and to respect the sovereignty of the Church in its own sphere.

As a result of all these representations the Minister modified the church clause in a manner that made it acceptable to the Dutch Reformed Churches. While the other churches found the revised clause less objectionable in practice, they still found it very objectionable in principle. As it is finally to be found in Section 9 (d) of Act 30 of l957, it was so hedged round with restrictive provisos that it has not been used as frequently as was once feared. But it means that Africans no longer have any right to worship where they will. This clause makes their right to worship a privilege conferred on them by the Minister concerned. And it is not the white clergyman or minister who incurs any penalty for allowing Africans to worship in the congregation of which he is in charge. It is the African worshipper who is penalised. By this device the Government avoided any direct clash with the churches on this issue.

Deterioration since 1960

However, no human situation is ever static, and Church-State relations in South Africa are no exception. Although there was much in the relations of the churches with the State in the first ten years of the implementation of apartheid to cause them grave disquiet, the year 1960 not only brought with it the shooting at Sharpeville, the banning of African political movements and the declaration by the South African Government of a state of emergency. It also marked the beginning of a further deterioration in church-state relations which has continued to this day.

In September 1960, the South African Government took the grave and unprecedented step of arresting and deporting me from the Republic. At that time I was the Anglican Bishop of Johannesburg, to which diocese I had gone in 1949 after my consecration in Cape Town Cathedral. Among the numerous comments made at that time, the South African Institute of Race Relations, of which I was a Vice-President, "protested against the Government's summary eviction of an important spiritual leader of one of the major churches of the country. Whether or not so intended, this action will be viewed by many as a step towards stifling views on the burning question of the day, namely, the relation between white and non-white, if such views are opposed to those of the Government."[215]

Actions against Church Leaders

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215 *Survey of Race Relations, 1959-1960* (South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 1961), p. 98

The South African Government recognised (as I believe the churches within and outside South Africa have still largely failed to recognise) that picking of church leaders who opposed apartheid one by one is a far more effective way of securing the subservience of the churches than making any frontal attack on them. Indeed this is the policy that the South African Government has followed increasingly since 1960.

In January 1971 the South African Prime Minister claimed that in the previous ten years only 25 out of the 1,440 foreign religious workers had had action taken against them. What he did not say was that as the years passed, action was taken against more and more church leaders. For example, in 1971 alone the following have been compelled by the Government to leave the Republic: the Rev. Marcus Braun, a German Lutheran pastor; Fr. J.L. Casimir Paulsen, a Roman Catholic priest from the United States; the Rev. Colin Davidson, an Anglican priest working for the Christian Institute; Mr. and Mrs. Reed Kramer and Mr. Gus Klous, three American mission workers in Natal; the Rev. R. Llewellin, an Anglican priest in Johannesburg; Mr. and Mrs. Turnbull of the United Congregational Church in Durban; Fr. Wilfred Jackson, a Franciscan priest who was distributing food and clothing to destitute Africans in Limehill; and Mr. David Walker, Warden of the Bishop's Hostel in Kimberley. Fr. Cosmos Desmond, author of *The Discarded People*, has been placed under house arrest. Two research workers of the Christian Institute have had their passports seized and the passport of the Rev. Dale White has been restricted. Again some missionaries have been refused entry to the country and others have been refused re-entry permits after visits to their homes.

It is understandable that the Rev. Beyers Naude, in his annual report on the work of the Christian Institute for 1970, said that if the Christian churches in South Africa implemented their Christian beliefs on crucial issues, a direct confrontation with the State is inevitable. This is a serious warning but so much depends upon this small word "if," for too many similar statements made in the past in South Africa have gone unheeded.

Meanwhile the Very Rev. Gonville Aubrey ffrench-Beytagh, the Anglican Dean of Johannesburg, has had to endure what may justly be described as a "show trial" in Pretoria, at the end of which he was sentenced to five years` imprisonment under the Terrorism Act. Then early in 1972, the Bishop of Damaraland was ordered to leave Namibia, the second bishop from that diocese to be expelled in four years. At the same time, two of his white clergy were expelled from the diocese. As long ago as 1962, Al Lowenstein entitled his record of a journey to Namibia (then South West Africa) *Brutal Mandate*. One wonders what his title would have been if he was writing of a visit to Namibia in 1972.

Cottesloe Consultation

All this shows how from a small beginning has grown a monstrous menace to the life and work of the churches in South Africa. But the deportation of one Anglican bishop on September 12, 1960, was part of a more immediate chain or events.

Already in April that year, following the Sharpeville incident, Dr. Robert Bilheimer,

an Associate General Secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), visited South Africa to discuss the situation with leading members of those churches which were members of the World Council of Churches. On his return to Geneva he suggested that a consultation should be held in South Africa between a fully representative group of these churches and the WCC. It was envisaged that such a consultation would seek a factual understanding of the South African situation and a clearer assessment of that situation from the Christian viewpoint, together with an understanding of the meaning of the emergency in South Africa that had followed Sharpeville.

It was agreed that such a consultation should be held in December 1960, but my deportation complicated the situation. However, after some argument in which differences of opinion were expressed, it was decided to hold the consultation in December as originally planned, the delegates meeting at Cottesloe, Johannesburg, from 7 to 14 December.

Each of the eight member churches sent ten delegates. These churches were the Church of the Province of South Africa (Anglican); the *Nederduitse Gereformeede Kerk* (NGK) of the Transvaal; the Methodist; the Presbyterian; the Congregational Union; the Bantu Presbyterian; the NGK of the Cape; and the *Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk* of South Africa (NHK). Each of the first five churches mentioned sent inter-racial delegations.

In the statement issued at the conclusion of this consultation the delegates declared that while they were united in rejecting all unjust discrimination, they had expressed widely divergent views on the basic issues of apartheid. However, those present were able to make certain affirmations concerning human need and justice as they affected relations among the races in South Africa. In the nature of the case the affirmations that the delegates made on a wide variety of subjects did not express in full the convictions of the member churches represented at the consultation. As a result of their work, the delegates hoped that a South African Conference of World Council members would be created, at which local matters could be dealt with so that it would become an organ of study, consultation and co-operation.

But these hopes were never to be realised, because the Dutch Reformed Churches represented at Cottesloe soon repudiated the agreement of their delegates to the statement and within a few months decided to leave the World Council of Churches. In the meantime the Prime Minister in his New Year's message had warned the people of South Africa that any form of political multi-racialism or so-called partnership would ultimately deprive the white man of his rightful heritage.

Although the Roman Catholic church in South Africa was not represented at the Cottesloe consultation, the Catholic bishops had issued a joint pastoral letter on May 21, 1960, in which they had enjoined their members to cease practising a social colour bar and that positive steps must be taken to ensure rapid racial integration in parochial activities.

Christian Institute Established

At the time it might have seemed that the consultation of the member churches of the World Council of Churches held at Cottesloe was an almost complete failure. The very churches, namely those Dutch Reformed Churches, which had taken the initiative in bringing together representatives of the member churches, on an inter-church and inter-racial basis (prior to the consultation convened by the World Council of Churches), ended by withdrawing from the WCC.

This however was not the end. Individual members of the Dutch Reformed Churches continued to support the ecumenical movement. They, and many leading members of other churches, were convinced that individual Christians, members of all the various denominations in South Africa, should meet together to try to work out the implications of the Kingdom of God for all the peoples living in the Republic.

The Christian Institute of Southern Africa was formed for this purpose in August 1963. In no sense did this new body compete with the once-established Christian Council of South Africa, for this latter body was a council of churches and missionary bodies, whereas the Christian Institute was essentially an association of individual Christians drawn from any church.

The Rev. C.F. Beyers Naude, who in the previous April had been elected Moderator of the Southern Transvaal Synod of the N.G. Kerk, was appointed Director of the Christian Institute. By a majority vote the Examining Commission of the Northern and Southern Transvaal Synod refused the application of Mr. Naude to remain a minister of the NGK. Mr. Naude appealed to the Synod of his church against this decision but his appeal was rejected. In his first annual report to the Christian Institute, Mr. Naude pointed out that some Dutch Reformed members of the Christian Institute had felt compelled to resign from the Institute because of pressure exerted upon them and the request that had been made by a commission of the NGK that church members should not join the Christian Institute. In October 1966, at the four-yearly meeting, the Synod of the church went much further, ordering all officials and members of the NGK to withdraw from the Christian Institute.

Shortly after its foundation the Christian Institute began to interest itself in the theological training of the ministers of the African Independent (or Separatist) Churches. Later the Christian Institute joined with the South African Council of Churches (formerly the Christian Council of South Africa) in working out a plan of training for these ministers. This decision taken in l968 was of great importance for it brought members of "recognised" churches into close contact with leaders of churches which are exclusively African and which have grown from a membership of 761,000 in 1946 to 2,188,000 in 1961.

Harassment of the Christian Institute

But attacks on the Christian Institute have continued from its foundation until the present time. As has been indicated these attacks in the first instance came from leading members and others in the Dutch Reformed Churches. So severe did they become that early in 1966 the Rev. Beyers Naude and Prof. A. S. Geyser were compelled to institute libel action in the Supreme Court arising out of a series of articles in May the previous year written by Prof. A.D. Pont. In June of 1967, they were each awarded R10,000 ($14,000) damages plus costs, the highest damages that up to that time had ever been awarded in South Africa for libel.

These attacks were not for long to be limited to those from other churchmen. Soon the State began to take a hand in the affairs of the Christian Institute. In March 1966, complaints were made by officials of the Christian Institute to the head of the Security Police that non-white members of the Institute had been interrogated by the police. In May of the same year eight policemen searched the offices of the Christian Institute, but left without finding any incriminating material. They then proceeded to Mr. Naude's house, searching both his home and his person. The Executive Committee of the Christian Institute at once sent telegrams to the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition deploring these uncalled-for searches. But their protests were to little avail and the harassment of the Christian Institute by the police has increased until Prime Minister Vorster announced in February 1972 that the Christian Institute, the South African Institute of Race Relations, the University Christian Movement and the National Union of South African Students would be investigated by a Parliamentary Select Committee.

"Message to the People of South Africa"

In the summer of 1968, the Anglican Bishops met at Lambeth and the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Uppsala. The second of these two meetings was especially important for South Africa. At Uppsala Bishop Zulu of Zululand (Anglican) was elected one of the six Presidents of the World Council of Churches, but even more important was the conclusion reached by the Assembly that racism is a scandal before God. Later, the attempt of the World Council of Churches to work out the practical implications of this assertion were to have serious consequences not only for the churches in South Africa but also for some churches elsewhere.

Meanwhile important events were taking place in South Africa. The Christian Council of South Africa became the South African Council of Churches with 27 churches and church organisations associated in the Council, including the Christian Institute of Southern Africa and the University Christian Movement. Both the Roman Catholic Church and the NGK (Dutch Reformed) agreed to send observers to the meetings of the reorganised Council of Churches. Then in February, the Council of Churches, together with the Christian Institute, sponsored a national conference on "Church and Society." The findings of this conference dealt *inter alia* with "The nature and function of the State," "International co-operation" and "Man and community in changing societies," and recommended the creation of a permanent commission on family life. Later, in May, another national conference was convened on the emergence of pseudo-gospels in church

and society in South Africa. At this conference attention was focussed on deviations from true Christianity caused by such factors as attempts to justify racial discrimination, appeasement of the intolerance of some whites, blindness to the sufferings of fellow South Africans and the emphasis by some Christians on forms of spiritual pietism to the exclusion of social concern. As a result of these conferences a "Message to the People of South Africa" was published on September 24.

The above document opens with a brief statement on the bearing of the Gospel on race relations; goes on to express the concern of the authors over the effects of the doctrine of separate development; and in the next section deals at length with the claims of Christ, and then spells out the task of the church in the light of these claims. Not only does it deal with the effects of apartheid on society, it also draws attention to the fact that in its own structures the church conforms to the practice of racial separation.

By itself nothing in this document goes much further than what has already been said by churchmen more than once in the past. What is encouraging is that for the first time in South Africa a significant group of church people, in the light of this document, was set up to consider the practical implications of the rejection of apartheid. An attempt was to be made to suggest alternative policies more in keeping with Christian principles.

