

SOUTH AFRICAN REPRESSION - WHO DOES IT AFFECT?

CHRISTIAN OR NON-CHRISTIAN? By CAROL MAJIZA

THE South African struggling people are experiencing the most naked, barbaric and brutal repression in the hands of the Nationalist Party since it came to power in 1948. The White minority racist regime has unleashed its dogs of war and develops more repressive laws by the day to counter the mass popular resistance to its apartheid policies. It has unleashed its trigger happy rogues on all the peace loving and democratic minded people of South Africa.

All forms of repression have been utilised by the Botha clique in the name of the defense of so-called civilized values, peace, Christianity and freedom. The lives of the millions of the oppressed majority are no longer guaranteed. A friend, relative, comrade may bid you good night tonight not knowing that it would be his or her funeral the following week end.

A funeral fraught with government regulations as regards who must attend the burial, when and how to conduct the funeral and the duration of the proceedings. In a nutshell the oppressed people do not have the right to bury their loved ones the way they like because of the so-called law and order regulations.

Among the ranks of democratic forces no one for certain can be sure that he can survive the total onslaught by the apartheid rulers through detentions without trial as in the case of New Nation Editor, Zwelakhe Sisulu, General Secretary of the Municipal

Workers Union, Thiemba Nxumalo, Trevor Manuel, the 31-year-old Secretary of the UDF in the Western Cape who is now marking his 16th month in detention.

The pathetic part is that Trevor was detained 6 weeks after the birth of his son, Govan. Above Govan's cot hangs a photograph of Trevor which he tells what he has done during the day and bids it good night before going to sleep.

During his lengthy confinement in Paarl's Victor Verster Prison, Trevor has held his son in his arms just once - during a "contact" visit with his wife. These are not the only ones on detention but scores of our people are detained every day.

The neo-fascist onslaught inflicted upon the oppressed majority is not only through detentions but mass arrests, forced removals, tortures and assassinations depict the real face of apartheid rule. Still fresh in our minds is the assassination of Comrades Cassius Make and Paul Dikeledi in the dusty streets of Swaziland.

It is also reported that in November 1987, Mr Mlungisi Stuurman was given a cigarette and a mug of brandy and thereafter taken to the Great Fish River where he was shot dead and thrown in the river.

When a Constable Goosen was asked how he had shot Mr Stuurman his answer was, "I shot him from behind; through the neck. I saw the bullet come out of his face and hit the opposite bank. Sand flew. The boy fell like an ox. We

grabbed him and threw him in the river." Good Gracious!!!!

The regime does not end there it continues unabated its kidnapping of ANC members in neighbouring states and abroad. The regime has turned Swaziland into its spring board to carry out atrocities against ANC activists. One ANC member Ismail Ebrahim was abducted from his home in Swaziland in December, 1986 and is now facing treason charges in Piet Retief. There are also reports that up to 10 people kidnapped from Swaziland are held by the South African Police. Even as far as London and Brussels plots to kidnap and assassinate ANC members were exposed.

Executions are also the order of the day. In December 1987, 14 people were executed in Pretoria and these executions brought the number of people hanged in 1987 to 164, the highest annual total since the union in 1910.

If one is lucky to 'escape' the net of repression he remains with a long term of imprisonment. Not long ago, Rev. Arnold Stofile whom we, as friends and students affectionately called "Bra" Stof was sentenced to 11 years imprisonment for his alleged involvement with a banned organisation.

Two men, Esekiel Motaung and Aaron Memela who were also detained under the emergency last year have been sentenced to 24 years and 19 years by a Potchefstroom regional court magistrate. A minister in the Dutch Reformed Church, Cyril Afrika who was arrested in October 1985

just began his jail sentence in January this year.

The health of jailed trade union leaders Cde Harry Gwala and Oscar Mpetha also leaves much to be desired. Cde Gwala is reported to have been moved to a prison hospital from Robben Island suffering from a neurone disease. Cde Mpetha who is 78 old and suffers from diabetes has had his leg amputated while in prison and is permanently hospitalised.

He was even refused permission to attend his wife's funeral. Once again the people of South Africa have been robbed of their leader Cde Govan Mbeki who has served 23 years on Robben Island and has been released into the confines of a prison house in the Eastern Cape.

It is a wonder to me and perhaps to the whole world how these forces of the Botha-Malan regime can manage to lay claim to being a Christian government with such a grim picture of their performances. They profess to be Christians and yet war is in their hearts, their words are softer than oil yet they are drawn swords. They often confess to draw their religious beliefs from the teachings of Christ.

