

Phakamani



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FREEDOM CHARTER
The People Shall Govern.
Equal Rights for All.
All Shall Share The Country's
Wealth.
The Land Shared Among All.
Equality Before Law.
Equal human Rights.
Work and Security For All.
Free Compulsory equal
Education For all.
Adequate Food, Clothing and
Housing For All.
Peace and Friendship Among
All The People of South Africa.

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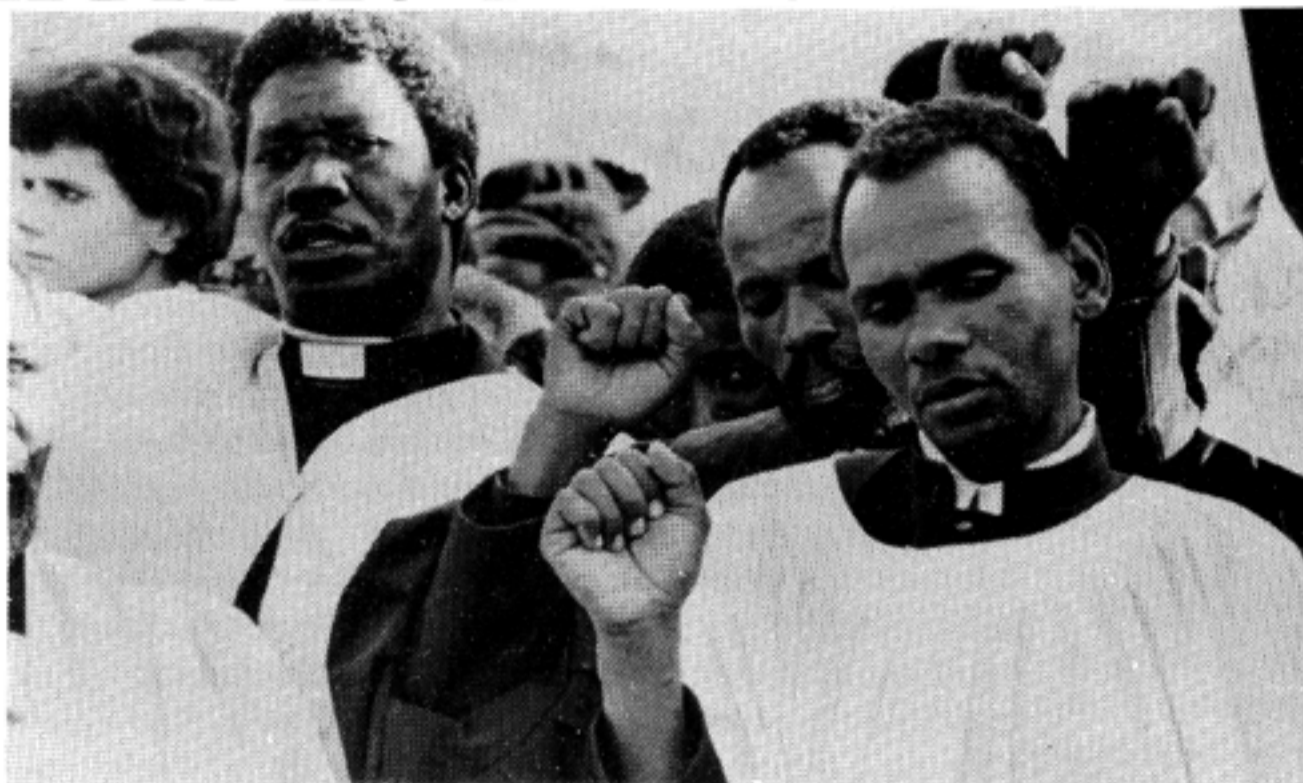
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Views and opinions presented do not necessarily express the official policies of the African National Congress, or the editorial collective of the Department of Religious Affairs. Articles are designed to raise issues, stimulate debate on current and topical issues in as well as matters of faith and theological concern.

Contributions, articles and letters are welcomed. They can be addressed to.

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FAITH IN THE STRUGGLE



Faith in the struggle is exciting. The ANC vision for the future, born in our experience of the present, turns the world upside down.

South Africa exhibits all the divisions which run rifts through mankind. We come from many tribal and ethnic backgrounds, and the palette of our pigments displays every shade from palest peach to deepest ebony. We practice religions which approach Reality in many ways, from traditional beliefs, through ancient religions of the East, the children of Abraham, the people of the Prophet, every imaginable version of Christianity, and millions who couch Truth in terms which deny deity.

We are a country of superlatives and contrasts, vast and beautiful, stuffed with riches and devastated by poverty, fertile and barren, and between the Limpopo and Cape Agulhas we experience every major problem known to humans. These are the differences which the regime promotes as instruments of the great oppression to divide and rule and exploit us.

In the heart of the struggle against that oppression the faith of the ANC has arisen that the future lies in a society that is united, non-racist, non-sexist and democratic. Struggling against oppression from many backgrounds we find a common commitment to a new society that unites our diversities. It is an exciting challenge to the world.

All religions include an element of hope, an expectancy of good times to come, a foretaste of the future in the present, a sense of things hoped for and a conviction of things not yet seen. The way may lead through suffering, persecution and death, but people with vision have always had their eyes cleared by tears. The ANC sees a new united South Africa.

We reject all prescriptions which perpetuate divisions in our human family, by justifying groups to preserve the conflicts which dehumanise us. Earnest fundamentalists, desperately clinging to their past, feverishly building right wing sects controlled by money, power and fear, making heresies holy and worshipping gods that are idols, are dismal and dangerous extremists with no recipe but fear and violence.

Revolutionaries in the liberation struggle know the mass democratic movement will win. Theologically, politically, economically, socially, and personally, the Freedom Charter heralds a new era for our country and our continent, which makes our belief in that struggle so exciting. Victory is certain.

This issue of Phakamani spells out some of that faith.

On The Department of Religious Affairs's Recent Consultation

Patric De Goede

Cde Patric, lay member of the Catholic Church from Cape Town, and ANC worker in London, is a member of the UK Region committee of the Department of Religious Affairs. In addition, he is a functionary of the ANC Department of Publicity and Information. In this article he reports from his perspective as a layman and cultural worker on the meeting of the Department of Religious Affairs held in London during September, 1989.

In one of its resolutions, the Culture in Apartheid South Africa (CASA) December '87 conference, noted the historical role of religion in the oppression of our people as well as the laudable endeavours of democratic theologians of various Faiths to have religion in our country play a meaningful role in the national democratic struggle. In a milestone development, the conference resolved to support the efforts of all theologians struggling to find a meaningful way of expressing their faith in our struggle for a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa. Also, it called upon all theologians to identify completely with the national democratic struggle and to consult regularly with the National Liberation Movement and the MDM with a view to strengthening the links between organised religion and the national democratic struggle.

A few weeks ago the ANC Department of Religious Affairs & Multi-Faith Chaplaincy (DRA) held a consultation of clergy who are ANC members in exile, lay people and executive members of the ANC working on the religious front. The central motivations for the consultation were the obligations of the Movement to the commitment to struggle on the religious front.

The conference lasted two days and was concerned with a number of issues relating to the objectives and organisa-

tion of the DRA. Principally, it was established that the ANC Department of Religious Affairs, with its chaplaincy, was not trying to be a substitute for the various religious communities members of the Movement are associated with. Neither was it attempting to produce any 'ANC theology'.

As the primary political organisation of liberation in South Africa, which has a population of which more than 82% are religiously active, the ANC has a duty to understand the religious voice of the people, particularly its political dimensions. Thus the NEC had established a political department of Religious Affairs, rather than a Religious Section or 'a religious department'. To aid the DRA in its work all people of faith within the ranks of the ANC, especially clergy and theologians, have been mobilised to

assist. The DRA, it was established, has nine full-time officials as its H.Q. directorate. Four of these are NEC members, and the rest constitute the department secretariat which consists of the Head of Department, Director of Chaplaincy, the Administrative Secretary and two other posts.

Consultation clarified that the ANC was not resurrecting the formation of an ANC Chaplaincy-General such as it had in the 1940s. There is no general ANC chaplain; there is, rather, a Director of the chaplaincy activity within the movement, who currently is Cde Rev. Fumanekile Gqiba. The consultation designated Cde Rev John Lamola as the new Head of Department.

In line with its main purpose, the meeting proceeded in a determined spirit to review its structures, goals and operations, in the light of the accen-



AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS PRESS STATEMENT

At a meeting of the African National Congress Department of Religious Affairs, held on 9 and 10 September 1989 in London, the current critical situation in South Africa was considered.

The meeting was attended by members of the National Executive, clergy and lay persons of the ANC.

The meeting:

1. Salutes the Mass Democratic Movement on its enormous success, achieved in the continuing challenge to the racist regime, and especially through the Defiance Campaign and the two-day strike.
2. Denounces the fraud of the white and puppet elections and condemns in the severest terms the brutality and exceptional violence unleashed against peaceful protesters, resulting in large numbers being murdered by the regime.
3. Mourns with our people the loss of life.
4. Demands that the people shall have the right to bury their dead in a dignified manner in accordance with their own customs.
5. Rejoices at the leading role of significant numbers of South Africa's religious community in the Defiance Campaign.

The meeting, in a message to the people of South Africa, states its rededication to the urgent and vital task of informing and interpreting to the international religious community the significance of current events in South Africa. The objective in doing so is to call on the international community to:

- condemn these atrocities;
- take further action towards the total isolation of the South African regime;
- provide increased support for the liberation struggle to remove the illegitimate and violent regime and replace it with a united, non-racial and democratic government.

The meeting sent a letter to President OR Tambo, assuring him of their prayers and support and wishing him a full and speedy recovery.

tuated need to meet the needs of the resistance movement on the religious front at home, and the religious solidarity movement abroad. It also looked at our own membership's Chaplaincy requirements in all its facets, dealing with salient problems which have been experienced thus far.