Government reaction to "A message to the People of South Africa" came swiftly. At the Natal Congress of the National Party, the Prime Minister stated that the calling of ministers of the church demanded that they preach the gospel of Christ, the Word of God. The job of the Church was not to turn their pulpits into political platforms to do the work of the Progressive Party, the United Party and the Liberal Party.

A few days later at a National Party meeting at Brakpan, the Prime Minister repeated this and is reported to have said that there were clerics who were toying with the idea of doing the same sort of thing in South Africa that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., had done in America. He added:

> "I want to say to them, cut it out immediately, because the cloth that you are wearing will not protect you if you try to do this in South Africa."

This led 12 leaders of the Council of Churches and the Christian Institute to address an open letter to the Prime Minister in which, after answering the points made by him, they reiterated their conviction that apartheid was not in accordance with the intention of God as revealed in His Word.

In October the Prime Minister returned to the attack, stating that he was not impressed by their pious talk and accused them of wanting to make propaganda by their attacks on the Government. Nor were political leaders the only ones to attack this document. For example, the Executive Committee of the Baptist Church in South Africa said that much of the theological reasoning and some of the conclusions reached in "A Message to the People of South Africa" were unacceptable to them. Some other church bodies received the statement with enthusiasm, but others were much more qualified in their support.

However, whatever the reaction has been either by the churches of South Africa or the Government of the Republic, the groups set up by the church conferences in 1968 to consider the practical implications of rejecting apartheid have continued steadfastly in their work. Already seven important volumes of their findings have been published. Yet, valuable as these documents are, everything will depend on the action taken by the churches as a result of their labours.

At the moment the churches in South Africa may have little chance of influencing to any great extent the structure of South African society, but if they had the will, there is a great deal that they could do to change the structures in their own church communities. It is true that in the last few years, in addition to the statements, resolutions and protests that appear year after year with monotonous regularity, some churches have made gestures in this direction. Yet when such gestures are announced the impression is that too little is being done and too late. Patterns of church life in South Africa often conform all too closely to the pattern of life found in South African society. If any church with an appreciable white membership took seriously the need to change radically the pattern of its own life this would result in a serious division at least in the white membership of that church.

From time to time in recent years some people have speculated that a "Confessional" church may emerge in South Africa as it once did in Nazi Germany. At the moment there are few signs of this happening. Already the hour is late and it may well be that the implications of "A Message to the People of South Africa" provide at least those churches with a considerable white membership the last chance they will have of radically reforming themselves.

Moves in Reformed Churches

Be that as it may, there was a conference in l970 which may well have more than passing significance for the Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa which have an exclusive white membership, their non-white adherents being the mission church of the D.R.C. with its own organisation and ministers.

In August, 1970, delegates from these churches attended a conference on "Reconciliation" in Nairobi, convened by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the only world church organisation to which the Dutch Reformed Churches still belong. From the outset of the conference the South African delegates were under attack. And the attack continued right through until the end of the conference. It is true that a resolution declaring that the D.R.C. was no longer an authentic Christian church was defeated. Nevertheless, the conference condemned the D.R.C. for practising internal apartheid, in a declaration which said:

> "Since, according to the New Testament there is neither Greek nor Jew, a doctrine or practice which asserts racial segregation is against the nature of the Christian church..."

The conference also condemned the impression that the D.R.C. gave of supporting white supremacy.

In October 1970 a motion at the General Synod of the *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk* that the church should resign from membership of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches was defeated. Instead, the question of continued membership was referred to a commission of investigation which is to report to the next General Synod in 1974. It is therefore too early to say what the final reaction of the D.R.C. will be to the strictures passed on the South African Dutch Reformed Churches at the Nairobi conference.

In the meantime the D.R.C. cannot fail to recognise that this is the most sustained attack upon its structure and practice that it has yet encountered - and it came from fellow-churches in the same Calvinist tradition. It is true that in the closing session of the Nairobi Conference the World Alliance of Reformed Churches decided to organise a regional consultation between their executive and representatives of the South African member churches. At the time the leader of the N.G. Kerk delegation indicated that his church might be unwilling to participate in such a consultation as the conference had already pronounced judgement on the D.R.C. in South Africa. Even if such a consultation takes place, in view of what happened at the Cottesloe consultation, there is little ground for hope.

On the other hand the D.R.C. may hesitate to take the same step in relation to the World Alliance of Reformed Churches as it took in relation to the World Council, for if it did the D.R.C. would snap the last link with any world organisation of churches and end in complete isolation. From what happened at the 1970 Synod it seems that the D.R.C. is more likely to employ delaying tactics. This in itself has some virtue of buying time at a moment when there are some signs of questioning apartheid in certain circles in the D.R.C. These ought not to be exaggerated, even though it is clear that without a radical change in attitude on the part of members of the D.R.C., there is little or no hope of significant change on the part of the white minority in South Africa.

World Council of Churches Grants

Not only the Dutch Reformed Churches, but all the churches in South Africa, were greatly disturbed the same year (1970) by the decision of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches meeting at Frankfurt to allocate money received from a special fund to combat racism (to which member churches had contributed), together with some of the reserve funds of the WCC, to strengthening the organisational capability of certain organisations committed to freeing racially oppressed people, and to raise the level of awareness of churches to the racial problem. Without dissent the executive agreed to the disbursement of $200,000 for this purpose, noting with appreciation that the organisations which had been given grants had of their own accord given the WCC assurances that they would not use the money given by the WCC for military purposes but for activities which are in harmony with the World Council of Churches.

It is often forgotten that following on the decisions of the General Assembly at Uppsala in 1968, the Central Committee had set up a Division to Combat Racism in 1969, and that this money allocated by the Executive Committee was part of the programme of that Division of the WCC. But it was the fact that of this $200,000 a sum of $120,000 was given to certain liberation movements that caused a sharp reaction from the churches in South Africa as well as from a small number of churches elsewhere. Church leaders in South Africa and in Rhodesia were swift to condemn this action, as was the Prime Minister of South Africa.

Indeed the Prime Minister was surprised that the member churches in South Africa had not reacted more strongly than they had done, and on September 15, 1970, he said in the House of Assembly:

> "If they do not decide to dissociate themselves from this organisation, I would be neglecting my duty... if I did not take action against them, if I allowed more money to be collected in South Africa for remission to that organisation, if I allowed churches which... remain members to send representatives to conferences of that body... and if I failed to take action against clergymen who allow pamphlets to which I shall refer in a moment... to be distributed at their churches."[216]

This statement referred to a leaflet entitled "Money for Terrorists" which had been distributed by Fr. Mercer to his parishioners at the Anglican church at Stellenbosch. Needless to say Fr. Mercer and his colleague Fr. Chamberlain were ordered to leave the country soon afterwards.

While the churches in South Africa dissociated themselves from the action of the WCC Executive, those that were members of the World Council of Churches decided to retain their membership. The South African Council of Churches and the Christian Institute of Southern Africa also dissociated themselves from the action of the WCC, issuing statements in which they rejected violence as a morally acceptable means of effecting change.

While the attitude of the South African Council of Churches and the Christian Institute of Southern Africa towards all use of violence to change the *status quo* ought to be taken seriously, it must be asked if those who take this view have become pacifists. If this is doubtful then do they draw a sharp distinction between international and civil war? Such a distinction is surely dubious, and in any case is very difficult to make in colonialist situations such as those in Rhodesia, Mozambique, Angola and the Republic of South Africa. Further, if they genuinely renounce violence under any circumstances in these situations, then they have a responsibility to spell out alternative methods by means of which situations which daily become more intolerable may be speedily changed.

In January of 1971, the Central Committee of the WCC endorsed the action of the Executive Committee by 84 votes to none, with 3 abstentions, and an appeal was made to

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[216] House of Assembly Debates (Hansard), September 15, 1970

member churches to support the special fund for combating racism. In April the World Council of Churches received a formal invitation from South Africa to send a delegation for joint talks. But when in June the South African Prime Minister refused to allow the WCC delegation to go further than the international hotel at Jan Smuts airport and to leave immediately, the consultation was concluded. The Prime Minister also suggested what the agenda of the consultation should be, whereupon the World Council indicated that they found such conditions totally unacceptable, and the South African churches concerned concurred.

But the matter was not to rest there for when in September the World Council of Churches gave a further £45,000 to liberation groups for humanitarian purposes, the Prime Minister told a deputation from the South African Council of Churches that he was not now prepared to allow a delegation from the WCC to enter South Africa under any conditions, although he would not stand in the way of a meeting held outside the Republic.

Must Take Positive Action

As long go as 1957, the Bishops` Conference of the Roman Catholic Church in South Africa condemned the "evil and non-Christian character" (of apartheid), "the injustice that flows from it, the resentment and bitterness it arouses, the harvest of disaster it must produce." These words are among the most searching criticisms that have ever been made by any group of church leaders in South Africa since the National Party came to power in 1948. However, as the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, the Most Rev. R. Selby Taylor, observed at the 1971 national conference of the South African Council of Churches, the time had passed when it was enough for the South African Council of Churches to pass resolutions condemning racial prejudice and social injustice. He went on to state:

> "We must take positive action which will make it abundantly clear that we are not prepared to accept inequalities based on race."

This was indeed a strong call for action but the Archbishop did not specify what action ought to be taken. Further, it has to be remembered that if such action was designed to secure some transfer of power, which is essential if the present inequalities based on race are to be overcome, then many white members in the English-speaking churches would resist any erosion of their present privileged position or diminution of their present political and economic power. This remains true, even though the acceptance of the application for full membership of the South African Council of Churches by the African Independent Churches Association (representing 358 out of the 3,000 Independent African churches) has considerably increased the African membership of the Council.

As in most countries, relations between church and State in South Africa are a continuing and changing relationship. But for the moment it may be well to let the Rev. Beyers Naude, the Director of the Christian Institute, have the last word on these relations. In his annual report on the work of the Institute in 1971, he made it clear that in

spite of the denial of the Prime Minister and others, if the churches and Christian bodies in South Africa were to affirm and implement their Christian beliefs on crucial issues, a direct confrontation with the State was inevitable.

But what of the relation of churches outside the Republic to whatever form the Church-State struggle there may take in the future? Twenty years ago, various church leaders in South Africa were advising church leaders elsewhere that they ought not to become involved in their affairs, and that same advice is still given from time to time. But looking back over two decades the wisdom of this advice may well be questioned. Too often this refusal to become involved has been taken as acquiescence in what has happened in South Africa. The inaction of some churches outside South Africa has been more than matched by the apparent indifference of some governments to these events, even when their own nationals have been the victim of the policy of the South African Government. Is this indifference due to the fact that the financial and economic involvement of others of their nationals is so great? Do such governments believe that a few bishops, clergy and laity who have actively opposed apartheid are expendable because of the vast material interest involved?

Certainly the World Council of Churches has made its conviction plain that its member churches have a Christian responsibility to be involved in events in Southern Africa. St. Paul declares, when talking of the church, all members must care for one another. "If one member suffers all suffer together."

If churches, why not governments? And if governments, why not the international community?

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND RACISM[217]

(With special reference to the Roman Catholic Church)

by

Father Austin Flannery, O.P.

Racial discrimination and racial exploitation are totally at variance with Christianity. Christians, however, have been the most persistent and ruthless offenders in recent centuries. The main reason for this chilling anomaly is that since the commencement of European colonial expansion to the Americas and to Africa the countries of Christian Europe have been faced with massive opportunities for the exploitation of peoples less powerful and technically less advanced than themselves; and they grasped their opportunities.

How eagerly they did so may be gleaned from the blood conquests of the two Americas, the enslavement of the American Indians by Spanish, Portuguese and British settlers, the virtual annihilation of the North American Indians, and the barbaric African slave trade.

It is only comparatively recently that the majority of Europeans and Americans have begun to see that era of exploitation and mass murder for what it was. In its hey-day, empire building was seen by its beneficiaries as a great and glorious and even benevolent enterprise. Then, as now, self-interest was the most persuasive of arguments.

