

# BREYTENBACH AND NUSAS

The Breytenbach trial claimed many victims. Breytenbach himself, of course. That a man of his talents and gift for communication should disappear into the silence of the gaol for nine years, taking with him there, and through the rest of his life, the unhappy memories of his trial, hardly bears thinking about.

And the people who gave evidence for the State? How are they going to feel for the rest of their lives? They will certainly never be the same again. Of those who spoke, either during or after the trial, only Jenny Curtis comes through it all as a person with her integrity intact. Her statement on her release from 65 days of the terrors of solitary confinement was the one sane thing to come out of the whole crazy and tragic episode. She laid the blame for the Breytenbach debacle where it squarely belongs . . . at the doors of a system which can drive sensitive and concerned and idealistic people to think in terms of violent acts, quite foreign to their temperaments, acts which their convictions, in normal circumstances, would not even allow them to contemplate.

Breytenbach and those who were involved with him in his trial are, ultimately, victims of this system. We hope it won't claim other victims, notably NUSAS. To whatever

extent the outgoing president of NUSAS, Karel Tip, was involved in the Breytenbach talking-shop (for, let's face it, his "Okhela" movement never got further than talking, and it seems unlikely that it ever would have) it is quite certain that NUSAS itself was not. Tip's involvement, while president of NUSAS, was an act of the greatest irresponsibility on his part but there can be no suggestion that he, or anyone else, became associated with "Okhela" with the knowledge of NUSAS. Yet, we have no doubt, this will be just the kind of impression that government and right-wing United Party supporters will try to spread. Nothing would please them better than to see the end of NUSAS.

As on most things, we take a different view. We hope NUSAS survives these latest shocks. For in the growing polarisation which threatens South Africa, NUSAS remains one of the few White-based bodies which has a real understanding of what the true elements of a just society ought to be. With Angola in upheaval, and every sign that the Republic's involvement there will prove to have been a gross and dangerous miscalculation, the call to come into the laager will grow more insistent. Then more than ever, White South Africa will need people who will refuse to be panicked into conformity. □

# MAHATMA GANDHI MEMORIAL LECTURE

Given by Peter Brown at Phoenix, October 19th, 1975

If I may start off with a platitude I am honoured to have been asked to speak on this occasion.

I am honoured, firstly, because I regard the Mahatma as the greatest man of our time; secondly, because of Manilal, the memory of whose warmth, and steadfastness and quiet strength, remains as a support and encouragement to many of us even after all these years; thirdly, because here the Gandhi family still works to keep alive the ideas for which those two great men stood.

Although I regard the Mahatma as the greatest man of our time I wonder whether, during that long life of struggle of

his, he didn't suffer despair? Was he not sometimes tempted to abandon the course on which he had set out?

Was he not, perhaps, tempted to give up his philosophy of non-violence, and turn to violence?

Or was he tempted, when everything seemed hopeless, to retire? To give it all up? To go back to the comparatively quiet life of the lawyer, perhaps making the occasional public statement, but not really doing anything much more than that?

Did he ever perhaps think of "using" the system he was opposing to try to achieve his own aims? Did he, in a dark