We also looked at questions relating to the development of a liberation theology contextual to the South African experience, i.e. relations of religion in South Africa to the national liberation movement, armed struggle, the women's movement, and workers' issues. Amongst other things, we explored methods whereby those 'doing theology from ANC trenches' could bring their experiences to a broader audience at home and abroad. Conclusions were reached and projects have been set up. Also, plans to have the ANC voice forged into the language of the religious community were also worked out. Delegates also saw a need for those theologians engaged in struggle within the ANC to lead the way in opening up a 'Marxism and Religion' dialogue in the context of South Africa.

As with all conferences, progress must be measured by both what happens within sessions and outside sessions. Many informal, albeit, important, political and theological discussions and debates were held at the eating tables, in sleeping quarters and in corridors. In

conclusion, let me take up just one point from one of these conversations, which brings us back to the CASA resolutions.

One delegate who had also been a delegate at the CASA conference remarked how, when the issue of religion was brought up at CASA, some people around him hissed and tut-tutted in annoyance at what appeared as an insinuation of a relevance of religion to liberation or culture. The comrade expressed his surprise at that attitude, and thus ensued an interesting discussion about this important side of the resistance of the oppressed. We started by going back to Karl Marx, as those who expressed their annoyance were probably thinking of what Marx once said, that religion is the opium of the oppressed. We reminded ourselves that all too often people forget how Marx prefixed that statement. He also said that religion, 'is the expression of real distress and protest about real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world ...' We looked at two forms of religious expression:

That is, religion as the idealist tool of oppression and religion of the people concerned with the material now. Towards the end of our discussion we found ourselves coining a new phrase: 'Religion can also be seen as a manifestation of the expression of the oppressed for a better and higher form

of life!'

We then took this theoretical position and applied it to South Africa. We recognised that the vast majority of the oppressed were people with religious faith. We also noted that for many of our people, the only literacy they possess and are comfortable with, is the literacy of the Bible stories and the Hymns. Furthermore, we identified and looked into how an informal education arising from these forms of popular literacy affect popular culture and political expression.

The ANC as the movement of the people has to respect and use the people's language and forms of thought to forward the struggle. We can either bury our heads in the sand and use the finest political phrases which people cannot comprehend, and thereby speak over their heads, or we can meet the people where they are, using a language and methods of communication which are derived from their day to day life. We have witnessed the central role institutions of all Faiths have played in mobilising people. Because the ANC is at the heart of this activity, nobody can break the bonds between the people and their political movement by using religion mischievously as a tool of division. May we all be aware of this important victory.

**FORWARD WITH THE STRUGGLE
ON THE RELIGIOUS FRONT!**



THE JUST STRUGGLE

Sipho Jama

All revolutionaries fight for the sake of justice, and struggle against injustice. In this fact lies the moral superiority of the revolutionary. This means that it is basic to the revolutionary project that we ask questions about the justice of particular struggles and the methods used in them. This article is an attempt to ask just such questions about the armed struggle in South Africa, and to answer them by using the doctrine of the just war.

This doctrine is a useful tool in our project. Though it was developed by Christian thinkers, it is not bound by Christian doctrine, and has come into its own as a tool for answering questions about the justice and injustice of struggles in today's world. A young South African White man used the just-war theory to show that it is morally wrong to serve in the South African army, by showing that the war waged by the apartheid regime is ruled completely unjust if one looks at it in terms of the just-war doctrine.¹

How does the armed struggle of the ANC match up to this test? I would like to argue that the just-war doctrine shows that it is a just struggle waged by just means.

Peaceful Means Have Been Exhausted

It was only in 1961 that the ANC turned to armed struggle, and this was because it was clear that all peaceful means had been exhausted. In the course of the 1962-1963 sabotage campaign, bloodshed was scrupulously avoided wherever possible. The struggle had its peaks and troughs, but reached an all-time high in the aftermath of the Soweto uprising of 1976, and the signs are that the struggle is bound to intensify until victory is won. The period since 1976 has seen the establishment of the ANC as the major opposition force in South Africa. The movement has conducted a successful campaign in which targets of particular strategic and economic importance have been attacked. These have been chosen for public impact — actions have been demonstrative, 'armed propaganda', and there has been a concerted attempt to avoid civilian casualties where possible. At the same time, notorious informers and collaborators with the apartheid regime have been assassinated in a programme of vigilante justice.

It should be mentioned that the ANC became a signatory to the 1977 Geneva Protocol I in November 1980. This implied a measure of international recognition for the justice of the ANC's struggle. Since then, a number of substantial operations have been carried out, including attacks on several power stations, including the Koeberg nuclear power station. A rocket attack was launched against the Voortrekkerhoogte military complex, and in May 1983, the South African Air Force headquarters in Pretoria was bombed. In all, South Africa is in the throes of 'the most sustain-

ed violent rebellion in South African history, and all the indications are that it will develop into a full-scale revolutionary war.'² Let us now look at the tools we are going to use in testing whether this armed rebellion and revolutionary war is just.

Killing of the Innocent is Wrong

Most people would agree that it is always wrong intentionally to kill innocent people, and that killing is bad. We would like to say that someone who murders offends against his or her humanity, and against the demands of our own humanity. This is at the root of our moral indignation at, say, the Nazi extermination policy against the Jews, and against the crimes of the apartheid regime. It is always wrong to kill or injure for its own sake. At the same time, there are circumstances where one has to kill or injure as a necessary means to a good end.

I am in a bar, and I observe someone who has drunk too much coming at me with a knife. If I am quick enough, I manage to step aside, and knock him out. What I try to do is to defend myself, but perhaps the circumstances are such that I cannot avoid doing him or her grave injury. I am not likely to have any hang-ups, since I was obviously bound to defend myself, and hit my attacker because it was the only way I could stop him or her from harming me. **That** was my intention. The fact that the attacker was injured was something I may well have known would happen. It was perhaps a consequence I could foresee, but it was not something I directly intended by my action. If, on the other hand, I had no choice other than to defend myself with a pistol, and chose to shoot my attacker through the heart, although a bullet through the leg would have done the trick, I would have been guilty of murder. I would have chosen to use means of defence which were bound to kill, where they were not strictly necessary. In **that** situation, I might be perfectly justified in using a pistol to defend myself, but I used it in a way which shows that causing grave injury and death was part of my direct intention. I would have used more violence than was strictly necessary.

In the example we have just examined, my aim is to ensure that I am not cut up and killed. I act in order to prevent something bad (my injury or death), and in order to achieve something positively good (that I should live unharmed). It is not my direct intention to cause injury. I use violent means because I cannot do anything else in the circumstances, and the degree of violence I use is more or less the minimum necessary to achieve my ends.

This applies, of course, to the case where I acted in a way which was clearly not directly intended to kill. One could think of cases where one had no way of avoiding the death of the attacker without risking one's

own death, and that would also be a just action. Where there was a choice, and one chose to use more force than was strictly necessary to achieve one's ends, the means used would be unjust, though the ends might be just.

What Are the Aims of the Struggle?

These considerations apply to wars between nations and organisations as well. We need to ask whether something bad is being struggled against, whether the aims of the struggle are good in themselves, and whether the means used are in keeping with the ends. If the means are violent, we want to know whether this violence is strictly necessary, and whether it is kept down to the minimum necessary to achieve the ends, or thereabouts. To be precise, the question is whether loss of innocent life is kept to a minimum.

In our example, the first question was whether one was justified in using violence under the circumstances. In the case of wars, the question is whether it is morally right to wage war in particular circumstances. The just-war doctrine lays down a number of conditions which must be met before we can say that a nation or organisation was indeed justified in going to war. There are five conditions which must be satisfied in this respect:

- ★ The war must be waged by a legitimate or competent authority;
- ★ It must be waged in a just cause;
- ★ It must be undertaken with the right intention regarding its ends, which must be humane;
- ★ It should be waged only when all peaceful means have been exhausted;
- ★ It should be waged only when there is a reasonable hope of success.

I think there are also circumstances where failure to fight a war, even where it is hopeless, is wrong. The Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto were surely justified in waging war against the Germans rather than being passively carted off to the extermination camps. They were saying, in effect, that the Nazis were not to be allowed to get away with their crime without resistance. Their action was demonstrative — it was meant to show the German soldiers and the local population that Jews **could** fight, and that they had retained their self-respect and ability to organise. They also needed to remind German soldiers that they were party to a criminal act, and would be held responsible for it. Armed resistance was the only way the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto could affirm their human dignity, and the demands of dignity made it necessary for them to take up arms, although they had no chance of winning their local struggle. In the light of this, we can modify our last condition to read:

- ★ It should be waged only when there is a reasonable hope of success, or where it is impossible to preserve human dignity without resort to war.

Are the Means Justified?

In our example of the fight in the bar, we asked a second

question; were the means used to defend ourselves justified under the circumstances? We were clearly right to defend ourselves, but were we right to do so in the way we chose? The just-war doctrine lays down two more conditions which help us to answer this question in the case of war. They are tests to see whether the means we use to wage a war are themselves just, and they are as follows:

- ★ The means used must be proportionate to the ends of our struggle — there should be an attempt to cause the least damage possible without endangering the achievement of the just ends of war;
- ★ There must be no intentional killing of innocent people.

What is a 'legitimate competent authority?' A few reactionaries perhaps claim that only an official government fits this description. One can, however, think of governments which are clearly unrepresentative, illegitimate and unjust. One can also think of movements which, while not constituting recognised governments, have so much popular support that they are surely able to make decisions on behalf of the people, and whose actions are the genuine will of the people. What is a 'just cause'? What is 'justice'? These are questions concerning which there is a great deal of debate. At the same time, it is commonly recognised that justice involves a fair distribution of wealth and conditions which make for a dignified life.

The Injustice of Poverty and Degradation

What are these conditions? Much ink has been spilt in trying to answer this question, and we do not need to give a positive answer to these questions in order to carry on our present enquiry. Most people agree that great poverty imposed on some in order that others can enjoy wealth is an injustice, as are conditions which degrade and humiliate people. It is just to aim at doing away with situations of this sort.