Slavery and Racism

Looking back over those centuries, one recalls the often vigorous protests and criticisms of Christian leaders like the Dominican Bartolome de las Casas, of theologians like the Jesuit Francisco Suarez; one recalls the Jesuits and their slave-free colony in Paraguay. The Quaker, William Penn, abolished slavery in Pennsylvania and the evangelical William Wilberforce contributed greatly towards the abolition of the slave trade. One can cite many condemnations of the slave trade by successive Popes: Pius II in 1462, Paul III in 1537, Urban VIII in 1639, Benedict XIV in 1741 and Gregory XVI in 1839.

But there is the other side of the picture. If these names stand out, it is because at the time they were exceptions. The *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, commenting on papal condemnations of slavery, [218] said:

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[217] From "Notes and Documents", No. 11/74, May 1974

[218] Article on "Racism", Volume 12, p. 54

"They were hardly effective, but they may have reduced the participation of Catholics in the trade. The Church did not interfere with slavery as a customary institution. It was, however, as a result of the opposition of the outspoken Dominican, Bartolome de las Casas, that the colonial regimes of Spain and Portugal officially rejected the notion of essential racial inferiority and declared that the conquered people of the New World, however strange their culture and notwithstanding their non-Christian condition, were fully entitled to all fundamental human rights."

Slavery is not identical with racism. People have been guilty of slavery who were not necessarily also guilty of racism, as the above quotation would appear to indicate. However, a racist attitude is the readiest salve for the conscience of the exploiter. If a group are believed to be of their very nature and ineradicably inferior and incapable of advancement, it is easier to justify the disparity between their poverty and degradation and the wealth and splendour of those who exploit them. Justification becomes easier still if the exploited people are popularly believed to possess the characteristics which make them the exact opposites, the mirror-images, of those who exploit them - if, in other words, they are popularly believed to be lazy, unreliable, dishonest.

F. Ashley-Montagu has noted that as long as the slave trade was not questioned "the slaves, though treated as chattels, were nonetheless conceded to be human in every sense but that of social status..." It was only later, when influential people began to attack the slave trade on moral grounds, that its supporters began to look for other arguments to counteract the arguments of their opponents.[219] Ashley-Montagu explained:

"The difference in physical appearance provided the convenient peg upon which to hang the argument that this represented the external sign of the ineradicable mental and moral inferiorities. It was an easily grasped mode of reasoning and in this way the obvious differences in social status, in caste status, was equated with the obvious difference in physical appearance, which in turn was taken to indicate a fundamental biological difference."[220]

Special Concern to Europeans

It is apposite to remark that today's racist exploitation in South Africa, Southern Rhodesia and - at any rate until the recent *coup d'etat* - in the Portuguese colonies, is of a piece with all that is most shameful in those dark pages of Europe's history. This is why the matter cannot but be of special concern to Europeans. It has its roots in our history and the exploiters are our own kith and kin. And whether we like it or not, most European countries have economic and political links with the exploiters. It is to a large

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[219] *Man's Most dangerous myth: The Fallacy of Race*, 4th edition, Cleveland, 1964, and *Catholic Encyclopedia*, article on "Racism", vol. 12, p. 56.
[220] *Ibid.*, p. 21

extent our money and our support which provide the sinews and the will-power for this twentieth century version of the slave-trade.

To us in Europe who are Christians, the matter is of still greater concern, for the Portuguese and the rulers of South Africa and Southern Rhodesia do not merely, and to a greater extent than most European countries, claim to be Christians: they also claim a convergence between their values and Christian values and that their policies are helping to preserve Western Christian civilisation. Indeed they sometimes go so far as to claim Christian sanction for them.

In this context, one ought also to recall that the Christians who today raise their voice in protest against oppression in South Africa, the Portuguese colonies and Southern Rhodesia, are heirs to a long ad proud tradition. Not all their co-religionists recognise this. Indeed, they have frequently been the object of particularly bitter attack by the more conservative of their co-religionists. But the climate of opinion has been changing enormously in the past few years. The majority of Christians have learned to listen with a new respect to protests against apartheid and other forms of racial discrimination.

Attitudes of Christians Far from Uniform

The attitudes of Christians to racism are far from uniform, as may be inferred from the preceding paragraph. In attempting to assess them it will be helpful to examine them at two levels: the level of official statements and actions, on the one hand, and the level of day-to-day attitudes and reactions of the ordinary Christian, clerical and lay, on the other.

It must however be borne in mind that official attitudes to racism and the attitudes of the ordinary Christians do interact on each other. Official statements purport, in varying degrees, to be normative. This is more true of the Roman Catholic Church than of other Christian churches, since it is more centralised and more authoritarian.

At the same time, for the Roman Catholic Church no less than for the other churches, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness of official statements, especially in the matter of race and exploitation. As has already been mentioned, the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* said of successive papal condemnations of slavery over the centuries: "they were hardly effective." In his paper on "Church and Race in South Africa," the Reverend Kenneth N. Carstens writes: "The Catholic Church is not unlike the other English-speaking churches in that the practical application of its pronouncements is hardly perceptible and often contradictory."[221]

Later I shall put forward some reasons for the gap between theory and practice in the Christian churches, but I shall also attempt to show that the gap has been narrowing considerably in very recent times, as is evidenced by the increasing number of Christian

[221] United Nations Unit on Apartheid, "Notes and Documents", No. 23/71

ministers of religion who have been expelled from South Africa, Southern Rhodesia and the Portuguese colonies, have been imprisoned there, or have chosen voluntary exile as a protest.

Attitude of the Roman Catholic Church

Bearing in mind what has been said about the gaps that exist between theory and practice in the Christian Churches, we can go on to examine official statements on racism. I shall concentrate mainly on the Roman Catholic Church, this being the church to which I have the honour to belong and, naturally, the one I know best. I shall also concentrate on racism in the context of South Africa, Southern Rhodesia and the Portuguese colonies, this being of greatest concern to me, as a European and a Christian, for the reasons already put forward.

The most authoritative, most representative, statement of the Roman Catholic Church's position on a wide variety of topics and problems in the modern world are the documents of the Second Vatican Council. These documents touch on the problem of racial injustice fifteen times. They condemn racism. To set this in perspective one should bear two facts mind. The first is that most of the council's documents might be described as introspective: they are concerned with the Church's own problems, its theology, its renewal. The need for a more out-going approach to the world as a whole and to its problems did not begin to be felt until the council had run much of its four-year course. The fact that the problem of race figures fifteen times in the documents is evidence of a deepening concern.

The second point which might be made is that condemnation is very rare in the documents of the Second Vatican Council. In fact, it was expressly eschewed. As one commentary on the Council documents put it:

> "This Council wished to avoid anathemas. It did however resort to severe language when speaking of the moral scourges of our time. It condemned vigorously the crimes which detract from man's dignity... One meets the same severe language when there is question of `all forms of discrimination in the matter of fundamental rights, whether on the basis of sex, race, colour, social condition, language or religion.` (*Church in the Modern World*, no. 29, para. 2) In this disclosure of the tragic evils of our time we find, in short, the only anathemas of the Council, if one might use the expression." [222]

The Second Vatican Council did not treat of the race question in isolation from other moral problems, nor did it deal with it in detail or extensively. What it did have to say, however, leaves one in no doubt that it saw racism as totally inimical to the basic tenets of Christianity. By way of commentary and introduction to what the Council said, the

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[222] *Concile Oecumenique Vatican II; Document Conciliaires*, vol. 3, pp. 75-76, Editions du Centurion, Paris, 1966: author's translation.

following passage from *The Catholic Church and the Race Question,*[223] written some ten years previously by Father Yves Congar, O.P. is apposite:

> "What is racism? It is the dividing and grading of human beings into groups, and then the effecting of discrimination against some of them, on the ground that their human qualities or characteristics are genetically determined. Racism refuses to see man outside a system of classification based on genetic factors (real or supposed). In its view, it is these factors that radically and decisively qualify, unite or separate men.
>
> "This standpoint is incompatible with the tenets of the Christian faith as regards (a) the unity and (b) the dignity of human nature, and also with Christian spirituality. Racism is a pseudo religion; it has disastrous results which attack Christianity at it roots." (p. 13)

Later in the same treatise, Father Congar wrote:

> "Pope Pius XI proclaimed... that by transposing the great premises of Christianity into terms of race, racism was profoundly perverting them and becoming itself a pseudo-religion... If there is in Christianity the idea of a mystery of blood, it is that, not of a race opposed to other races, but of the unity of all men in the heritage of sin, derived from our first father, and in a heritage of redemption purchased by the blood of Christ."(p. 21)

The documents of Vatican II treat of race in two main contexts: (a) in statements about the nature of the church and about its life and worship; and (b) in statements about injustice. What they have to say might usefully be seen against the background of the racist ideas which Father Congar describes and which had a certain currency in Europe, during the Nazi period especially. Father Congar recalls (writing in 1953) that the racist theories of people like A. Rosenberg and W. Hauer had been distilled in pithy sayings which were still fresh in his memory: "Art is always the product of a specific race." "All true culture is the conscious form taken by the growing life-force of a race." "Faith is closely dependent upon race." (p. 18)

In contrast, the *Constitution on the Church*, the major document of Vatican II, sees all members of the Church as "a single people" (No. 9) and "one people of God" (No. 11). It asserts that all have "a common dignity" and says "in the Church there is no inequality arising from race or nationality, social condition or sex" (No. 31). Another document, the *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, makes it clear that there can be no question of exclusiveness about church membership: "the Church has been sent to all races and nations and, therefore, is not tied exclusively and indissolubly to any race or nation." (No. 58). For this reason, the "Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in worship... She respects and fosters the spiritual riches and gifts of

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[223] Published by UNESCO, Paris, 1953

the different races and peoples..." [224] For "the Church transcends every particularity of race or nation..." [225]

Since today's worst racial problems exist in southern Africa, where many Europeans work as missionaries, it is particularly relevant that the Decree on the missions should speak of racial prejudice. The decree bids Christians to follow the legitimate customs of the countries in which they live, to "practice true and effective patriotism", since the church does not have political institutions of its own. However, it draws the line at collaboration in racial discrimination:

> "At the same time, let them altogether avoid racial prejudice and exaggerated nationalism, fostering instead a universal love for men."[226]

When the Council documents turn to the larger issues of justice and peace in the world, they note the continued persistence of "racial antagonisms" [227] and of "great inequalities between races." They call on all men to put an end to inter-racial conflict and assert that all peace-making is doomed to failure so long as inter-racial hostility persists.

In the light of this, it is not surprising to find the Council taking a wholly uncompromising stand on racial discrimination, which it sees as diametrically opposed to the Christian spirit:

> "With respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, colour, social condition, language or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent." [228]
>
> "We cannot in truthfulness call upon God who is the Father of all if we refuse to act in a brotherly way towards certain men, created though they be in God's image. A man's relationship with God the Father and his relationship with his brother men are so linked together that Scripture says: 'He who does not love does not know God.'" [229]
>
> "The ground is, therefore, removed from every theory or practice which leads to a distinction between men or peoples in the matter of human dignity and the rights which flow from it.
>
> "In consequence, the Church rejects as foreign to the mind of Christ, any

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[224] *Constitution on the Liturgy*, No. 37
[225] *Decree on the Missions*, No. 8
[226] *Ibid.*, No. 15
[227] *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, Nos. 3, 4, 42, 82
[228] *Ibid.*, No. 29
[229] 1 John 4:8

discrimination against men or harassment of them because of their race, colour, condition of life, or religion."[230]

In similar vein, the *Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* asserts that the ultimate purpose of economic production is the betterment of all men, "no matter what their status or race . . ." (No. 64)

Papal Encyclicals

The other great source for the teaching of the central authority of the Roman Catholic Church are papal encyclicals. Since the publication of the encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, in 1891, by Pope Leo III, there have been a number of encyclicals on social problems. The most notable of these have been Pius XI's *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), John XXIII's *Mater et Magistra* (1961), and Pope Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio* (1967) and *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971).

An examination of these documents shows that the present race question has impinged comparatively lately on the consciousness of the universal church. Only in the last two of these documents is it dealt with, and even there only comparatively briefly. One reason for this is that it is only comparatively recently that Europeans have begun to shed a paternalism with regard to Africans. The emergence of the new African nations, coupled with their influence at the United Nations and in bodies like the World Council of Churches, have helped us to see the race question in clearer perspective.

