

'A struggle that can be waged by everyone'

I ARRIVED at peace-keeping and non-violence by quite a different path to that taken by many other people. I was never a pacifist, I was never an advocate of non-violence, although in 1976 as a student I participated in non-violent protests against Bantu Education when many people were shot dead.

But there was a particular experience around that time that touched me deeply. I lived in King William's Town, haunt of Steve Biko, and met many people through him. One young man I saw come and go at Biko's was Mapetla Mohapi.

He was a social worker - kind, soft-spoken and dedicated to whatever cause he was working for. He had just married and his second child was a few months old when he was arrested.

When I came home during the school boycotts, I heard reports that Mapetla had died. It was August 1976. He had been arrested and it was claimed that he had committed suicide.

Something started burning in my mind and I began thinking about all the people who had died in detention - Timol, Ntshuntsha, Khoza, Mabija.

Many who died were alleged to have jumped from high buildings or fallen on soap in bathrooms - it was disturbing. Mapetla could not have committed suicide. He had everything going for him. He was young, he had a beautiful wife, beautiful daughters, a small house and, more than anything else, he seemed to enjoy what he was doing.

Hardly a year after Mapetla's death, Biko was arrested and died. He was very important to King William's Town; he was supportive of all the efforts of transformation taking place in our area and attempts to revive our community.

she would say. "My struggle can't be waged by the old and sick."

While not completely convinced, she was moved by her and became more and more involved in the people's lives.

It was 1985. Zimbabwe was five years into its tenth year of independence and the struggle was all around us. When I examined the gains of armed struggle, I had to ask if it was worth the gains. To my shock and surprise, the answer was no.

It had not been worth the lives of those who stayed with in camps who died in the process of a better deal.

What are we going to get on 20 years of "liberation before education", "education later" be redeemed by the gains of the struggle?

Look at Zimbabwe. Look at the gains of no jobs, no future, said of Nicaragua, told everywhere.

I am not an advocate of looking at things from the views and the view of the young, being convinced that the sacrifice is worth it.

And it is with this that my weight heavily on the side of do this against the struggle. People see their survival in the destruction of the struggle. It can be a squatter le-



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settler.

It concerns me to see the struggle all around by everybody. Often