The Geneva Conventions lay down some laws which try to ensure that there is a measure of justice in the means used to wage war. The ANC is, as we saw, a signatory to the first Protocol of these Conventions, drawn up in 1977. It must be said that the fact that a party to a war complies with the terms of the Conventions does not in itself guarantee that a war is just. This is because a war is truly just if, and only if, it is fought for just reasons.

A government might wage war without good cause, and its soldiers might nonetheless fight with great humanity. In that case, we would hold that the war itself was criminal — the government was a government of war criminals — though we might not want to call the soldiers criminals. We would hold their governments responsible for all death, damage and injury caused in that war.

A war might, on the other hand, be waged for the best of reasons, but in an unnecessarily bloody way. In that case, we would say that the war is just in regard to its ends, but not in its means. It is a just war fought in an unjust way, where the first case was of a war which was unjust through and through as far as those who initiated it are concern

ed, fought by soldiers acting on the assumption that it was declared for good reason, fighting justly by their own lights. We would exonerate the soldiers, and hold the government responsible. If the means, too, were unjust, we would hold both government and soldiers responsible for the criminal act.

What is Terrorism?

The Geneva Conventions condemn terrorism, and the ANC is called 'terrorist' by the apartheid regime. It is therefore important to note what terrorism involves. A terrorist act maliciously and intentionally injures innocent people. Parcel bombs, of the sort which killed Ruth First, are a terrorist weapon, and actions like the Lesotho raid and the raid on Matola are terrorist actions in international law. Attacks on strategic installations of the enemy, or upon the armed forces of the enemy, are **not** 'terrorist actions' in a war. The 1977 Geneva Protocol I also recognises 'armed conflicts in which people are fighting against colonial domination and alien occupation and against racist regimes in the exercise of their right of self-determination.' It also condemns as war crimes 'practices involving inhuman and degrading practices involving outrages upon personal dignity based upon racial discrimination.'

In conventional wars, soldiers wear uniforms which clearly identify them as soldiers rather than civilians. Guerrillas wear no uniforms, and merge 'into the people, to whom they belong and of whom they are a part,' as was pointed out in a document illegally circulated in South Africa in 1970. Does this make guerrilla warfare immoral? I think not, and for this reason: No guerrilla struggle can succeed without popular support. The people protect guerrillas and hide them from the enemy **because** they support them, **because** the struggle of the guerrillas is the struggle of the masses. The surest sign that a particular guerrilla struggle is just is the fact that it succeeds. As an American moralist points out, such a war 'cannot be won and should not be won' by the oppressor, 'because the degree of civilian support ... makes the guerrillas the legitimate rulers of the country,' and the struggle against them 'is an unjust struggle that can only be carried out unjustly.'³

What is a Legitimate Authority?

Is the ANC a legitimate authority? In the 1950s, the ANC successfully mobilised many thousands of people in vast public demonstrations. Though it is now an illegal organisation, support for the ANC is at a peak. The vast majority of South Africans recognise that the gaoled ANC leaders are their own leaders, and foreign analysts recognise that 'Nelson Mandela ... would easily defeat any other potential presidential candidate, White or Black,' if free multiracial elections were held today.⁴ The ANC is, in effect, given legitimacy by the oppressed majority of South Africans, while the apartheid regime is rightly considered illegitimate. Umkhonto We Sizwe is what most South Africans believe it to be, the people's army, and the ANC, by virtue of its support in the country, is surely the legitimate

voice of the people of South Africa. This conclusion draws support from the massive demonstrations at the trials of captured guerrillas of Umkhonto We Sizwe and at funerals, and by the fact that most people who join Umkhonto see service in its ranks as a contribution to the struggle, and service to our people.

Is the ANC's war waged in a just cause? What we are asking here is whether apartheid is bad in itself, so that the struggle to defeat it is waged in a good cause. It is difficult not to see that apartheid is unjust. A small minority, South African Whites, live in comfort, because the vast majority of South Africans are super-exploited and are therefore caused to live in poverty. This is clearly a grave injustice. The trappings of apartheid which deny civic rights to the oppressed majority, break up families, restrict the movements of people, and subject people to arrest and deportation to the so-called 'homelands,' where there is neither work nor food — these things and more clearly combine to make apartheid a massive and sustained assault upon human comfort and dignity. Apartheid is surely a crime against humanity which we must fight against.

Controlled Violence

The Freedom Charter, which puts forward the positive aims of the ANC, will help us to judge whether the struggle is being waged with the right intention. A 'right intention', in terms of the just-war doctrine, can only be a just and lasting peace, and this intention is surely fundamental to the Freedom Charter. The Freedom Charter, itself the product of what was surely the most representative gathering in South African history, is based on the belief that 'only a democratic state, based on the will of the people, can secure to all their birthrights without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief.' It calls for a democratic order in which a stable peace without oppression is possible. The ANC clearly displays the right intention in its aim.

The turn to armed struggle was made after the Sharpeville and Langa massacres, and after pleas that the government call a national convention had proved fruitless. It was by then clear that the exclusive use of peaceful means was no longer possible. In addition, this period saw the outbreak of spontaneous acts of violence on the part of some of the oppressed, which had to be channelled in order to prevent indiscriminate and fruitless acts of violence. Armed struggle was clearly the only way greater loss of life could be avoided. The choice was for effective and controlled violence as against ineffective and uncontrolled violence, given the fact that other alternatives had failed. Was there a reasonable chance of success? There was, and there is a reasonable chance of success. Many foreign analysts work on the assumption that the ANC is bound to succeed in the medium run, and the precedents of Angola and Mozambique and Zimbabwe confirm this. In any case, it should be clear that armed struggle would have been justifiable on grounds of dignity alone.

Targets of a Just War

The sabotage campaign between 1962 and 1963 was marked by notable attempts to avoid bloodshed. The few actions which resulted in bloodshed were exceptions rather than rule. Such incidents are a foreseen but unintended consequence of any armed struggle. Respect for life clearly continues to be a principle stressed in the training programmes of Umkhonto, as is shown by the testimony of some ANC guerrillas caught and tried by the apartheid regime.

South African police and army personnel and installations

Umkhonto We Sizwe has been responsible for the assassination of notorious informers and collaborators with the apartheid regime. This is not, properly speaking, an act of war, but constitutes the administration of vigilante justice by an organisation recognised by the oppressed in South Africa as its own government. **It expresses the fact that dual power exists in South Africa.**

In conclusion, the armed struggle carried out by the ANC is just with regard to both its ends and the means it uses. Actions of Umkhonto We Sizwe seek to preserve life. Where



have been attacked and these are surely licit targets in a just war. They are part and parcel of the oppressive apparatus which attacks the South African people. The South African press waxed indignant at the loss of life when the Air Force headquarters in Pretoria was attacked. It is noteworthy that all the 19 people killed worked in the building, and the fact that there were not more deaths shows that there was discrimination on the part of the ANC. A military installation is a legitimate target, and it is the duty of those who would place major installations in civilian areas to guarantee the security of civilians in the area. It is surely easier to bomb buses and cinemas, but the ANC has rightly refused to do so. Were Umkhonto interested in simply causing death, its cadres would have bombed civilian targets. The fact that this was **not** done in Pretoria reflects the fact that the concern of the ANC was to attack a military target, and that Umkhonto is **not** a terrorist organisation like the South African army and police.

civilians have been injured, this has, on the whole, reflected the fact that the regime has sited military targets in civilian areas. The intention of Umkhonto is to bring about a just and lasting peace rather than cause unnecessary loss of innocent life.

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3. Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, Harmondsworth, 1980, pp 195f.
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THE TESTIMONY OF MARION SPARG

Marion Sparg is a 29-year-old white woman from an ordinary, middle class family. She was a trained journalist and her real political involvement started after the death in detention of Black Consciousness leader Steve Biko. She left South Africa in 1981 and joined the ranks of MK. She was later assigned to the editorial staff of Voice of Women, the official journal of the ANC Women's Section. After the SADF's raid in Lesotho in 1982, in which 32 ANC civilian members and 19 Lesotho citizens were killed, Sparg felt that she had to join the operative ranks of MK. Some of the ANC leaders tried to dissuade her, but she felt that there was no other way for her to express her commitment to the urgent need for the liquidation of the apartheid regime. With remarkable dedication, she carried out her missions as an MK soldier. In 1986 she was arrested and convicted of treason, arson and attempted arson. She was sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment.

On March 2 1986, while in underground life inside South Africa, Marion Sparg wrote a letter to her mother in which she made a last desperate appeal for her parents' understanding of her life. The letter was not posted. Five days later, on March 7, she was arrested and the letter was among various items confiscated by the police. The following are excerpts from the letter.

Dear Mom,

It is not an easy task for me to explain myself in a letter like this, but I am going to try; so just bear with me as I stumble along ...

I can understand that in a way you have cause to resent me, for bringing more pain and problems to a family that has already had more than its fair share of trouble. I know also that I have to work out how to survive on my own without depending on anyone. And I believe I am doing all I can at the moment ...

Yes, I do feel sad at not being able to be with you and the family. But I do not regret giving up my previous life. I do not regret the commitment I have made. The struggle to get this country free now is my life. If I did not truly believe in what I am doing I would have succumbed to a nervous breakdown or some form of insanity a long time ago. I don't really expect you or Dad to agree fully with my actions. But I did have an idea that you understood a lit-

tle. I value the past four or five years more than you could know. The people I have met, the experiences I have gone through, I believe have made me a more complete person. My life has meaning now. I know where I am going and I know we will reach there — even if I don't personally make it. I have never been more fulfilled. This is probably sounding very trite, but I hope it conveys something of the depth and understanding I've gained over the past few years.

Daily happenings only serve to increase my determination, and I am afraid harden me a little each day. In Alexandra last week more than 80 people were shot dead. Most were simply teenagers with nothing more than stones in their hands. But I can understand the fear of the white policemen and soldiers as they faced those children. I can understand their fear as they failed to understand how children with stones were prepared to take on armoured cars and sub-machine guns. But anyway, I'm not going to give you a lecture on that. I do get very bitter and angry still, but what these past years have given me is confidence and hope — the knowledge that we will win. The government knows it too.