Populorum Progressio speaks of racism as "a cause of division and hatred within countries whenever individuals and families see the inviolable rights of the human person held in scorn, as they themselves are unjustly subjected to a regime of discrimination because of their race or their colour" (No. 63). Little more than four years later, *Octogesima Adveniens* lists - as did the Second Vatican Council - racial discrimination as one of several forms of discrimination, but then goes on to single racial discrimination out for special comment and special condemnation:

> "Racial discrimination possesses at the moment a character of very great relevance by reason of the tension which it stirs up both within certain countries and on the international level. Men rightly consider unjustifiable and reject as inadmissible the tendency to maintain or introduce legislation or behaviour systematically inspired by racialist prejudice. The members of mankind share the same basic rights and duties, as well as the same supernatural destiny. Within a country which belongs to each one, all should be equal before the law, find equal admittance to economic, cultural, civic and social life and benefit from a fair sharing of the nation's riches." (No. 16).

One hopes that the next step will be a full-scale document on the evils of racism treated on its own.

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[230] *Declaration on Non-Christian Religions*, No. 5

Statements by Local Churches

The other source of official comment by the Churches are statements by leaders of the local churches. These have been well covered, in the case of South Africa, by the paper written for the United Nations Unit on Apartheid by the Reverend Kenneth N. Carstens, in 1971. He showed that while the Dutch Reformed Churches are pro-apartheid, on the whole, the official policy of the English-language churches is opposed to apartheid. He adds, however:

> "The practice... does not match the professed principles..." (p.15)

The remarkable joint pastoral letter published by the bishops of South Africa in 1972 bears out Mr. Carstens on this point. The bishops point out that they have on several occasions addressed their people on social and interracial justice and then add: "Regrettably there has been very little significant response. But we can try again." They go on to speak of legislation and convention dividing people of different colours; they condemn the evils caused by migratory labour: "around half the main African male labour force are obliged to live more or less permanently separated from their families." They speak of the deep frustration of the Africans, deprived of sufficient opportunity for education: "Deep frustration begins with half-education." They assert that it is wrong to deprive a person of promotion because of the colour of his skin. They go on:

> "In many ways the poorest members of our mixed population are the least protected. There is no unemployment insurance required by law for those who earn least. Pensions are below the subsistence level. There is a lack of care for the aged, the deprived and the handicapped... Resettlement camps have shown how people are uprooted and moved in a heartless manner."

Later they say:

> "We are deeply troubled by the memory of the many people who have been detained, banned, silenced or restricted, without public trial, or who have become the object of suspicion and harassment because of their Christian concern for neighbours of a different race. All that we know of many them is their struggle and protest on behalf of the voiceless who suffer under discriminatory legislation and way of life and this deserves our sympathy and praise." [231]

In Southern Rhodesia the problem is of more recent origin and from the beginning the attitude of the Roman Catholic hierarchy has been uncompromisingly on the side of justice. In January of this year they published the most recent of their statements on the problem and in the course of the document they say:

> "Half measures and token gestures will provide no solution. The real issues

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[231] Text in *Osservatore Romano*, March 9, 1972

must be faced; discrimination based on race must be eliminated, equality of opportunity must be guaranteed; there must be proper parliamentary representation, job reservation must go, land reform must be seriously tackled with more equitable distribution and appropriate control. These are reasonable demands. They are the demands of simple justice."

The Rhodesian bishops also speak of the use of police State techniques by the government:

> "... the summary arrest, restriction or imprisonment without trial of people who have at heart the welfare of Rhodesia but who are known to oppose the present government. The widespread use of informers has a demoralising effect. Among the African people especially, all these things have resulted in a growing lack of confidence in the impartiality of law and order." [232]

When we turn to the Portuguese colonies, the picture begins to change considerably. True, Mozambique has in common with South Africa an increasing number of priests and religious who have made their opposition to racist government policies known in no uncertain terms. This, indeed, has been one of the most significant developments in colonial and southern Africa in recent years. The Governments of South Africa and the authorities in Southern Rhodesia and the Portuguese colonies have found themselves increasingly in conflict with ministers of religion, with nuns and brothers. The number of ministers and religious imprisoned or deported from these territories is now very considerable.

The hierarchy of Mozambique, until very recently, appeared to be totally behind the Government. Indeed, they would seem to be committed to this by the Concordat with the Vatican - a document which, one hopes, will soon be abrogated. Roman Catholics find themselves in a different position in Mozambique than they do in South Africa or Southern Rhodesia. In Mozambique they are officially identified with the colonial regime. Roman Catholic priests are paid by the regime, and are regarded as collaborators in colonial government. In this situation, the White Fathers, a missionary congregation, decided to leave Mozambique altogether, an unparalleled decision.

In a lengthy testimony *Venticinque anni di presenza in Mozambique: Twenty-five years in Mozambique* (*Africa*, 3, Rome), Father Cesare Bertulli, Superior of the White Fathers in Mozambique, recalls a statement drawn up in 1961 by the then Archbishop of Laurenco Marques, Dom Custodio Alvim Pereira. He added that it would still be regarded as normative. Among the principles which the Archbishop put forward for the guidance of his clergy were the following: (1) Independence is a good thing for a population only when certain cultural and geographical facts are justified. It is taken for granted that this does not obtain in Mozambique. (2) Until such conditions are verified, it is contrary to nature to take part in a movement for independence. (3) Even when the conditions shall have been verified, the Mother Country has the right to oppose

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[232] Text in *Osservatore Romano*, February 21, 1921

independence, so long as liberty and rights are respected and she seeks the well-being and the civil and religious progress of all. (4) All terrorist movements are contrary to natural law because independence, as a good, ought to be achieved by peaceful means. (7) The native African peoples have the obligation to thank the colonists for all the benefits they have received from them. (8) Educated people have the obligation to disabuse the less well-educated of the illusion, the mirage of independence. (9) Almost everywhere that independence has been achieved in Africa, this has been accompanied by revolution and communism. Such movements ought not, therefore, to be supported. The teaching of the Holy See is quite clear on communism and revolution.

In another section the Archbishop says that the slogan "Africa for the Africans" is "a false philosophy and an act of defiance to the Christian civilisation. In fact, recent events show that it is communism and Islam which want to impose their civilisation on Africa." (Author's translation)

Father Bertulli, who said that such was still the thinking of the hierarchy of Mozambique, remarked that it was no wonder that African seminarians could not accept such ideas and that the best of them were leaving the seminaries.

It is no wonder too that, in the light of what has since become known of the brutality of the Portuguese regime, many more priests, religious and lay-folk should have begun to protest. The most recent and the most significant protest came to light last March.

For the first time ever, a Mozambique bishop has criticised the Government. He is Mgr. Vieira Pinto, bishop of Nampula. Mgr. Pinto said in a pastoral letter, dated last January, but which has only recently come to public knowledge outside Mozambique, that "African self-determination is a natural right and is essential to true development." He added: "To promote full development is to promote and defend the right of the people of Mozambique to their own identity, their right to the freedom to formulate their own aspirations and to construct their own history... The right to self-determination involves the right of an emergent people to choose freely their own political institutions, their cultural, social and economic institutions... Mozambique is at the time for decision... a time for men worthy of the name of men."

A second remarkable document has since then come to light. It is a statement addressed to the hierarchy of Mozambique and signed by Mgr. Pinto, 34 priests, 14 religious men and 14 religious women. It said: "The Church in Mozambique is on the side of the oppressor"; it "does not defend men's rights"; it "lacks the courage to say how the peoples of Mozambique have been despoiled of what is rightfully theirs"; it "follows the Government's directives, without bothering to discover whether or not this war is an attempt by the people of Mozambique to achieve their independence."

The statement accuses the hierarchy of not having clearly and firmly denounced the massacres and says that "some members of the hierarchy have even gone so far, out of servility towards the Government, as to deny publicly facts that are absolutely certain and known to all." Lastly, tied by a concordat and a missionary statute which are totally

at odds with its true mission, the Church in Mozambique, it says, has become "an accomplice of a regime which is leading to the cultural genocide of the people." The signatories announce that they will not in future accept Government subsidies paid to missionaries, nor will they teach in the primary schools.

The reaction of the white colonists was strong. As has been widely reported in the world's press, a white mob attacked Bishop Pinto and six priests at the airport at Lourenco Marques, whither they had been hidden for interrogation. The immediate provocation on that occasion was a homily which the bishop had preached shortly before at Mass. [233]

Hope for the Future

The tensions thus revealed within the church itself in Mozambique exist also in Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. One important difference is that the majority of the bishops in both South Africa and Southern Rhodesia would seem to be on the side of justice - at least they have all signed the joint statements on racism. As we have seen, the last two statements from each hierarchy were quite categorical, their most trenchant statements to date. In Mozambique, however, the hierarchy has always been - publicly at any rate - on the side of the Government. Mgr. Pinto has been the first to break ranks. One hopes that the recent coup in Portugal might encourage others to put justice before their brand of patriotism. One hopes too that the coup might be taken as a suitable occasion to abolish the present concordat.

In all the churches in Africa at the present time an increasing number of clergy and laity are seeing clearly that the present regimes are evil and that justice will have to be done: that therein lies the only hope for the future in Africa. Increasingly also the governments are adopting repressive measures against them and against others who do not share their religious convictions but do share their humanitarian concern. This has been noted by the statements issued by the Southern Rhodesian and South African hierarchies and has been regularly reported in the world's press. Information has also become available that the Portuguese authorities were planning to step up their campaign against priests and religious who oppose their views.

But it is not only the governments who oppose the liberal Christians who put justice and truth first. They are also bitterly opposed by those who enjoy the fruits of white supremacy. It is such as they - in this case the Portuguese *pieds noirs* - who attacked the bishop and priests at Lourenco Marques airport; it is such as they who have given such little significant response to the South African hierarchy's appeals. It is such as they who can make their views known in no uncertain terms to a bishop at a Saint Patrick's Day dinner in Salisbury.

But, on the part of many of the clergy, there is a temptation to a kind of ecclesiastical self-interest, a feeling that one must not rock the boat and that one will thus be left free

[233] Account from *Informations Catholique Internationales,* April 14, 1974

to get on with the Church's business. In an interview published last year in *Informations Catholiques Interationales* (April 15, 1973), Archbishop Denis Hurley of Durban said that that situation could not last: "I believe that all the churches in South Africa... will become more and more involved in the struggle for justice and equality. This will create great tension between the churches and the State in the years to come. It is inevitable and we shall simply have to face it. Most Christians accept that Christianity has no hope and no meaning unless it is on the side of justice."

Many white Christians in Africa and many Europeans and Americans - especially if they are over forty - share other attitudes and prejudices which blind them to the true situation in Africa and inhibit them from giving the help that is so desperately needed by black Africans and the liberal whites who live there. First of these is a tendency to accept the lawfulness of the actions of any government - except, of course, a Communist government. Allied to this is a tendency to bracket any protest group - including, especially, anti-apartheid movements - with all those "lefties" and anarchists who seek to overthrow society, or are alleged to. The South African Government's propaganda machine is not remiss in fostering such obfuscation mythology.

Allied to this latter attitude, and at times reinforced by it, is a tendency to portray the role of a Christian clergyman or religious in terms of a false antithesis, an either-or choice between "spiritual matters" and "social matters". The Christian clergyman, it is urged, should concentrate on "spiritual matters," especially since - it is sometimes urged in addition - concern about social justice is suspect, hence the domain of communists and atheists. Such unthinking obfuscation is not at all uncommon. I was surprised, however, to find it in a statement by the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for Evangelisation (the congregation in charge of the missions), Cardinal Rossi. It was in a message for the end of the centenary of the birth of St. Therese of Lisieux and was addressed to the Carmelites of Lisieux. It was published in an English translation in the *Osservatore Romano*. In the course of it he said:

> "I ask you, then, to pray that the coming Synod of Bishops may not be turned aside from its aim, `the evangelisation of the modern world', to the benefit of purely socio-cultural aims, promoted by currents of thought that are fundamentally atheistic and materialistic."