These claims as expected have a negative effect on the genuine Christian community in South Africa. In spite of all this, the ANC stands firm as Botha's system of apartheid.

I want to commend and applaud the ANC, the mouth-piece of the oppressed people which has stood for 7 decades of struggle, unshaken and unyielding in its conviction to mobilise, organise and unite all the oppressed people.

I commend and applaud the vanguard movement for the step it took in catering for



ZWELAKHE SISULU, silenced editor

Zwelakhe Sisulu, aged 35, one of South Africa's leading journalists, is the son of former ANC general secretary Walter Sisulu, who was sentenced to life imprisonment.

the Christian community within its own ranks. This move has undoubtedly shattered all questions of doubts that the African National Congress is a genuine and above all the authentic national liberation movement.

I also wish to remind our allies that the enemy will not relent and let this achievement pass by in an idle way. Already in the past all forms of deceit and division have been employed to render asunder any efforts to unite our people. As Cedric Mayson puts in his

Article (AC,110.p.53):

"The system has spent years and millions promoting Christian versus Marxist conflict as part of divide and rule policy upon which capitalist imperialism thrives."

Christians were often the target of the enemy trying to put them at logger heads with their historical allies in the struggle — the communists. This tactic was a deliberate and calculated plan aimed at enforcing divide and rule policy. It is still widely claimed that these two allies are two strange bed-

mates in many circles.

These circles have overlooked ties that were born through the past and present life and death struggle. We have observed in our history as sufferers that Christians had all along fought ceaselessly alongside the communists since the formation of the ANC and therefore it is our common commitment in the liberation of our country which is a great spiritual and material reality and that is where Christians and communists unite. As Cedric (AC, 110. p.62) puts it: "The object is not to make

conversions, not to establish dogmatic grounds for discrimination against believers and non-believers, not to become involved in ideological wrangles about deity or the science of Marxism-Leninism but to share our joint resources."

Yes, to share our resources as we strive to liberate our people who have centuries known no peace and for decades stood at the command of a vicious system whose urge to a Black person is the latest styles of dying. Cde Alfred Nzo, the ANC Secretary General once said:

"Religious people and atheists must join hands against the common enemy. By their participation in the struggle all these forces place themselves in a position to participate also in determining the future of our country."

Both Christians and non-Christians are at heart concerned with the liberation of human community and they know that the problem of Christians is not Communism and that of Communists is not Christianity BUT that our PROBLEM is apartheid, imperialism and capital exploitation.

Christians and the Path of the Revolution, Leaflet produced by A.N.C. Christian Underground structures inside South Africa.

Brothers and Sisters,

We are Christians who are members of the African National Congress. We are playing our part in the democratic organisations of our people, as well as in the underground political structures of the ANC, and the people's revolutionary army, Umkhonto we Sizwe.

We are writing to you because the revolution in South Africa presents a challenge to Christian faith, and also because you are part of us, and we are part of you. Being part of one another is not merely a theological truth, but is made real by the fact that we are part of the Mother Church of our beloved land, South Africa.

For many of us Christians, our involvement in the broad struggle for liberation was motivated by the desire to rid our country of the tyrannical Apartheid regime. However we

need to acknowledge that for some of us, the initial spur for our involvement was motivated by other considerations: The fear of being irrelevant or the desire to fill the pews of the church; or even out of fear of reprisal from the revolutionary youth. However, whatever the reason for involvement — it is important for all of us now committed to the liberation struggle, to reflect on our involvement — in order to intensify the struggle.

The important experience gained from being part of the liberation struggle, should enable us as Christians to give depth to the programmatic announcement of Jesus: "The Kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the Gospel". Like Abraham, we are called out of the old and the decadent. Our work in the struggle is the historical expression of the Christian vocation

to be a sign of the Kingdom; to incarnate the Christian faith, giving it flesh and blood in the life of our people.

We urge you therefore, brothers and sisters, to give urgent and serious attention to certain specific tasks and issues.

Our churches should give clear support to the democratic organisations of our oppressed and exploited people. Many Christian revolutionaries have been, and still are, involved up to the highest levels of our people's organisations. These comrades are taking their rightful places as servants of the poor, and in so doing, are making valuable contributions to the daily struggles of the people.

However, our churches as opposed to many individual members, have not taken up a clear option in support of the