They are only prolonging the agony for all — black and white. It is the people who give me hope — not only those kids in Alexandra and elsewhere. But especially the individuals I've met —

black and white. I've been able to discover what real friendship, love and trust are all about. I know our future is safe in their hands.

I think it is natural for a child to want to make its parents proud. And although it is hard for you to understand, let alone feel proud, I hope one day, if time is kind, you will be able to understand and feel proud. I know it.

If you could meet the people and know the people I am close to, you would understand. Do you remember the young white guy who was killed in the SADF raid on Gaborone? Well, his parents said afterwards they never understood until they went to his funeral and met all his friends and those who worked with him.

They said only then they realised how much he meant to others, and that his life was good and worthwhile, even if they still couldn't accept all his actions completely. I only hope it doesn't have to take death to bring you to that understanding.

And in any way I have made enemies of my family and some previous friends. For if they are to defend apartheid then I am their enemy for life. It is painful but true. But it is not all that surprising, for South Africa is in a state of war. And war turns brother against brother, and father against son. You see there is really no going back for me. Neither can I stand still. We can only move forward now.

If it means my life I am quite prepared.

In fact I'll be proud to be counted amongst those who fought and died for this country and people.

This is probably sounding very romantic and reckless, but then it is very difficult to put down in words the simple yet profound principles of one's life. If I were to live like a 'mole', that is part of the price that must be paid. And it is a very small price compared to what others have gone through, and are still going through.

I suppose the one thing I really need to talk to you about is wanting to have another child. I've met and loved other men — and especially one now whose child I would be proud to have. But I know there is no time. I want to be able

to be with my child all the time. And now there is so much else to do. I had virtually made up my mind that I was going to have a child no matter what. And then there was the SADF raid on Lesotho in December last year, where amongst others a young white woman and her coloured husband were killed. They were shot dead in bed.

Their one-year-old daughter lay screaming next to their bodies until neighbours came to fetch her. Then I thought, God!

I don't want my baby to have to go through that. And yet the baby will have cause to be proud one day. So who knows, maybe I will be lucky enough to have a child.

I don't know if I have gone any way towards trying to explain myself. I hope some makes sense to you. In the end you'll see, it will be for the good of all. This war has to be fought to the bitter end. And it is going to be bitter. I have no illusions about that. But in the end there will be a happier life for all of us — black and white. And I quite honestly believe that this is going to happen in our lifetime, not that of our children or grandchildren.

Just know that I do love you even if you feel exasperated, betrayed or hurt.

Yours

Marion

TO NELSON MANDELA

STATEMENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN CHURCH LEADERS ON THE OCCASION OF HIS 70TH BIRTHDAY

NELSON ROLIHLAHLA MANDELA

On the occasion of Dr Mandela's 70th birthday, 18 July 1988. We, the undersigned, are Clergy, Church layworkers and professional theologians in South Africa.

We write to honour you on this your 70th birthday.

As Christians we acknowledge Jesus Christ as the supreme Lord, from whom all human authority derives. Under his Lordship we are called to resist all illegitimate authority, and share in the total liberation of humanity from all that denies complete human life. In South Africa this means struggling against the tyranny of apartheid, and for a country free of injustice, exploitation and discrimination.

We believe this struggle is established in history by Jesus Christ and continued by human beings imitating Christ's obedience and compassion.

We recognise this obedience and compassion in your lifetime of commitment to struggle to liberate all South Africans and in your endurance of tremendous hardship.

We regard it as a crime against humanity that you, a peace-loving man, should languish in an apartheid jail, when you ought to be enjoying the freedom of full family life with your wife, children and grandchildren.

We emphatically reject the propaganda disseminated by this illegal regime and its supporters which dismisses your organisation, the ANC, as terrorist.

We understand the motivations which led you and

other imprisoned and exiled leaders to embark on an armed struggle to enable the liberation of our people.

We regard it as a mark of your true leadership that you choose to remain in prison, rather than accept P W Botha's offer of conditional release.

We agree with you that a peace process can only be initiated by the apartheid government's rejection of the violence of apartheid and the repression with which they maintain it. As such, negotiations are only possible when the state demonstrates its intentions by:

- unconditionally releasing all political prisoners and detainees;
- unconditionally unbanning all the organisations of the people;
- allowing exiles to return without restriction;
- dismantling all apartheid structures, laws and institutions without reserve.

We will continue to pray and strive for a non-racial, democratic South Africa, and for the time when you will take your rightful and proper place amongst us as husband, father, grandfather and national leader.

We declare that your freedom and ours cannot be separated.

May God continue to bless and inspire you.

Yours in the struggle for freedom, justice and peace.
Signed by Frank Chikane, Albert Nolan, Smangaliso Mkhathshwa, Shun Govender, Desmond Tutu, and over 150 other signatories.

NEGOTIATIONS, DEFIANCE AND THE CHURCH

For the interest of our readers we reproduce this publication of the Institute of Contextual Theology, Johannesburg

NEGOTIATIONS AND DEFIANCE

The long political struggle in South Africa has entered upon a new phase: the politics of negotiation. Not that we are anywhere near actual negotiations, but the political debates, discussions, promises and proposals have begun to focus on the issue of negotiations. The international community is pushing for negotiations, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) has just released its negotiations plan, the Democratic Party (DP) has made negotiations central to its policy and the Nationalist Party (NP) mentions the word 'negotiations' 14 times in its Five Year Plan. As yet it is little more than talk, but it has become a matter of great urgency for the Church to reflect upon what is happening and to develop a clear and unambiguous stance on negotiations.

What makes this matter all the more urgent is that many Christians do not understand why it is necessary at the beginning of a new phase of talk about negotiations to launch a defiance campaign.

There can be no doubt about the success of the campaign so far. And now the Churches themselves are beginning to participate through the **Standing for the Truth Campaign**. In a recent pamphlet, this Church campaign proposes that we take up the same issues as the Defiance Campaign and join forces. This could be very powerful, but what is the relationship between the politics of defiance and the politics of negotiations? And how do we account for this theologically?

PEACE

The fundamental concern of the church will always be peace: 'Blessed are the peacemakers' (Mt5:9). But it is this very concern for peace that can also lead

us into temptation. We can be tempted to support anything that looks like peace. The Bible warns us that it is the false prophets who shout 'Peace, peace' where there is in fact no peace (Jer.6:14; 8:11; Ez.13:10).

In our eagerness to promote peace, we can find ourselves supporting a form of negotiations that only leads to false peace which is in fact no peace at all. There is a difference between true peace and false peace, between reconciliation based upon justice and reconciliation that perpetuates oppression, between genuine negotiations and something that pretends to be negotiations.

It was precisely because the prophets were so concerned about true peace that they set out to expose the false and complacent peace of their times. Jesus was even more decisive. At one stage he found it necessary to say: 'Do you suppose that I have come to bring peace to the world? No, not peace, but division. From now on a family of five will be divided, three against two and two against three' (Lk.12:51-52, Mt.10:34).

Sometimes the only way to bring about true peace is to confront people with the truth, and at first the truth will bring about division and dissension. Is that not why we need a defiance campaign at this stage?

The danger of being seduced by any kind of talk about negotiations and peace cannot be overemphasised. At the heart of this temptation lies the false belief that the conflict in South Africa today is based upon nothing more than misunderstanding and prejudices, so that the resolution of the conflict requires nothing more than sitting down to talk to one another and learning to understand one another. It is tempting

to believe that any kind of talks will do, because all that is necessary is to clear up our misunderstandings and misconceptions about one another.

This point of view is, to say the least, naive. We are not dealing only with a range of misunderstandings and prejudices; we are dealing with oppression, injustice, lies, power struggles, selfishness and sin. Talking by itself will not solve such problems. Talking in some circumstances could even lead to more effective and more deceptive forms of oppression.

The Church must therefore remain vigilant. We must be very clear about the difference between genuine negotiations and pseudo-negotiations. We must be very clear about the conditions for genuine peace.

WHY IS THE NATIONAL PARTY TALKING ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS?

The answer is simple enough: because it is facing the most serious political and economic crisis in its history. The pressure is on them from every side and the regime has its back to the wall. The Nationalist Party is searching for a way to relieve the pressure. Repression (or what the regime calls 'security measures') has not worked. Promises of reform have not relieved the pressure. And now the latest attempt to deal with the crisis is the promise of negotiations.

It is particularly important for Christians to understand the motive behind the Nationalist Party government's talk about negotiations. Some Christians might be tempted to believe that the leadership in the Nationalist Party has undergone a moral conversion. Has the white minority regime after years of arrogant domination and selfishness suddenly repented and become willing to mend its ways, or is it simply reacting to political and economic pressure? No matter how desirable a change of heart might be, it would be naive to believe that this is what has happened. All the evidence points to a pragmatic political decision in the face of mounting pressure.

South Africa is facing a very serious economic crisis. Sanctions are having an effect and there is the threat of more

sanctions. But more important still is the threat that in June 1990 South Africa's huge loans will not be rolled over or rescheduled. That would pressurise the economy more effectively than anything in the past. It has therefore become imperative for the regime to show some evidence that it is moving towards a negotiated settlement.

Margaret Thatcher must be able to show some progress in her plans for a negotiated settlement if she is to stave off further sanctions and the bankers must be able to say that there is reasonable hope for a solution to South Africa's problems before they roll over the loans. With enough posturing about change and negotiations the regime might manage to relieve the international pressure and continue in power.

But there is a much more fundamental form of pressure: the mounting pressure from the majority of the people of South Africa.

If the regime now has its back to the wall and is willing to talk about talks, then it is above all because of the very successful resistance and struggle of the people, especially over the last thirteen years. Without that, there would be no international pressure, no boycotts and calls for negotiation. Without that, the Nationalist Party would still be talking like the Conservative Party or even the Herstigte Nasionale Party. Even the very limited talk about possible negotiations is a victory for the struggle.

It is in this context that the Defiance Campaign must be understood. We can only move toward genuine negotiations if more pressure is put on the regime. The Defiance Campaign is the latest form of political pressure.