One returns with relief to the sober and stark realism of Archbishop Hurley of Durban: "Christianity has no hope and no meaning unless it is on the side of justice."

One last point which must be made is that the Christian churches in Europe could do a great deal more to show their solidarity with and support for their co-religionists in southern Africa who are working to achieve a more just society here. That support is desperately needed and will be needed much more in the future, as the governments step up their campaign against the churches. The World Council of Churches has set a magnificent example by giving financial support, for humanitarian purposes, to the liberation movements. Would that individual member churches and the Roman Catholic Church were as forthcoming.

VUYISILE MINI[234]

Worker, Poet and Martyr for Freedom

Vuyisile Mini was born in the bustling and rapidly developing Port Elizabeth in 1920. But the development taking place on that important dock-side was not for the benefit of the Black workers who were paid minimal wages by the bosses. His father was involved in the desperate struggle to raise a family on these wages.

When he was a boy of ten, the workers in the nearby East London went on strike to try to improve their situation. The strike was broken by scab labour, and most strikers lost their jobs. The Government demonstrated its ruthlessness, by later removing most of the strikers from the city to remote areas where employment opportunities were virtually non-existent.

This pattern was to emerge again and again. It did not daunt the militancy of the workers, however. It is a tribute to their dogged determination that they continued to fight, despite being beaten back, and to fight back again.

Trade Union Struggles

Mini himself became part of this struggle at the age of seventeen. He joined the fight against bus fare and rent increases and the crippling injustices perpetrated against people who could barely afford food. He was active in local campaigns against the mass removal of Africans from Korsten, Port Elizabeth, where he lived.

In 1957, the stevedores in Port Elizabeth struck. This strike received international publicity when convict labour was brought in to break it. The South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) and African National Congress (ANC), as well as other organisations, protested vehemently against this intrusion of convict labour and appealed to international bodies to help them in that struggle. The International Transport Workers` Federation threatened to call on workers in other ports to refuse to handle goods loaded at Port Elizabeth. The stevedore companies panicked and the Minister of Labour announced the immediate withdrawal of convict labour.

Eventually the Government took revenge. When the stevedore companies offered an increase of 15 pence a day, the Minister of Labour withheld his permission and ordered a Wage Board inquiry. The result of this inquiry was that the workers did not receive the 15 pence increase offered by the employers.

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[234] From "Notes and Documents", No. 31/74, November 1974.

This biography of Vuyisile Mini, published on the tenth anniversary of his death, was based on information provided by the South African Congress of Trade Unions.

There were many more dock and transport strikes in this period. Most ended in the same way. The Government representatives stepped in, even where companies were prepared to negotiate and complicated the situation. Police were often brought in to clear striking workers out of their living areas, and to bring in scab labour from remote areas.

Government intervention to stem militant trade union action took a new turn. The law was manipulated to harass trade union leaders on political charges and thus remove them from their place of organisation.

Through these kinds of experiences, trade unionists became aware that trade union activity was really part of a wider struggle. The intervention of the State in factory floor disputes showed workers only too clearly that the exploitation of African workers was but an aspect of the overall oppression. Workers not only had no right to strike, but they also had no right to choose where to live, no right to vote, and no representatives in Parliament. The union struggle, trade unionists came to realise, could not be divorced from the struggle for freedom.

Defiance Campaign and Treason Trial

The ANC grew rapidly in strength in the decade after World War II. It formed an alliance with Indian and Coloured and white movements, which became known as the "Congress Alliance" and together they launched the Campaign of Defiance against Unjust Laws in 1952.

Vuyisile Mini was then the Secretary of the Dock Workers` Union and the Sheet Metal Workers` Union, which were both affiliated to SACTU. A father of six, he volunteered to take part in the Defiance Campaign, and was sentenced to three months` imprisonment for entering railway property which had been reserved for whites only.

Because of his arrest, he lost his job as packer in a battery factory. After release, he combined his trade union activities with political work and became Secretary of the Cape region of the ANC.

The State machinery was soon busily seeking other means of harassing the people’s leaders. In 1956, it arrested 156 persons of all races and charged them with treason. One of these was Mini. The trial dragged on for four years, disrupting the lives and work of the accused and their families, before the State case collapsed and all the accused were freed.

Composer and Singer

Through all his arrests and victimisation, Mini reacted with that great gift which heartened all who heard him - his singing. His own compositions, which he sang in a magnificent bass in meetings, in prison and during the mass trials, were militant at times:

"*Verwoerd pasopa*
Naants` indod` emnyama"

("Look out, Verwoerd, here are the Black people");

and at times, nostalgic, especially the song composed during the long and wearying Treason Trial, which expressed the yearning of the accused to return home:

"*Thath` umthwalo Buti sigoduke*
balindile oomama noo bab` ekhaya"

("Take up your things Brother and let's go,
They are waiting, our mothers and fathers, at
home")

The feelings in this song have now taken on a new dimension for all those South Africans who live as refugees from the land of their birth.

Mini, however, also loved classical music. He sang in various choirs, including the Port Elizabeth Male Voice Choir. Some of the choirs of which he was a member included whites who were not connected with the struggle for freedom. He joked about this afterwards, saying he had carried the "gospel of Congress" further by way of song. This allusion to the gospel refers to a song Mini had composed during the Defiance Campaign:

"*Mayihambe le vangeli*
Mayigqib ilizwe lonke"

("Let this gospel spread and be known through the world")

The Final Test

The early 1960s saw an all-out campaign by the racist regime to smash the popular movements. The oppressed people had seen all their appeals ignored and the doors to peaceful protest bolted by the National Party leaders, who had been schooled in the ideology of Nazi Germany. The popular movements therefore took to direct action in the form of limited acts of sabotage against Government installations.

While working in the Port Elizabeth Local Committee of SACTU in 1963, Mini was arrested along with two other prominent ANC members, Wilson Khayinga and Zinakile Mkaba. All three were charged with committing acts of sabotage and complicity in the death of a police informer in January of that year. (None of them were charged with participation in the shooting of the informer: four others were subsequently tried on that charge).

The accused men, as well as all the witnesses who gave evidence against them, were

held in solitary confinement under the "90-day law." This law, enacted in May 1963, allowed the authorities to detain any person without charge for successive periods of 90 days. Most Africans held under the Act were tortured severely. Some committed suicide during this period of confinement; others are known to have died under circumstances which have never been explained. These were the conditions under which statements were extracted or even dictated to the detainees by the police.

The three men were eventually brought to trial in Port Alfred, hundreds of miles from their home town of Port Elizabeth, thus making it difficult for their families and friends to visit. Further, the attorney briefed for their defence was forbidden by the authorities to leave Durban, making proper defence and a fair trial impossible.

The three men were sentenced to death in March 1964. Appeals, calling on the South African regime to refrain from executions and release prisoners, flooded into South Africa from all over the world: telegrams, statements and letters came from the Presidents and Prime Ministers of many States; from Gamal Abdel Nasser, President of the United Arab Republic, on behalf of the Conference of Non-aligned States; from U Thant, Secretary-General of the United Nations; from trade unions and private individuals all over the world. The United Nations Security Council called on South Africa to renounce the executions. The United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid did all it could to press for the liberation of South African prisoners. All these efforts were in vain, however. Mini, Khayinga and Mkaba were hanged in Pretoria Central Prison on November 6, 1964.

No Turning Back

In a statement Mini wrote from the death cell, he recounted that a Captain Geldenhus and two other policemen had come to see him in the cell. The statement read:

> "They then asked me about Wilton Mkwayi[235]. They said I saw Mkwayi in January 1963. I said `Yes.' They asked me if I was prepared to give evidence against Mkwayi whom they had now arrested. I said `No, I was not.' They said there was a good chance for them to save me from the gallows if I was prepared to assist them. I refused to assist.
>
> "They then said, would I make the *Amandla* salute when I walked the last few paces to the gallows. I said, `Yes.' After a few more jokes of that nature, they left. Vuyisile Mini."

It became known soon after their execution that the three patriots, Mini, Khayinga and Mkaba went to their deaths singing Mini's beloved freedom songs.

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[235] A prominent trade union and political leader.

The Last Moments

One of the few people in a position to recount the last moments of Mini, Khayinga and Mkaba is Ben Turok, former Secretary of the South African Congress of Democrats, a white organisation allied to the ANC. Ben Turok was serving a 3-year term of imprisonment at Pretoria Central Prison at the time the three workers` leaders were executed. In an account which he wrote for *Sechaba*, the official organ of the ANC, he said:

> "The last evening was devastatingly sad as the heroic occupants of the death cells communicated to the prison in gentle melancholy song that their end was near... It was late at night when the singing ceased, and the prison fell into uneasy silence.
>
> "I was already awake when the singing began again in the early morning. Once again the excruciatingly beautiful music floated through the barred windows, echoing round the brick exercise yard, losing itself in the vast prison yards.
>
> "And then, unexpectedly, the voice of Vuyisile Mini came roaring down the hushed passages. Evidently standing on a stool, with his face reaching up to a barred vent in his cell, his unmistakable bass voice was enunciating his final message in Xhosa to the world he was leaving. In a voice charged with emotion but stubbornly defiant he spoke of the struggle waged by the African National Congress and of his absolute conviction of the victory to come. And then it was Khayinga's turn, followed by Mkaba, as they too defied all prison rules to shout out their valedictions.
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> "Soon after, I heard the door of their cell being opened. Murmuring voices reached my straining ears, and then the three martyrs broke into a final poignant melody which seemed to fill the whole prison with sound and then gradually faded away into the distant depths of the condemned section."

ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENTS IN WESTERN EUROPE[236]

(with special reference to their role in support of United Nations action against apartheid)

by

Kader and Louise Asmal

INTRODUCTION

Throughout Western Europe, anti-apartheid movements have come into being in response to an increasing awareness of the evils of apartheid. Thousands of individuals, whose imagination has been struck by the determination of courageous men and women inside South Africa to end the most highly-organised and all-embracing system of oppression the world has known, have come to recognise that apartheid is indeed a "crime against humanity" as declared by the General Assembly of the United Nations. They have joined together to combat the collusion of their own governments with the South African regime and to render what assistance they can to the liberation movements.

These movements have now become an effective counter to the propaganda machinery of the South African regime and its supporters. There have been some dramatic results from the efforts to assist the people of South Africa who are struggling against the system of apartheid, such as the saving of the lives of some who have been put on trial under obnoxious repressive laws. At other times the results of these efforts seemed disappointing, but they have succeeded in keeping open the channels of communication between the people of South Africa, who are mostly black, and the people of Western Europe, who are mostly white; this, in itself, constitutes an overwhelming repudiation of the philosophy of apartheid.

This paper is not a comprehensive study of all anti-apartheid movements in Western Europe. An attempt has been made to indicate the role of these movements and to deal with certain selected areas of work which have a common significance and in which greater co-operation would be valuable.

As the struggle against apartheid and racial discrimination has developed, so the calls to cease collaboration with the white minority governments have become more specific. The anti-apartheid movements, the liberation movements themselves, and the various organs of the United Nations, have all contributed to detailed analyses of the international aspects of the situation and the formulation of precise courses for action in support of

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236 From "Notes and Documents", No. 4/74, March 1974

those struggling for freedom in southern Africa.

As United Nations resolutions become more specific, the Western European governments have become more reluctant to support them. Even those governments which have given financial aid to liberation movements are reluctant to break all economic links with South Africa. The work of the anti-apartheid groups in researching the areas of collaboration which exist, and in carrying out campaigns to educate public opinion, remains essential in order to secure the widest implementation of United Nations resolutions.

I. ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENTS AND THEIR ACTIVITIES

There are now anti-apartheid groups in all the countries of Western Europe, with the exception of Spain, Portugal, Greece and Luxembourg.

The nature of these groups, their aims and objects, and the methods they use vary widely and they are not formally linked in any particular way, although one European conference and occasional consultations have been held. This is partly a reflection of the differences in the links which each country has with South Africa, and partly the result of particular geographical and political circumstances. Most groups have tried to be broadly-based organisations, and their strength lies in the influence they are able to bring to bear in many different sectors of society. They keep in close touch with the liberation movements of southern Africa, and many of them were, in fact, set up in consultation with the leaders of liberation movements. The exchange of ideas and co-operation with the United Nations bodies dealing with apartheid, particularly the Special Committee on Apartheid, has grown considerably over the past few years.

