

# THE CRUCIFIXION PROTEST

The following is the text of a pamphlet distributed during the students "crucifixion protest" in Pietermaritzburg on Maundy Thursday.

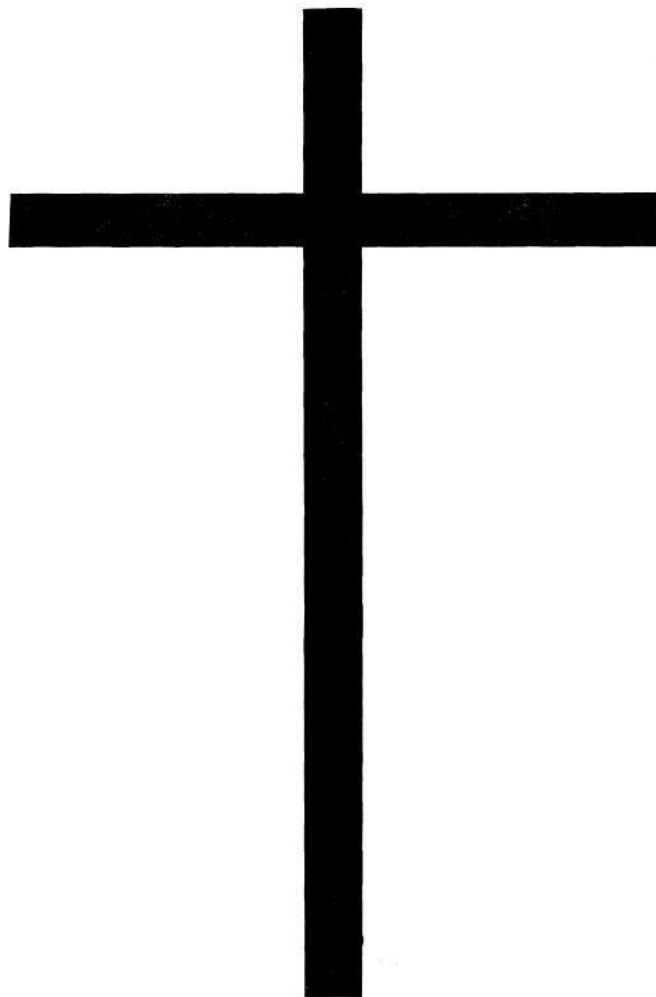
The high Priest then questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered him, 'I have spoken openly to the world; I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all Jews come together; I have said nothing secretly. Why do you ask me? Ask those who have heard me, what I said to them; they know what I said'. When he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand saying 'Is that how you answer the high priest?' Jesus answered him, 'If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness to the wrong, but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?' (John 18: 12-24)

No evidence was led against Jesus of Nazareth. He had no proper trial, but he was regarded as a subversive element by the authorities of the times, the High Priest and his Council. He was led away to be crucified because it was thought better that 'one man should die for the people and that the whole nation should not perish' (John 11: 50) The authorities' thought he menaced the nation. To 'save the nation' they got rid of an innocent man.

This is exactly the argument used in South Africa today by the Minister of Justice. *There are over 200 people in South Africa at present who have been got rid of by being banned.* (Gov. Gazette 23/7/71) Not one of these persons has had any evidence led against him in court. Every one of these people can justly use much the same words that Jesus used 'If I have acted wrongly *bear witness to the wrong*, but if I have acted rightly why do you punish me?

Many of the over 200 banned people are holding a fast during this week to protest against their bannings. Fasting is one of the few means left to them of protesting their innocence. Their banning orders make it illegal for them even to proclaim publicly that they have done no wrong. But the general public, ourselves, we can publicly protest that they are innocent until proved guilty in a court of law.

These 200 people who have been got rid of are undergoing a kind of modern crucifixion. We can remain silent in the face of this injustice, but to do this is to side with the mob which cried 'Crucify him'. Crucify him" on that first Good Friday which we commemorate tomorrow. The silence of many South Africans in the past has in fact been a loud



cry of support for the Minister of Justice's actions. As a result we have witnessed this month the banning without trial of two more people :-

**Dr. Basil Moore, a Methodist Church minister on March 3rd  
Sibelo Ntwasa, theological student in his final year of study  
for the Anglican church ministry on March 17th.**

It is surely significant that people such as these who have pledged themselves to carry on Jesus's work among men are being banned. The Government may claim there is no Church/State conflict. What is clear, however, is that there is a conflict between the State and the *founder* of the Church and that this conflict will continue until the state can 'bear witness to the wrong' that it claims the people it bans have done.

Issued by 'Concerned Students Action Group'

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