WHAT DO NEGOTIATIONS MEAN FOR THE NATIONAL PARTY?

What the Nationalist Party might mean by its negotiations talk has been kept purposely vague. When they spelt it out at last, it meant a National Council presided over by the President with members approved by the President and with no power at all because its decisions would have to be approved by the tri-cameral parliament. Such an arrangement makes a mockery of the word 'negotiations' and is an insult to



the intelligence and the dignity of black people. No wonder it has proved to be a non-starter. Now they speak of a Great Indaba, but it is not at all clear what it means. The aim of negotiations as far as the Nationalist Party is concerned is to ensure that one 'group' does not dominate another 'group'.

If the Five Year Plan mentions 'negotiations' 14 times, it also mentions 'group' or 'group rights' 39 times! This attempt to have apartheid without domination is simply laughable. If we remember that the majority of South Africans do not want to be divided into groups and that it is only a small number of whites who are proposing ethnic groups, then it becomes clear that it is only in their interests for us to be separated into groups.

If this is what the Nationalist Party has in mind, then we haven't even begun to approach anything that might be termed genuine or just and equal negotiations.

There will be other proposals. Margaret Thatcher will probably present a kind of 'Lancaster House' proposal as a compromise solution. Others will no doubt be making their own proposals. The Church will have to remain extremely vigilant if it is not to be fooled by the rhetoric and the propaganda.

WHY ARE THE ANC AND THE MDM TALKING ABOUT NEGOTIATIONS?

The media sometimes give the impression that the African National Congress has changed its policy on negotiations, that it was unwilling to negotiate but is now being pressurised by the international community and Frontline leaders such as President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia into accepting a negotiated settlement.

The truth of the matter is that the African National Congress has always

seen negotiations as the final stages in the struggle for a non-racial, democratic South Africa. As the Organisation of African Unity's declaration on negotiations states:

We have repeatedly expressed our preference for a solution arrived at by peaceful means. We know that the majority of the people of South Africa and their liberation movement, who have been compelled to take up arms, have also upheld their position for many decades and continue to do so

What has also been said, however, is that genuine negotiations cannot take place until the climate is right. And that is why the African National Congress and the Mass Democratic Movement have always insisted on preconditions. For these organisations, it is a matter of timing. They are concerned about when it would be appropriate to sit down and negotiate. They do not want to negotiate at a time or in circumstances when all the cards are stacked against them because leaders are in prison and organisations are banned.



The pressure that is being put on the African National Congress and the Mass Democratic Movement by even friendly governments like the Frontline States, therefore, is not pressure to negotiate (that is not needed) but pressure to negotiate soon.

The Organisation of African Unity declaration asks for negotiations 'in the shortest possible time'. What this means in practice is that a climate conducive to genuine negotiations must be created as soon as possible. As we shall see, this is the purpose of the Defiance Campaign.

It should be noted that the purpose of negotiations for the African Na-

tional Congress, the Mass Democratic Movement and the Organisation of African Unity is quite different from the Nationalist Party's understanding of its purpose. The aim is not to protect group rights. They do not even wish to negotiate the end of apartheid. For them, the purpose of negotiations is to build together a post-apartheid society that is non-racial, united and democratic. The dismantling of all apartheid laws is a precondition that must be fulfilled before negotiations can begin.

THE PRECONDITIONS

It will be necessary to list the oft-repeated conditions for genuine negotiations and to evaluate them from a Christian theological point of view. The Nationalist Party also has its conditions and we shall have a look at them as well. The demands of the people as preconditions for negotiations, whether they are articulated by the OAU, the ANC, the UDF or other organisations of the people, are always substantially the same, even if the wording or minor details sometimes vary. This agreement is not surprising if we remember that the purpose of these conditions is, in the words of Cosatu, to create a 'climate of free political activity'.

The following are, in substance, the conditions:

- the release of all political prisoners and detainees;
- the unbanning of all organisations and the return of all the exiles;
- the lifting of the State of Emergency and all restrictions on individuals;
- the withdrawal of troops from the townships;
- the repeal of all apartheid legislation and security legislation that would prohibit free political activity.

It is clear that it is not possible to have free and fair negotiations when the leaders of the real opponents of the government are in prison or in exile and when the real opposition's organisations are banned.

Moreover, if the leaders who do the negotiating are to have a mandate from the people in order to avoid negotiating over the heads of the people, then free political activity and organisation becomes absolutely necessary. This

means that the State of Emergency would have to be lifted, troops would have to withdraw from their control over people's activities in the townships, and legislation that prevents free association would have to be repealed. There will no doubt be much debate about who negotiates, who represents the people and who are the real leaders. It will have to be possible to settle these debates through free and democratic processes. The concern of the Church in all of this must be to ensure that justice prevails throughout the process of negotiations. A climate of free political activity will go a long way towards ensuring that the negotiations are just, fair, equal and therefore genuine and lasting.



The Church will have to monitor the plans and the processes to ensure above all, and in the name of God, that the future of the country is not negotiated away over the heads of the people and against their genuine interests and needs. Because of the pressure, we can expect the Nationalist Party to begin to meet some of these conditions in the near future. International pressure might ensure that they release Mandela and some other prisoners, but not all; that they unban some organisations, but not all; that they lift the State of Emergency but hold on to security legislation and apartheid or group structures. This will give the impression that great concessions have been made while in fact a climate for free political activity has not yet been established.

The conditions for genuine negotiations are still a long way off and the

regime will surely hope for sympathy and play for time. If negotiations are to come soon, a great deal more pressure will be required.

THE RENUNCIATION OF VIOLENCE

On the other hand the Nationalist Party government has its own conditions, or rather because it holds most of the cards in its own hands at the moment, it is demanding just one condition: that it will negotiate only with those who renounce violence. This is its way, at present, of avoiding negotiations with the ANC, and by constantly accusing the Mass Democratic Movement of violence and even trying unsuccessfully to deceive the public into believing that the Defiance Campaign was going to be violent, the Nationalist Party government is able to avoid negotiating with any of the people's organisations.

The Mass Democratic Movement is not conducting an armed struggle. The African National Congress is, and at some stage in the process there will have to be cessation of hostilities, but justice demands that there be a cessation of hostilities on both sides. Genuine negotiations will require as part of the process a genuine ceasefire, not a unilateral demand that one side alone surrenders its arms.

THE DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN

Because genuine negotiations have become a matter of urgency and because the regime is nowhere near ready for genuine negotiations and because it can only be brought nearer by means of political and economic pressure, **now is the time to intensify the struggle against apartheid.**

This is the reason for the Defiance Campaign. The Defiance Campaign is a step in the direction of negotiations because it is preparing the ground for genuine negotiations by attempting to secure the necessary conditions. Apartheid still exists in hospitals, schools, parks, at swimming pools, beaches, on buses and in residential areas. The process of changing this is too slow and in some cases it is being reversed.

The people will now take up the matter themselves and force the govern-

ment's hand by quietly ignoring these forms of apartheid.

Many people are restricted and many organisations are banned. The Defiance Campaign includes a process through



which these people and organisations will gradually unban themselves. Moreover, the MDM is organising not only a Defiance Campaign but also a broad-based conference that will bring together all organisations and movements that are uncompromisingly opposed to apartheid — including the Churches. It will be called the Conference for a Democratic Future, and it is being jointly planned by representatives of the Mass Democratic Movement, Black Consciousness movement, unions and the Churches.

This gathering will no doubt make a major contribution to the debate about negotiations. The climate of free political activity is beginning to be created and this is being done outside of parliament and quite independently of the recent apartheid tri-cameral elections. More and more pressure is being put on the Nationalist Party to fulfil the conditions for negotiations.

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

The ideas of confrontation, pressure, struggle and defiance are not foreign to the Bible and to the Christian faith. Moses tried to negotiate with Pharaoh but because Pharaoh was so hard-hearted it was necessary to put pressure on him. This is described in the Bible as plagues, the plagues that pressurised Pharaoh into allowing Moses and the Hebrew slaves to leave Egypt. But the moment pressure was lifted, Pharaoh

changed his mind and sent his chariots after Moses and the Hebrew people. When rulers become hard-hearted, it is necessary to apply pressure and to keep applying it for the sake of the people.

Jesus himself, like John the Baptist, found it necessary to confront the leaders of Israel and to defy them.

Jesus clashed with the scribes, the Pharisees, the Saducees, the chief priests, the rich and the powerful. He led a triumphal procession into Jerusalem and when the Pharisees told him to silence his followers, he said that if they kept quiet the very stones would cry out (Lk. 19:39-40).