A. Establishment of Anti-Apartheid Groups

Most anti-apartheid groups were established in the late 1950s or early 1960s in response to a growing international awareness of the monstrousness of apartheid. One of the earliest of these groups, the *Fonden for Rasfortryckets Offer I Sodra Afrika* (the Fund for the Victims of Racial Oppression in Southern Africa) was founded in Sweden in 1959, on the initiative of a few people who had spent considerable time working in South Africa, after an appeal in the press by writers, churchmen and leaders of the Social Democratic Party and the Liberal Party.

In countries such as Britain and Ireland, where there were numbers of black students from South Africa, anti-apartheid groups were initiated in co-operation with local sympathisers. These groups started as boycott movements in response to the appeal of the African National Congress of South Africa for the boycott of South African goods. During the same period, other people in Britain, mainly churchmen, became involved in

raising money for the defence of the 156 South African leaders accused in the treason trial, which dragged on from 1956 to 1961. The "Treason Trial Defence Fund", as the group was known, was succeeded by the Defence and Aid Fund with which the Swedish Fund became associated.

The Sharpeville massacre of March 1960 galvanised public opinion into greater action. In Sweden, a second body, the Swedish South Africa Committee, was founded for political campaigns and became very active in the boycott movement. The inspiration came again from those who had lived and worked in South Africa, but the new organisation obtained support from many political leaders. Separate groups for humanitarian assistance and for political action were also founded in Denmark and Norway, and in the spring of 1963, the youth movements of all three countries came together to co-ordinate action in support of United Nations resolutions calling for a boycott of South Africa.

In the Netherlands, the first organisation set up was the *Comite Zuid-Afrika*, which was founded in 1960 by a fairly broadly-based group of people drawn from different political parties. The *Comite Français Contre l`Apartheid* began to function in 1964, after a number of visits by liberation movement leaders. The Finnish *Sydafrikakommitten*, the Belgian *Comite contre le Colonialisme et l`Apartheid*, the *Mouvement Anti-Apartheid de Suisse*, and groups in Italy and Germany were established in subsequent years.

The aims and objects of all the anti-apartheid movements are basically the same, namely, to help achieve the freedom of the oppressed peoples of southern Africa. All aim to disseminate information about apartheid, to influence the policies of their governments, and to build up public support. However, the precise policies and methods of work differ from group to group, and their activities have broadened over the years to meet the changing situation in South Africa and southern Africa.

B. Information

All anti-apartheid groups consider one of their principal functions to be the provision of information about conditions in southern Africa as well as the struggle of the peoples in the territories under colonial and racist domination. All of them issue printed material, ranging from duplicated newsletters circulated to members to the monthly newspaper of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, the *Anti-Apartheid News*, which by means of eye-catching cartoons, photographs and up-to-the-minute articles and interviews, has consistently maintained a high standard. Established in 1965, the *Anti-Apartheid News* now has a circulation of between 7,000 and 8,000, and is an invaluable weapon in the British campaign against apartheid. Most groups also publish pamphlets from time to time.

The success of anti-apartheid campaigns depends upon solid information material. Documentation produced by the United Nations, the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, the World Council of Churches and other bodies is frequently of vital importance for their work, especially as it is produced by internationally-known and

respected organisations. The South African propaganda machine is, however, highly professional, and the material which they send out to schools and organisations tends to be attractively produced, copiously illustrated, and generally easy-to-read. Factual material alone is not sufficient to counter this; and there is a great need for films of which an increasing number are now available.

The United Nations General Assembly has repeatedly called for wider dissemination of information on South Africa and to this end, the anti-apartheid movements have made a tremendous contribution, both by producing their own material and by distributing the publications of the United Nations Unit on Apartheid, if available in the language of the country.

Television and radio services are utilised whenever possible. The fact that anti-apartheid groups are now well-established in most countries in Europe has enabled them to build up their contacts in the press and media. Many groups have been able to set up offices and employ staff, with consequent increased efficiency and continuity of experience. The great strength of the movement as a whole, however, continues to lie in the fact that it is voluntary; even full-time personnel do not look on their work simply as a job.

C. Humanitarian Assistance

Some organisations have started purely as humanitarian fund-raising organisations, as was the case with the Swedish and British funds already mentioned. Together with similar organisations in Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland and Ireland, and others outside Europe, these organisations constitute the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa. The developments in South Africa have led more and more people to realise that no distinct line can be drawn between humanitarian and political assistance. Once the Defence and Aid Fund was banned in South Africa in 1966, it became a political act to raise money for legal defence and assistance to families of prisoners in South Africa. Moreover, people who were at first prepared to give money for humanitarian purposes only came to see that it was useless simply to assist those who were the victims of apartheid laws without, at the same time, taking steps to change the situation, or supporting those who were taking such steps. As a result, in some countries, committees with humanitarian and political aims merged or operated side by side under a single umbrella organisation. In other countries, the distinct and urgent need for humanitarian assistance is more effectively met by maintaining separate organisations.

In the Netherlands, for example, the *Comite Zuid-Afrika* (CZA) had originally favoured dialogue with the South African Government and with the whites in South Africa, but in the light of its experience in trying to put its ideas into practice, it came to take a position in line with the policies of the liberation movements - that is, of disengagement. Meanwhile, it retained its humanitarian objects. Because some individuals within the organisation preferred to concentrate on one or another aspect of the work, the CZA divided itself into two bodies: the Defence and Aid Fund Netherlands

concentrates on fund-raising and the *Anti-Apartheid Beweging Nederland* operates on the political and activist level.

By retaining separate organisations for separate tasks, a wider group of individuals is encouraged to contribute to the struggle against apartheid. It may be noted that the United Nations has set up the United Nations Educational and Training Programme for Southern Africa and the United Nations Trust Fund for South Africa for educational and humanitarian assistance to victims of apartheid, while the Special Committee on Apartheid deals with political action against South Africa. Many Western European States contribute to educational and humanitarian funds, while they do not support the resolutions on political action. Anti-apartheid groups have played their part in urging their governments to contribute to these funds.

D. Co-operation with Liberation Movements

The inspiration for the foundation of anti-apartheid groups generally came from particular events inside South Africa, such as the Sharpeville massacre of 1960 and the Rivonia trial of 1963-1964, which received widespread publicity. Liberation movement leaders in exile have been invited by these groups to give an authoritative opinion on the events. The United Nations has only recently recognised the liberation movements as the genuine representatives of their countries, but anti-apartheid movements which have not been confronted with problems of an intergovernmental organisation, have been able to do so from the beginning.

One of the principal objects of anti-apartheid groups is to raise support for the liberation movements. Promotional material of the Swiss Anti-Apartheid Movement, for example, indicates that one of its major objectives is "to support the liberation movements in their struggle for their legitimate rights." One of the aims of the Irish movement is "to co-operate with and support southern African organisations campaigning against apartheid." Similar phrases appear in the constitutions of all anti-apartheid movements.

Support for liberation movements is one of the main areas in which the activities of anti-apartheid movements have developed over the years. Fifteen years ago, the question of apartheid was only beginning to be considered internationally. Public opinion was ill-informed and needed to be convinced that apartheid in South Africa was totally wrong. Therefore, anti-apartheid movements placed emphasis on demonstrating the true nature of apartheid to the public. Sympathetic sections of the public were shocked by these revelations but they had yet to accept that there was a case for the use of force against the ruling white minorities. Even some active members of anti-apartheid groups in the early 1960s did not accept that the use of force could not be rejected as part of the struggle.

Thus, support for the liberation movements was, at first, largely confined to moral support, expressed in resolutions, public meetings and information material. Increasingly, the movements were able to promote greater public understanding for material support to the liberation movements. The South Africa Freedom Day, which is observed on 26 June

every year, has become a focus for such activity. Leaders of the South African liberation movements are in demand on that day to speak at public meetings all over Europe. The British Anti-Apartheid Movement has an advantage in that it is able to conduct a continuous process of dialogue and consultation with liberation movement leaders since the movements maintain offices in London. Lack of funds and geographical considerations prevent smaller countries, such as Ireland, from holding such frequent discussions, but whenever possible, tours are arranged for these leaders.

Gradually, the policy decisions of anti-apartheid movements concerning the liberation movements have become more militant. A resolution of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement in 1968 called on the Movement "to consult with representatives of the freedom movements of southern Africa upon a concrete programme of international action designed to render moral and material assistance to the armed resistance of the southern African peoples". Even at that stage, however, the material assistance envisaged was of a humanitarian nature, such as medical supplies and warm clothing. It was felt that appeals for such assistance would achieve a greater public response. Student groups have found it easier to embark on general fund-raising campaigns for the liberation movements, though the response was slow. In 1970 the National Union of Students in the United Kingdom adopted a resolution calling for material support for the liberation movements, but it was only in 1972 that this became a reality, when over £2,000 was raised during a special fund-raising fortnight.

Each anti-apartheid movement has to determine its priorities for action in the light of the political stance of its own country. In Great Britain, the principal trading partner of South Africa, the attention of anti-apartheid activists has been directed chiefly at ending economic collaboration with apartheid (at the express request of the liberation movements) rather than at providing aid in the form of funds and equipment for the liberation movements.

In the Scandinavian countries, on the other hand, the anti-apartheid movements have been able to concentrate on persuading their governments to make grants to the liberation movements. The Swedish Government and Swedish public opinion have proved remarkably sympathetic to the aspirations of the liberation movements, and the Swedish Government was the first to give direct assistance to liberation movements. The climate of opinion in several other countries is such that, though governments might not be prepared to follow the example of Sweden, public opinion might well do so.

One of the main difficulties at present is that the repression in South Africa is so highly organised that the activities of the liberation movements must of necessity be clandestine and appear unorganised. This creates the impression that there is no focus for more active support. For instance, to the outside observer, the widespread strikes which took place during 1973 in Durban and other major South African cities seemed to lack prior organisation and overall leadership, making it difficult to convert the sympathy, which was undoubtedly felt in many European countries, into concrete assistance to organisations.

Nevertheless, these strikes, which were followed by the shocking shootings at Carletonville, showed that the situation in South Africa was not as rigidified as it seemed. During the latter half of the 1960s the white power structure had looked so enormously powerful that there seemed to be little hope of an early change. In the Scandinavian countries, it had become difficult to recruit voluntary workers for anti-apartheid campaigns while there was an upsurge of interest in territories under Portuguese domination where liberation movements were scoring real successes in the military struggle.[237] The guerrilla wars in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique, and now in Zimbabwe, are presently affecting the whole balance of power in southern Africa; as the supporters of the anti-apartheid movements came to realise this, their interest in the whole region has revived.

The most impressive result of Scandinavian solidarity work has undoubtedly been their success in persuading governments to contribute directly to the support of the liberation movements. During 1973-1974 the Swedish Government gave about £3.3 million, of which the greater part is allocated to the PAIGC, FRELIMO, and MPLA. In 1970, the Norwegian Government decided in principle to provide development aid to the liberation movements, and it later gave a grant to the PAIGC of 151,515 Norwegian kroner. The Danish Government increased its contributions to the victims of apartheid from 28,666 dollars in 1965 to 2,400,000 dollars in 1973. Nor is this assistance limited any longer to strictly humanitarian purposes. For example, in 1973, the Government of Finland has decided to support the liberation movements directly and gave a grant to the PAIGC.

Other anti-apartheid movements have conducted their own aid programmes. Though the results were, perhaps, less spectacular in terms of the amount of money raised, they nevertheless mark an important step forward in terms of solidarity. The Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement, for instance, has run a medical aid scheme for Mozambique. The Swiss Anti-Apartheid Movement has been particularly interested in Namibia and has kept in close touch with its recognised liberation movement, the Southwest Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) and makes contributions towards the publication of the SWAPO journal, *Namibia News*.