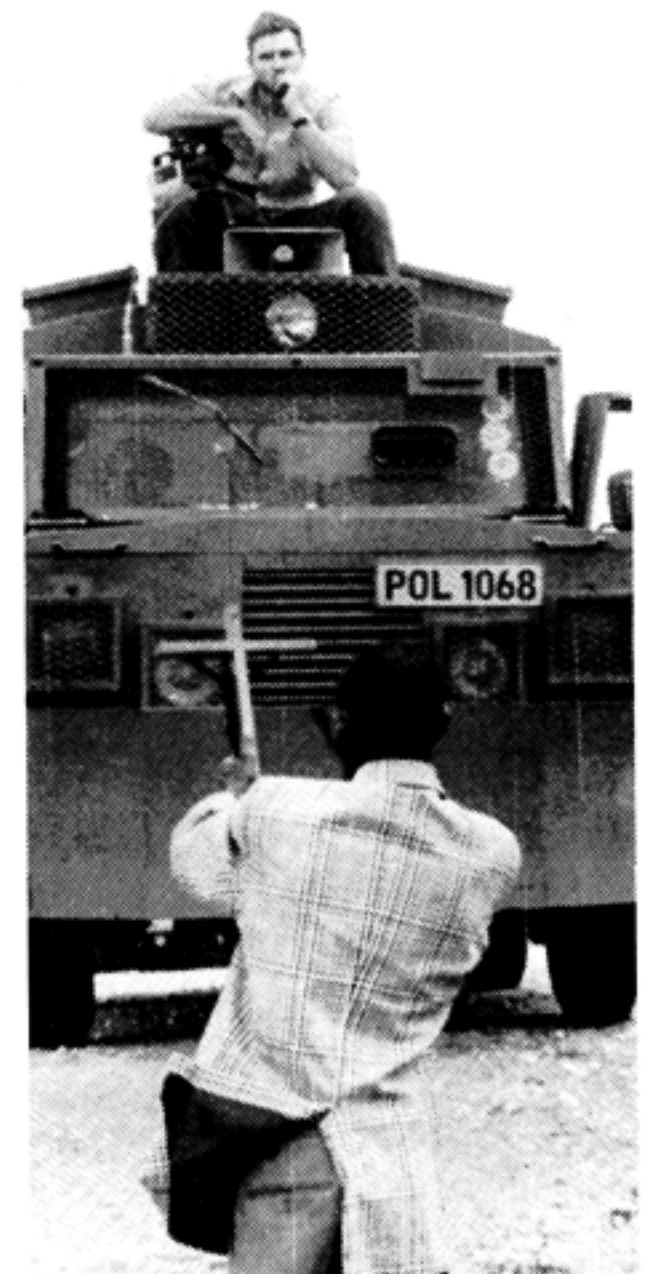
Jesus' great act of defiance was his action in the Temple courtyard: overturning the tables and driving out the traders and moneychangers. The rulers of Israel felt threatened by his words, his actions and his influence over the people. That is why they killed him.

The role of the Church is to create peace. But on the road to negotiations, reconciliation and peace it will be necessary to confront, pressurise and defy. The Church can only be a genuine peacemaker by exercising its prophetic role of standing for the truth and exposing the deception of a peace that is no peace and negotiations that are a lie. There are circumstances in which the Church might have to mediate between two parties, but the Church cannot and must not try to mediate between justice and injustice, between truth and lies, between a pretence at negotiations and genuine negotiations. In such cases, the Church must take a stand and speak out in the name of God against injustice, lies and false peace.

The Church's Standing for the Truth Campaign has already decided to support the Defiance Campaign. On the ground it will be necessary to explain to some of the people why this is necessary.

To others it will be obvious, although the theological reasons will need to be preached again and again. This will be an invaluable contribution to our speedy progress towards genuine peace.

Negotiations have become the new arena or terrain of struggle. In the years



to come the debates, protests, campaigns, propaganda and struggles will centre around what constitutes fair and just negotiations. The Church will have to monitor the process carefully, be ever vigilant itself, avoid the temptation of accepting a false peace, expose the lies, support the people and generally make its own contribution in prayer and action towards the just peace that God wants for South Africa.

IT IS LEGALISED MURDER!

by John Lamola

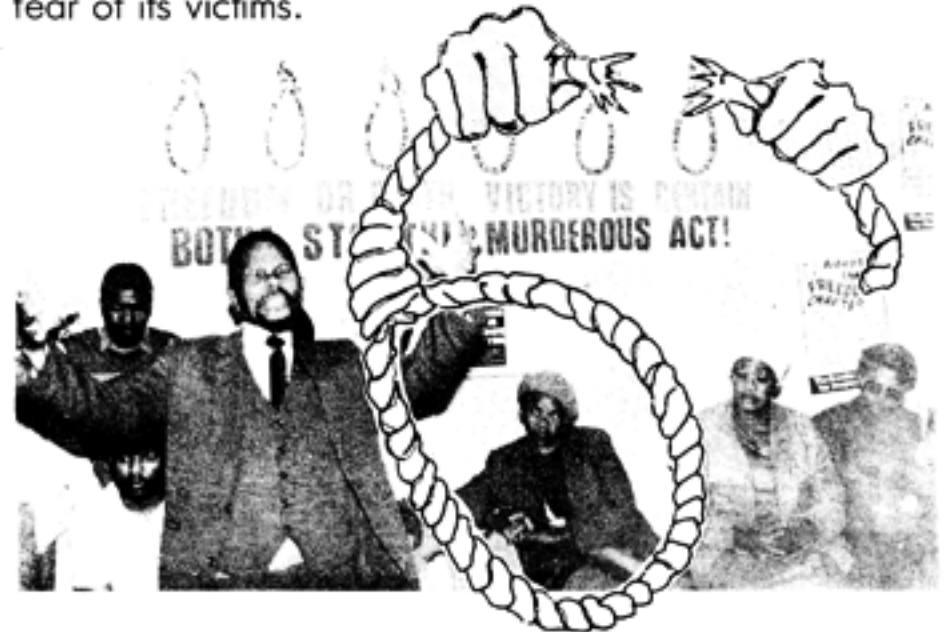
The apartheid regime, the 'civilised and Christian' government of the Republic of South Africa, the leading trading partner of West Germany, Japan, Britain and other countries, hanged 537 people between January 1985 and mid-1988. At the end of 1987 it had 268 people waiting their turn at the hangman's noose in Pretoria Central Prison. 117 of them saw their grisly turn come in 1988. Only three of them were whites, the rest were black people who came from crime-inducing socio-economic conditions of the oppressive and exploitative life under apartheid, and who ended on Death Row via the racist-infested South African judicial system. What is more disturbing, though, in a country which professes the democratic ideal, is that among these people are well-meaning political activists who are convicted for deeds which were inspired by the violent conflict which apartheid rule precipitated during 1985, and MK soldiers who, according to international legal convention, should be Prisoners of War as provided for by the Geneva Conventions.

Since the execution of Solomon Mahlangu on the morning of 6 April 1979, the issue of political executions by the apartheid tyranny has been first on our agenda of mobilisation against the Pretoria regime. The case of the Sharpeville Six brought an unprecedented universal focus on the thug-gish barbarity of the racist minority regime. Today we have the Upington 14. On 27 June their lawyers' litigation for a right to appeal the sentence on the grounds that Judge JJ Basson had failed to appreciate that the killing of the policeman for which these people have been convicted was precipitated by the actions of the police in their townships, was turned down. While work is on to exhaust all legal means to ensure that they do not end up as part of the statistics of the judicial murders of the apartheid state, on 13 September these people received the death row news that the head of their legal defence team, and their comrade, Advocate Anton Lubowski, member of the Swapo Central Committee, had been assassinated in Windhoek.

The theory of democracy implies that, in all its actions, the State embodies the collective will of its constituent electorate. As hangings take place at the behest of the state, logical truth has it that it is the voters of South Africa, those whose interests the apartheid state represents, who are actually hanging often blatantly innocent people. It is high time that we all have our voices ringing out, led by our white compatriots who know that it is in the defence of white privilege that such carnage is being practised in our dear land, and incessantly protest: *We won't let them die! Let us not allow one more South African to die in this manner.*

The primary aim of the penal system is to reform the social

deviant, and never to annihilate him. In South Africa the penal system has degenerated into a process of revenge and a feeding of the political ego of a racist tyranny which well realises that it no longer enjoys the sympathy nor the fear of its victims.



Hangings is vengeful, gruesome and barbaric

Amidst all the political and other moral motivations of our campaign against the institution of the death penalty, specifically when unjustly applied as a means of political repression in South Africa, it is important for us not to overlook the harrowing human experience the death sentence means for both the victims and their families. It is time that the barbarism and inhumanity of the very act of hanging people, irrespective of the nature of their crime, be exposed.

At its National Conference in February 1988, the Black Sash took up the issue of judicial executions in South Africa as its theme. Sheena Duncan read a paper entitled *Should Hangings be Carried Out in Public?* The gist of her argument was that if the public knew what a dreadful thing hanging is, as a method of terminating a human being's life, they would never allow it to happen. She cited two judges who, as judges, knew what went on behind the long grey walls of the hanging court of Pretoria Central Prison. The first, from Judge Gert Coetzee, who was quoted in *Beeld* (30/7/87) confessing at the time of his retirement: *'Dit was nooit maklik nie. Ek het nie getel aan hoeveel mense ek die doodstraf opgelê het nie and het altyd sleg gevoel as ek dit gedoen het. Gewoonlik kon ek vir die res van die nag nie iets anders doen nie. Persoonlik is ek om morele redes teen die doodstraf gekant. Ek beskou dit as onchristelik en onbeskaaf'*.

Judge Ray Leon told the *Weekly Mail* (4/9/87) that the imposition of the death sentence always caused him a great deal of distress and it took him some days to recover afterwards. *'One is in a very real sense causing someone to be killed'*. Ray Leon went on to say that he opposed the death

penalty as he believed it has a brutalising effect on society. There is no satisfactory evidence it is effective as a deterrent and there is always the possibility of judicial error, which in the case of the death sentence is irreversible.

If hangings were done in public people would always be haunted by images of those dying under this savage method of killing, which by intention is meant to ensure that the process of dying is as slow and as painful as possible. They would see that when men and women die under such circumstances of extreme anxiety and most often fear, their bowels turn to water and they defecate or urinate involuntarily. They would see that there are sometimes emissions of blood. They would know what the cold and deliberate taking of life in this way means. In the words of Paula McBride, wife of Robert McBride: *'When we talk about violence and murder, execution must be the most violent ...'*

In August 1981, David Dalling MP (PFP) put a question on the Parliamentary order paper. He asked what was the average time for condemned people from the time of arrival at the gallows to the hanging; whether they were given sedation; whether they were accompanied by a doctor, minister or anyone else; how many could be executed at a time; whether each man had his own executioner in multiple hangings; what procedure was followed and how many times physical force or teargas were used to get the convicts from their cells to the gallows. The Minister of Justice, according to Sheena Duncan's account, made an earnest personal representation to David Dalling, urging him to withdraw the questions because the answers would be 'too gruesome'. One can understand that it is to suppress information on such matters that the obnoxious Prisons Act was formulated to forbid all forms of disclosure of conditions in prisons, including photographs, to the outside world.

Apartheid capital punishment is violence!