In summing up the relations between anti-apartheid groups and the liberation movements, it can be said that the policy of the former is determined broadly by the latter. Basically, it is for the liberation movements themselves to determine policies and to make their demands, and for anti-apartheid groups to respond. There is, however, a considerable amount of interaction on a number of matters. Anti-apartheid groups have been able to provide information to liberation movements about developments in their countries, and have provided technical assistance and advice on the formulation of demands. To this extent they have been partners of the liberation movements in joint campaigns to change public opinion and alter the policy of governments.

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[237] See Skovmand, Sven, *Scandinavian Opposition to Apartheid*, United Nations Unit on Apartheid, "Notes and Documents", No. 23/70.

E. From South Africa to Southern Africa

Due to this close relationship with the liberation movements, a marked change in the aims of many anti-apartheid movements has taken place; namely, the widening of their scope to cover not only South Africa but also Namibia, Southern Rhodesia and the territories under Portuguese domination. Namibia fell naturally within the concern of the anti-apartheid movements inasmuch as South Africa refused to relinquish her illegal occupation of the territory, in defiance of the United Nations. Anti-apartheid groups became concerned with Southern Rhodesia following the illegal declaration of independence by the Smith regime in 1965, which brought that country closer to South Africa and resulted in a strengthening of apartheid laws there. In the Portuguese-occupied territories, the increasing successes of the liberation movements have compelled Portugal to open up the territories to foreign investment (much of it South African) and to forge military links with Vorster's regime. It has become increasingly obvious that progress of the liberation movements in any one territory affects the situation in the other territories in the region.

With the progress of the liberation movement in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique, separate committees have been established in many countries to direct solidarity campaigns and to raise money and material assistance for the liberation movements. Co-operation between these committees and anti-apartheid movements is generally close. In Ireland, where such separate committees do not exist, the Anti-Apartheid Movement has widened its aims to cover all the territories of southern Africa.

II. RELATIONS WITH UNITED NATIONS ORGANS

In 1962, the United Nations General Assembly decided to set up a Special Committee on Apartheid to study and report on developments in South Africa and to recommend action to the General Assembly and the Security Council. The Committee has gradually developed into a channel of communication between the United Nations and the many non-governmental organisations, including and most importantly, the anti-apartheid groups all over the world. In addition to hearing petitioners and experts at the United Nations Headquarters, it has followed the practice of visiting other countries, from time to time, to meet the representatives of these groups and to exchange ideas with them.

This exchange of views is of tremendous value in enabling the General Assembly, an assembly of representatives of governments, to take into account the views of many people whose ideas may differ from those of their governments, but who are united in anti-apartheid groups which collectively represent a significant body of opinion in Western Europe.

The visits of the Special Committee and its delegations also help in bringing developments at the United Nations to the attention of many who might otherwise remain unaware of them. Anti-apartheid groups have close affiliations with trade unions, various political parties, students and church bodies, at the local as well as the national level.

Because of these links, the publications of the Unit on Apartheid, the magazine *Objective: Justice* and other United Nations publications reach much wider readership than would otherwise be the case. The resolutions of the United Nations are made known to countless individual readers of the material distributed by anti-apartheid groups.

The Special Committee is the organ of the United Nations with which anti-apartheid movements have maintained closest and most direct contact. The Special Committee of 24 on decolonisation and the United Nations Council for Namibia have also established occasional contacts with the movements, and it is hoped that these contacts can be improved and made more regular. Recently, the Security Council Committee on sanctions against Southern Rhodesia has also invited non-governmental organisations to co-operate in discovering and reporting breaches of sanctions.

A number of anti-apartheid movements have now applied for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). The Commission on Human Rights, through its *Ad Hoc* Working Group of Experts and the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, has undertaken major studies on the gross violations of human rights in southern Africa.

Several specialised agencies of the United Nations are also concerned with the struggle against apartheid. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) does a great deal of educational work in the area of racism and racial discrimination, which includes apartheid. It has published a valuable study entitled *The Effects of Apartheid on Education, Science, Culture and Information in South Africa*, and intends soon to publish an educational kit on apartheid for use in schools. This kit was originally prepared and tried out in a pilot version by a group of teachers in Great Britain.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has also done valuable work since 1964 on the rights of workers and trade unions in southern Africa, and helped in the organisation of the International Trade Union Conference against Apartheid, held in Geneva in 1973, with the encouragement and support of the Special Committee on Apartheid. Here again, anti-apartheid movements play a valuable role in transmitting the fruits of the work of the ILO to both trade union branches and individual workers. The British Anti-Apartheid Movement has a special trade union section which publishes information material for workers and arranges trade union conferences on southern Africa.

These bodies issue documentary material and hold international conferences and seminars from time to time. Anti-apartheid groups, except insofar as their members may be invited as experts to read papers or to present evidence, do not by and large come into direct contact with them. Such contact would indeed be difficult in the case of smaller anti-apartheid groups, which do not possess the personnel or funds to devote to this task. This is not to say that an exchange of information is not useful, but only to stress that a small national group, which relies on volunteer workers and is constantly under-financed, must select its priorities very carefully and may decide to concentrate on influencing its

own government. Thus the work of the Special Committee on Apartheid, by acting as a channel of communication between the United Nations and non-governmental bodies, takes on great importance.

A. Significance of United Nations Resolutions for Anti-Apartheid Movements

Ever since 1952, the General Assembly of the United Nations has been adopting resolutions on apartheid, condemning the policy as a flagrant violation of the basic principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the United Nations Charter, and warning that this policy was creating an explosive situation which was a threat to world peace.

At a time when Western European governments were reluctant to condemn the South African regime, anti-apartheid groups supported these premises and did a great deal to publicise the situation in South Africa and thereby to bring about a greater public understanding.

By 1962, the General Assembly and the Security Council had adopted no less than twenty-seven resolutions condemning South Africa's racial policies and urging the South African Government to revise these policies and initiate measures "aimed at bringing about racial harmony based on equality".

In 1961, African and other States proposed diplomatic and other measures against the South African Government in order to dissuade it from pursuing its racial policies and to assist the struggle of the South African people for freedom and equality. Anti-apartheid groups in different countries had already been campaigning for a boycott of South Africa in response to the appeals of the African National Congress. In November 1962, when the United Nations General Assembly took its first decisive step towards the implementation of collective sanctions by recommending specific measures which Member States should take against South Africa, not a single Western European Government supported this resolution.

In December 1963, the Security Council established a Group of Experts which recommended that the Council call on the South African Government to summon a National Convention of the genuine representatives of all the people, irrespective of race, to decide the future of the country. The Group also called on the Security Council to examine urgently the logistics of economic sanctions. The proposals for sanctions were also examined in detail at an International Conference on Economic Sanctions against South Africa, organised in London by a preparatory committee of people drawn from the British Anti-Apartheid Movement and the liberation movement. Though no Western European government sent an official delegation, the work of the conference had a profound effect in promoting opinion in favour of sanctions.

Some progress was achieved by 1965, when a resolution of the General Assembly favouring sanctions was adopted by 80 votes in favour, and only 2 against. Several Western European States voted in favour of the resolution and undertook to implement sanctions if adopted by the Security Council.

Since then, the General Assembly has continued annually to consider apartheid in South Africa and to adopt new resolutions. However, as is pointed out by a paper published by the Unit on Apartheid:

> "Perhaps the most significant development during this period was the increasing emphasis on the need for promoting widest public awareness and public action to help secure implementation of the past resolutions rather than the formulation of new measures."[238]

The terms of these resolutions have become more specific in recent years. The concrete measures advocated in these resolutions to combat apartheid are often directly relevant to the campaigns of anti-apartheid movements. Particularly in Western Europe, where these movements endeavour constantly to influence public opinion and press for a change of established government policy, the specific recommendations incorporated in these resolutions and adopted by large majorities of States lend added weight to anti-apartheid campaigns and reinforce their impact.

B. United Nations Encouragement of Specific Campaigns

In resolution 2923 (XXVIII) of 1972, for instance, the General Assembly invited organisations to launch co-ordinated campaigns on specific issues such as:

- an end to the torture and ill-treatment of prisoners;

- the boycott of South Africa in sports and cultural activities;

- the discouragement of emigration, especially of skilled workers, to South Africa; and

- an end to all military, economic and political collaboration with South Africa, including the cessation of all activities by foreign economic interests which encourage the South African regime in its imposition of apartheid.

The 1973 resolution supplements these proposals in some details and emphasises support to the liberation movement.

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[238] *United Nations Action on Apartheid in the Republic of South Africa*, Unit on Apartheid "Notes and Documents", No. 10/73

All Western European anti--apartheid movements contribute to the implementation of the proposals, but the focus of the campaigns may vary according to the circumstances. In Britain, for instance, the implementation of an embargo on arms to South Africa is of vital importance and has been the subject of recurrent and hard-fought campaigns. In countries which do not manufacture arms, however, this issue is not as relevant.

1. Campaign for Release of Political Prisoners

A continuing campaign in which anti-apartheid movements have been involved since their formation is the campaign for the release of political prisoners and for the improvement of prison conditions in South African jails. The treason trial of 1956 inspired the setting up of what became the International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, and the Rivonia trial of many eminent liberation movement leaders in 1963-64 gave an added impetus to many new anti-apartheid groups.

When Nelson Mandela and the other leaders were charged in the Rivonia trial in 1963, the General Assembly of the United Nations called for the unconditional release of all political prisoners and all persons imprisoned, interned or subjected to other restrictions for having opposed the policy of apartheid. This resolution, adopted almost unanimously by the General Assembly, encouraged the public campaign for the release of South African political prisoners.

Though the campaigns have not secured the release of prisoners, it is clear that without the sustained international campaign the fate of these prisoners in South Africa might have been worse. Anti-apartheid movements, in co-operation with the International Defence and Aid Fund, have collected a great amount of information about political prisoners in South Africa. As a result of uncovering facts and publicity about torture and ill-treatment of prisoners, world attention was focussed on the issue and some improvements were obtained. Unless there is ceaseless vigilance, however, the brutal and repressive system in South Africa is bound to lead to renewed brutality and violence in prison.

The World Campaign for the Release of Political Prisoners, with its headquarters in London, was able to draw on the services of a number of distinguished alumni of South African prisons. Together with the United Nations and anti-apartheid groups all over the world, it was instrumental in saving Nelson Mandela and his fellow-accused from the death sentence. Publications such as *Apartheid and the Treatment of Prisoners in South Africa* produced by the United Nations Office of Public Information and *South African Prisons and the Red Cross Investigation*, issued by the International Defence and Aid Fund, provided information which shocked the world and led to greater awareness of the situation in South Africa.

Many anti-apartheid movements run schemes for sending Christmas cards to the families of political prisoners, so that they are not forgotten. Events such as the trial of the "Pretoria Six" in 1973 revive wide international interest in this issue. In this case, all

of the six accused had been detained for months before being charged. All of them were subjected to torture and brutality until their case became publicly known. This trial evoked public interest in three European countries in particular - Britain, France and Ireland - because of the background of two of the accused who were foreign nationals.[239] Meetings, demonstrations and petitions were organised in the three countries for the release of all six prisoners. The campaign was strengthened by the work of the United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid which invited two relatives of the accused to testify before it in New York, and arranged for the Unit on Apartheid to publicise the testimony. A day of solidarity with political prisoners was organised by anti-apartheid movements in conjunction with the Special Committee, and this gave further publicity to the harsh sentences imposed on the accused.

Recently with the successes of the liberation movements in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, and the growth of the armed struggle in Zimbabwe, anti-apartheid movements have pressed that guerrilla fighters should be accorded a special status in international law so as to protect them from the danger of summary execution in the event of capture. The United Nations General Assembly has made recommendations on this matter and the UN-OAU Conference, held in Oslo in 1973, recommended that the International Committee of the Red Cross should be requested to do everything in its power to induce Portugal to accord captured freedom fighters, whether in uniform or not, the status of prisoners of war. Anti-apartheid movements have put this proposal to their national Red Cross committees, and urged them to revise the Geneva Conventions accordingly.

2. Campaign for Boycott of South African Products

The boycott campaign, which is common to all countries, involves individuals in action against South Africa and is a seminal one for the development of anti-apartheid work. Anti-apartheid movements in many countries began as movements for the boycott of South African produce. At the time of Sharpeville massacre, the campaign in Britain did in fact produce a significant fall in South Africa's fruit exports.