After they have been convicted and sentenced and their appeals have failed, condemned people await the outcome of appeals for clemency made to the State President on their behalf. This process normally means close to two years of uncertain waiting on death row while witnessing the slow depletion of nearby cells as fellow inmates are whisked away. On average, seven people are hanged every week in South Africa. After the State President has announced his decision the execution date will be decided. Those who are going to die are told seven days in advance of the date of their death, and are removed to special cells — death cells — nearer to the hangman.

There can be no greater terror inflicted on any human being than knowing in advance the exact moment of one's death.

In July 1981 it was reported in the press that four men had resisted when warders entered the death cells to escort them to the gallows, and that teargas had to be used to 'calm down the prisoners'.

In reply to questions from the press, the Prisons Department issued a statement icily stating: *'It is of course always*

a possibility that a prisoner will refuse to leave his cell before his delivery to the place of execution — but this occurs only as the rarest exception. Naturally verbal persuasion as a means of handling the situation will be used in the first place. Only when this fails will other measures as dictated by the circumstances be considered'. Reports have leaked that besides teargas, which is used on occasions of multiple executions, electric batons are used to herd the victims, with their heads covered with black sacks, from the cell to the death court. Invariably, there is a measure of protest by the condemned as it is not natural for any one to walk calmly into a moment of such torturous and unjust death.

It was in this same reply that the Department unwittingly disclosed that *'The present facilities at the gallows make provision for the simultaneous hanging of up to seven condemned prisoners'*.

On 29 January 1988, seven persons were hanged in Pretoria. On 4 February 1988, seven persons were hanged. In the second week of December 1987, seven people were hanged on Tuesday, another seven on Wednesday and again seven on Thursday.



This thing of capital punishment must stop!

The statistics used by various human rights groups can never be completely accurate in exposing the number of people who are being killed by Pretoria. Almost all figures are collated from newspaper reports, which sometimes neglect the execution of 'common criminals'. Also, since 1976, it has not always been possible to obtain the statistics of hangings in Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei, which have their own gallows. The actual killing rate is certainly much higher than any of us might know. Families of executed people who win the right to take the bodies for private burial, have reported being taken into a mortuary strewn with the bodies of many people who have been freshly hanged, to identify their relative.

This reminds one of Robert McBride's letter from Death Row to his mother: *'There are so many people here on Death Row. There are so many, it is unbelievable. This thing of capital punishment must stop, as soon as possible'*.

According to independent sources, the 1987 figure of 164 hangings was the highest in the history of South Africa. Since 1979 South Africa has hanged close to 1 300 people. This figure is reached by noting that the figure of total executions between April 1979 and February 1988 was 1 114, and to this is added the 267 who were still on death row at the end of 1987, minus the 14 who were known to have been hanged during February 1988. How gruesome! These are not just numbers but individual people who have been brought up by loving mothers. Their only cardinal misfortune is that they were born in the wrong country. Even for those who committed crimes, surely there should be some other form of making retribution for their misdeeds. As people reared in a Christian culture we should at least believe that no one is beyond redemption.

Let us not let the 14 patriots of Uppington, and others on death row, be murdered. Let us harness all our abilities and

focus them on a campaign against the apartheid regime's death penalty. Let us add our voices and resources to the demand for Prisoner of War status for combatants of the people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, particularly remembering Ting Ting Masingo, Jabu Masina and Neo Potsane, who were sentenced to death on 27 April, 1989.

We who believe that all life is from God and that it returns to Him at his appointed time, find it most repugnant that a state as morally defective as apartheid South Africa, should play god over the creation of the All-loving One. Drawing from the various theological traditions of our Faiths, we must set ourselves at the frontline of a campaign to stop this gruesome aspect of the reality of apartheid. This savagery is congenital to the heart of the apartheid system itself. It is a reminder that we should use all means to ensure its speedy end.

RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AS A MEANS FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA

WHEREAS apartheid-related social and political conflict in the Republic of South Africa persists as a most difficult and dangerous problem destabilising all countries of southern Africa; and

WHEREAS the government of South Africa maintains a powerful military force which it uses against people in a manner that makes victims of civilians and that denies basic human rights to people, especially the majority Black population; and

WHEREAS the African National Congress (ANC) is recognised by the United Nations and the Organisation of African Unity as the representative political organisation for millions of South African Blacks and committed individuals of other races; and

WHEREAS South African ecumenical church leaders, including representatives of partner institutions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, have been in close contact with the African National Congress over the years; in fact, Chief Albert Luthuli, (deceased) head of the African National Congress and Nobel Peace Laureate, was a member of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa of which the former Disciples' Churches are a part; and

WHEREAS the African National Congress has historically envisaged a new South Africa that would be non-racial, unfragmented and governed according to a system of majority rule based upon universal suffrage and has generally sought to realise this vision without the use of violence; and

WHEREAS the government of South Africa refuses to recognise the ANC or to even hold discussions with it concerning the future of South Africa; and

WHEREAS, as Christians, we are unalterably opposed to racial segregation and discrimination and are called to seek reconciliation and to work for peace and for justice, particularly with the poor and oppressed; and

WHEREAS, as Christians, we believe that persons should be involved in major decisions which affect their lives, and we are called to determine and to support proximate steps which offer hope for moving towards the goals of peace, justice and self-determination, recognising that other Christians with the same goals may consider alternative approaches;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, on July 28 to August 2, 1989 recognises that the African National Congress is an important political organisation that deserves an opportunity to contribute to the search for peace and justice in South Africa; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) calls on the governments of the United States and Canada to use their fullest political, diplomatic and economic strength to end the vicious cycle of injustice in South Africa; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) urgently asks members of our churches to prayerfully consider these views herein expressed and to exercise their influence on government representatives towards ending conflict and the establishment of peace and justice for all the people in South Africa.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Minister and President convey these views to the President, Secretary of State and all leaders of Congress in the United States and to the Prime Minister and Parliament of Canada.

RECONCILED WITH EVIL?

by Cedric Mayson

Reconciliation has become a cant word amongst some Christians. Behind a false piety they hide a cowardice and complacency that reveals respectable churchgoers as servants of oppression. They are spiritual mercenaries using their faith to support evil, Christians of convenience mouthing heresies to avoid a confrontation which might upset their sleep or their prayers.

The argument can be heard from Stellenbosch to Washington, from Parys to Bonn, from Durban to London, in almost the same words:

We are against Apartheid which in God's good time will be left behind. But Jesus calls on us to love our neighbours and our enemies so we should not be involved in a struggle against the oppressive regime. Our duty is to love them. Christians should not take sides, but should stand in the middle reaching out a hand to both black and white to draw them together in love. That is the Christian way of reconciliation.

This handful of confused issues has misled many and needs taking to pieces, strand by strand, for closer examination.



SCRIPTURE. Those who cite scripture on the Christian's duty of reconciliation need to be careful. God seeks no reconciliation with evil. Jesus did not reconcile himself to the false traditions of the Pharisees, nor to the paganism or cowardice of Pilate, nor to the weakness and fear of the disciples: Jesus confronted them in word and deed.

Paul states that 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself' but Christ did not do this by supporting the religious, political or military leaders who were responsible for the oppression, nor by standing in the middle and refusing to take sides. Reconciliation was accomplished by identifying himself unequivocally with the sufferers and victims, even to becoming one of them and dying their death.

Reconciliation does not mean acquiescence with injustice, failing to rebuke sin, accepting the violence of an illegitimate State, going along with devilry. Apartheid is an evil system, unjust, an illegitimate tyranny dependent upon violence. We cannot be reconciled with it: we must be rid of it: the place of reconciliation is the struggle against it.

CONFRONTATION. At a Billy Graham Rally in Durban in the late seventies Gatsha Buthelezi of Inkatha and Piet Koornhoof of the Nationalist Government publicly embraced one another as a sign of their brotherhood in Christ. Graham supporters hailed it as a demonstration of reconciling love, and critics as a cynical attempt to hide realities behind sentiment. Kisses don't solve killings.

Before it was banned in 1977 the Christian Institute

ran 'Reconciliation Courses' throughout South Africa which began by emphasising there could be 'No Reconciliation with Confrontation'. Theo Kotze, who ran many of them, was well aware that harmony did not depend upon emotional attachment, but upon a

shared commitment to discover and solve the issues that caused tension between blacks and whites, and rich and poor, so the course began with exercises to enable the members of the group to expose these realities to one another. Confrontation were not avoided, as so often happens in pseudo-civilised meetings, but deliberately courted, and people were staggered to discover their own pride and arrogance, their stereotypes, assumptions and attitudes. Then, because of the confrontation, they were able to work out their reconciliation.

Most white westerners are quite unaware of their inherited unconscious racism, and have to realise it in themselves before they can become reconciled with those who suffer it. Those who ask 'Will South Africa end in violence' or 'Will it be the end of civilisation when the blacks take over' have to self-discover the blatant racism of such attitudes. It is the height of arrogance for white Christians to believe reconciliation means that blacks must become like them.

The current Defiance Campaign is forcing South Africa and the West to confront the reality of a people committed to the establishment of a united non-racial democracy. They live for it, and are willing to die for it. The initiative for peace, justice and prosperity in South Africa does not lie in the hands of western talkers but in the masses of the democratic movement through whom God works as they demonstrate their commitment to peace and justice by refusing to accept oppressive laws. Others seeking peace must reconcile themselves to the shattering reality that they must accept leadership by the oppressed.

VICTIMS. The blind effrontery of racist imperialism appears when people from outside enter oppressed communities and tell them to be reconciled with their enemies, their torturers. The only people who can institute reconciliation are its victims, standing by the graves of their children, wiping the blood from their wounds, or the bitterness from their spirits.

Most whites have never confronted the regime in their life. Statistics yes, but poverty and smog and police and soldiers in the townships are unknown to them. Whips, teargas, dogs' teeth, interrogation, and the press of frequent funerals are quite unknown. The powerlessness of votelessness, the necessity to defend yourself against the violence of the mightiest army in Africa with your bare hands ... this is the context of reconciliation. How dare Christians tell blacks to reconcile themselves to those who

perpetuate this? Blacks throughout Africa have dealt with oppressors in a way that western Europeans find simply incredible: by forgiveness. After the confrontation is over and a liberated society established, reconciliation begins. At great risk to themselves newly liberated states, in the face of continuous covert and overt onslaught from US and South African forces, held out the hand of forgiveness to former colonialists who genuinely wished to make their homes in Africa and participate in the process of reconstruction.