The real value of the boycott campaign, however, lies in the concrete action required of each individual, resulting in a greater awareness and greater commitment to the struggle against apartheid. In this connection, it is worth recalling an assessment made by Sven Skovmand that the quick results of the boycott campaign in Scandinavian countries, which were obtained through the persuasion of a few centrally-placed persons and not the active involvement of large numbers of individuals were in a sense harmful to the anti-apartheid movement. Disillusionment followed since the boycott seemed to the average Scandinavian to have had little effect on South Africa.[240] This experience has been

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[239] Alexandre Moumbaris, one of the accused, was an Australian national and a resident of the United Kingdom; his wife, a French national, was also imprisoned for several months and ill-treated despite her pregnancy before being deported. Sean Hosey, another accused, was an Irish national resident in the United Kingdom.

[240] *Scandinavian Opposition to Apartheid, op. cit.*

useful, and groups in other countries have been able to avoid such a danger.

In Ireland, a country in which the imports from South Africa form only a small fraction of South Africa's total exports, the boycott campaign has been a continuing one. Its success in terms of reducing sales of South African goods fluctuates according to events in South Africa. But the value of the work done by the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement in this campaign became apparent when specific issues of economic importance arose.

In the Netherlands, boycotts of specific products have been promoted with great success. The most recent campaign was for the boycott of Outspan oranges under the striking slogan of "Don't Squeeze a South African Dry". A great deal of preparatory work was carried out. In addition, explanatory material was produced, and posters and stickers were printed. At the height of the campaign, some 800 local groups were involved, and nearly all the major supermarkets stopped buying South African oranges.[241] However, the *Boycott Outspan Aktie* which organised the campaign feels strongly that a co-ordinated campaign in other European countries is necessary to prevent Outspan oranges from simply being diverted to other countries. The four largest consumers of this product are, in order of importance, Great Britain, France, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Netherlands, but all other Western European countries import some Outspan fruit.

One example of effective co-operation between anti-apartheid groups in different countries of Europe is provided by the campaign against the import of karakul pelts from Namibia, marketed under the trade name of *Swakara*. In 1972, the sale of *Swakara* earned a total of £18 million. Until recently, the skins were marketed exclusively in London, and the auctions were the scene of strong protest actions by anti-apartheid movement supporters. When a new *Swakara* centre was set up in Denmark, Danish groups appealed to the government to stop the auction; when this was refused, there was some disruption of the auction and a brief strike by workers. The principal markets for this product in Europe are the Federal Republic of Germany, Scandinavian countries and Italy.

The campaign for the boycott of South African produce has led to similar campaigns by specific groups of people, such as university teachers, entertainers and playwrights. The most spectacular campaigns in this area have been in sport, where tens of thousands of people have been mobilised, to demonstrate and protest against visiting all-white teams from South Africa. These campaigns have already been discussed in other publications and there is no doubt about their impact in South Africa.

3. Campaigns against Emigration to South Africa

Another major area of possible co-operation between European anti-apartheid movements is the emigration, particularly of skilled workers, to South Africa. Resolutions of the United Nations, the International Trade Union Conference against Apartheid and the Oslo UN-OAU Conference, have directed attention at the vital

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[241] Bulletin of the *Boycott Outspan Aktie*, Leiden, February 1974

importance of a continuous flow of skilled workers to South Africa for the maintenance of apartheid. The British Anti-Apartheid Movement has been able to provide information direct to potential emigrants through its trade union contacts. Supporters of the anti-apartheid movement in several Western European countries have attended recruiting meetings organised by South African immigration organisations and discouraged migration to South Africa. Student bodies in Ireland have campaigned against the holding of interviews for jobs in South Africa on university premises, while in the Netherlands a significant victory was won in May 1973 when the newly-elected Prime Minister announced that the Government would terminate financial aid for emigration to South Africa.

South Africa desperately needs white workers to fill its whites-only jobs. But as the public in Europe is now much more conscious than in the past of the true conditions in South Africa, the rate of emigration is not increasing as much as South Africa would like. It is, therefore, likely that South Africa will organise more frequent recruiting drives.

Some years ago the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement succeeded in preventing the establishment of an immigration office in Dublin, but the technique seems to have changed and it is now the representatives of individual firms who come to Ireland to conduct interviews. A greater exchange of information among anti-apartheid movements would be valuable.

4. Campaigns against Economic Collaboration

There is a far greater flow of information on economic collaboration, resulting from years of painstaking research and inquiry. At first this consisted merely of finding out the principal companies with interests in South Africa. *The Collaborators*, a pamphlet published by the British Anti-Apartheid Movement in 1963, was one of the first publications to indicate these companies and show the key role played by British investment in underwriting the policy of apartheid. Since then, detailed studies have been issued by British and other anti-apartheid movements on companies which have large stakes in South Africa or which are involved in activities such as arms production, or which are incontrovertibly linked with the suppression of the black majority. This information has been supplemented by a series of "anti-Reports," issued by the Counter Information Service in the form of glossy company reports. The reports document in compelling and often shocking detail the operations of South African companies with heavy British investments.[242] The Swiss Anti-Apartheid Movement, in co-operation with other Swiss organisations, produced a highly-researched book on Swiss-South African economic collaboration, which had a significant impact on the Swiss press and in financial circles.[243]

These reports deal not only with the ownership of the specific companies, the size of

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[242] See reports on Rio Tinto Zinc and Consolidated Gold Fields, Ltd., produced by the Counter Information Service, London.

[243] *Suisse-Afrique du Sud* (Centre Europe-Tiers Monde, Geneva, 1972).

investments, profits, and so on, but also with the conditions of work and wages of the African employees in these foreign-owned corporations. The reports reveal the hollow claims of foreign companies, namely, that they are contributing towards the development of the Africans when, in fact, any development resulting from their operations takes place along rigid apartheid lines and in conformity with the policy of the South African Government. These disclosures have led individual shareholders to question the policies of their companies and to demand that they withdraw from South Africa in conformity with the United Nations resolutions on the subject.

The value of this preparatory work became apparent in Britain in 1973, when reports of the miserable wages and poor conditions of African employees of British-owned companies in South Africa made headline news in the *Guardian* and produced a wave of shock which reached the Houses of Parliament and resulted in a special Parliamentary enquiry. Business interests at first tried to deny the facts or claimed ignorance of the true state of affairs. They quickly rallied, however, to profess their sympathy for the Africans and to claim that they must stay in South Africa in order to improve the lot of the Africans. The British Anti-Apartheid Movement has been able to draw on its previous research to show that this course of action is unacceptable and cannot be a "tolerable option" to the policy of total withdrawal from South Africa.

Similar work has been carried out by the *Anti-Apartheids Beweging Nederland* (AABN). This body awarded top priority in its programme of action to the demands of the liberation movement; namely, that industrial interests, which maintain links with South Africa and thus help uphold apartheid, should be compelled to withdraw completely.

The AABN decided in 1973 to place particular emphasis on the exposure of sanctions-breaking in Rhodesia by gathering information on the one hand and by pressing for the tightening of sanctions by the Netherlands Government on the other. The exposure of the Zephyr network in Amsterdam involved the collecting of more than 5,000 documents, as well as a great deal of other evidence. The initial revelations of the sanctions-breaking procedures used by Zephyr were carefully planned, and brought considerable international publicity.[244] This led to an investigation by the Dutch Government into the affairs of a trading firm in Amsterdam, which is now to be prosecuted. The AABN believes, however, that the sanctions-breaking network is an extremely resilient one, and is anxious to press for a joint initiative by European governments to approach the whole matter in a co-ordinated fashion. The Zephyr network, which operated from Amsterdam by sending goods to France and thence to Portugal for illegal shipment to Southern Rhodesia, is known to have secured goods from Britain, West Germany, France, Netherlands, Italy and Portugal.

One should also mention here the work of the Programme to Combat Racism of the World Council of Churches which although not a European body, has contributed greatly

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[244] *Zephyr Report*, published by *Anti-Apartheid Beweging Nederland*

to back up the campaign for the withdrawal of investments from southern Africa.[245]

The information and the public campaigns by these organisations have contributed to the formation of a climate of opinion which is conducive to some governments to take action. In Ireland, for instance, where much of the collaboration with South Africa is conducted privately and with little public attention, a small item in the South African press enabled the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement to discover that an official of the Industrial Development Authority (IDA) from Ireland had visited South Africa and had some 20 interviews with South African firms.[246] A sustained campaign on the part of the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement - which included the holding of a public meeting, providing information to selected members of the *Dail* (Parliament), and leading a series of representations both to the IDA and to the Minister for Industry and Commerce - resulted in a Government instruction to the IDA not to seek any further investment from South Africa. This followed on a similar campaign and victory in 1970, when the Irish Government ruled that *Coras Trachtala* (the Irish Export Board) could not in future engage in any activities aimed at promoting exports to South Africa, including the sending of trade missions to that country or the organising of such missions.

These moves by Ireland predate the specific demand made for the first time in the United Nations General Assembly resolution 3151 G (XXVIII) that States should close trade promotion offices in South Africa. Other governments which do not oppose economic sanctions but are unwilling to apply them until they are made mandatory by the Security Council, may be persuaded that they should not sponsor new areas of collaboration with South Africa.

The above resolution also asks for the denial of facilities for offices of South African trade commissioners abroad. It requests Governments to refuse any credits for trade with South Africa and any guarantees for investment in South Africa. Here again, the information-gathering work of anti-apartheid groups, which alerts public opinion when any such financial aid is contemplated, takes on great importance. If the government does not support sanctions against South Africa, then the activities of the anti-apartheid movements may frustrate aid of this kind. The large majority by which the United Nations adopted this resolution lends weight to the appeal of anti-apartheid groups, even though their own governments may have abstained on or voted against the resolution.

The "No Collaboration" campaign involves firstly the investigation of every area of collaboration and secondly the selection of the most suitable area in which to work. The work among professional groups, such as architects and doctors, as has been undertaken by the British anti-apartheid movements recently has been of great importance.[247] This

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[245] See *Time to Withdraw*, published by the World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1973.
[246] The IDA provides government grants and tax remissions to foreign firms which set up factories and provide work in Ireland.
[247] See, for instance, literature on the campaign among architects published by the British Anti-Apartheid Movement. In medicine, see *Medicine in South Africa*, prepared by the Medical Association for the Prevention of War, London, and *Nederlandse Vereniging*

has the dual result of forcing the South African professional associations to reconsider their segregated structure and of involving further sections of public opinion in the struggle against apartheid.

5. The European Economic Community

The campaign against economic collaboration with South Africa must now be extended to the European Economic Community (EEC). With Britain's accession to the EEC, the South African Government is concerned that her major market is threatened. The EEC accounts for over 50 percent of the foreign trade of South Africa and about 80 percent of foreign investment in South Africa. The South African Government has been exerting diplomatic pressures and taking business initiatives for some years in order to circumvent the EEC tariff regulations. A special mission to the EEC was established in Brussels even before the United Kingdom joined the EEC.

In this connection, it is noteworthy that the UN-OAU Conference held in Oslo in April 1973 recommended:

> "The European Economic Community should end all special terms and concessions already granted to South Africa, undertake to have no further dealings with its regime and its mission in Brussels, and pledge that it will not enter into any special agreements or arrangements with South Africa in the future."

The United Nations General Assembly has made a similar recommendation.

The Netherlands anti-apartheid movement has stated that it is particularly anxious to foster contacts among European anti-apartheid groups in order to prevent concessions by the EEC to South Africa. Joint action on such issues by national anti-apartheid movements has not been too common in the past as their relations have been entirely unstructured. But they did co-operate when the South African Prime Minister, B. J. Vorster, visited European countries in 1970.

The question of relations between EEC and South Africa will assume increasing importance and will need to become the focus of a growing campaign.

It is, therefore, particularly important at this time for Western European anti-apartheid movements to strengthen their links and take united action on the issues which confront them, in close co-operation with the liberation movement, the Organisation of African Unity and the United Nations.

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