TALK. Margaret Thatcher has voiced the plaint of many that the ANC should 'give up violence and start to talk'. The British Prime Minister is well aware that both the violence and the refusal to talk have been the policies of the Pretoria regime, not the ANC. The ANC is clearly on record as being willing to talk throughout its history. The ANC has stated that if Pretoria wants to talk, they must first



remove the crushing boot of oppression. Talks can only take place between equals. As such the ANC and the people of South Africa, in their various formations, have set out what steps must be taken to create the necessary climate before any talks can begin. If Thatcher and Pretoria want peace and justice, they are aware of what is required. The OAU Harare Declaration, adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement and supported by 48 of the 49 Commonwealth countries, clearly establishes the framework.

Talk can be an offensive weapon. The mines of Namibia have been a source of immense profit to the West, and when the World Court and the United Nations ruled that South Africa had no right to control that country some thought it meant the wealth would accrue to the Namibians. But talks about independence were skilfully maintained and delayed for nearly two decades, not to bring reconciliation to Namibia but to bring profit to the west, and weaken SWAPO.

No one in the ANC, the FLS, or the OAU, is going to be caught like that again. Before the present western suggestions about SA negotiations come to fruition there must be a clear commitment by Pretoria to a position which permits the emergence of a new society. To talk for years about perpetuating apartheid oppression under another name, with our people continuing to suffer exploitation whilst we talk, would not be the godly path to reconciliation but irresponsible devilry.

RECONCILED TO GOD. Reconciliation does not mean finding a central point of agreement by give and take with oppressors: too many of our people have died, for us to play those bargaining games. Reconciliation means accepting God's view of the world, overcoming an evil system and replacing it with a good one, setting out on a new course in harmony with the principles of the Freedom Charter which reflect the priorities of justice and love to which people of faith adhere. A society cannot be half-nonracist, half-united, or half-democratic: reconciliation is all, or it is nothing.

★ ★ ★

Western racist imperialism has so thoroughly confused Christians that we need to spell out some of the gospel priorities anew.

Christianity is concerned with human society, not merely individuals. Christians have been indoctrinated to believe that the Gospel is about individualistic achievement and destiny and it comes as a shock to realise that the Bible is about the salvation or liberation of humanity on Earth. The scriptures spend no more than half a dozen pages on life after death. The major focus is on life here and now, and not upon God's purpose for individual souls, but on God's kingdom for society.

Diverting the attention of the faithful to the salvation of souls has given religious and political leaders unfettered en-

joyment of their power over social structures, power and wealth, but it has not been faithful to the Gospel.

Nothing is more true than the African gibe that the Europeans gave them the Bible and took the land. But in recent years the worldwide liberation struggle has discovered that Christianity is deeply concerned about the world and its resources, and about justice, peace and prosperity in human society.

Loving our enemies, and being good to those that despitefully use us, is interpreted by individualists to mean we must be reconciled to people but leave the system alone: 'Leave the rest to God. If we call people to Jesus everything else will turn out right.' Nothing could be further from the truth.

Evil systems have to be overthrown. They do not melt away: tyrants must be toppled off their thrones, wrong systems must be removed. Our problem in South Africa is not to encourage the people in power to be kinder, but to scrap the apartheid system, and replace it. Some of those in power will be converted and help us, but the object of the struggle is to scrap apartheid. The regime is illegitimate and must be chased out of power as thief and murderer. The constitution, the law, the ownership of wealth and land, and the basis of government must all be changed if the Kingdom of God means anything on Earth.

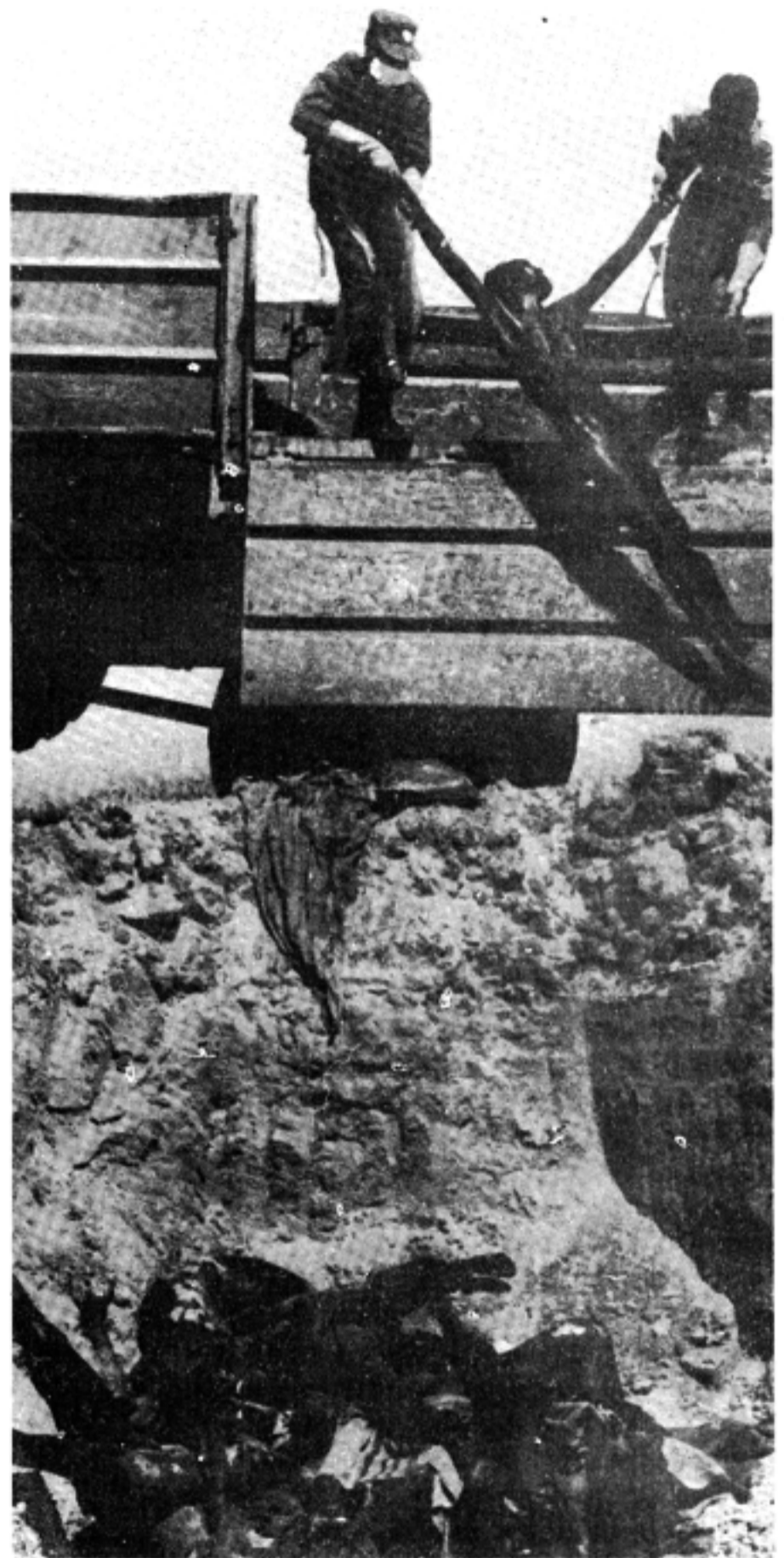
History has shown that people will not accept tyrants, for ever, whether in terms of feudalism, totalitarianism, capitalism, Stalinism or apartheid. Self-respecting human beings, responding to the image of God in which they are made, rise up and overthrow those systems, and a page of history turns.

Christians must be involved in the struggle to overthrow evil and replace it with good. This is not an argument about calling individual sinners to repentance, but about establishing God's laws of justice and peace. Right wing Christians, intent on maintaining their control of right wing societies, scoff at the futility of trying to change society whilst people are sinners. Will they accept a car of bad design because some people are bad drivers?

We can make a good society in South Africa! Christians concerned to love their neighbours as themselves must be in politics up to the eyebrows, thrusting into the world struggle for justice in law and economics, making the church a site of struggle in which western oppression is confronted, analysed and overcome.

South African and Western churches have always spoken of bringing peace and justice to our troubled people, but only now are accepting that reconciliation means joining the liberation struggle to turn out the oppressors and make a new system.

Frank Chikane of the SA Council of Churches has written: *If the church stops short at the 'traditional' line where religion is said to end and politics to begin, if it does not cross this imaginary line in order to test its non-violent*



● **MASS GRAVES:** Members of Pretoria's paramilitary Koevoet toss bodies of SWAPO guerrillas into one of three mass graves.

methods in the field, it will forfeit any legitimate right to condemn those who go further into the arena of life and death for the sake of justice. Once one recognises the illegitimacy of the regime one cannot hesitate in order to create the 'space' for a lengthy debate on violence and non-violence. One can only go forward with whatever methods are judged best to remove the tyrant... In South Africa today there is no time or space left for discussion. At this critical point the debate ends and action begins.

The way to reconciliation is through active service in the liberation struggle.

profound religious experience to join hands with other women in the rain and sing and dance around a wooden cross, celebrating the transforming power of community in the township. There is a communion, too deep for words, sitting

scarred, maimed, broken, dead. Bodies which should have been throbbing with life and blood are now lifeless. We know what it means when to die is not an option, but answering the call of the gospel, for 'greater love has no one but

in real communion with others. It means enough food to eat, homes, and living together as families — not as 'single bachelors' or 'superfluous appendages'. To be 'body' means to fight until those basic needs of life are fulfilled for all.



in a cell with other women and praying: 'Be present at our table, Lord' with mice scurrying across the floor and cockroaches crawling on your legs. Words go away, you are choked up, you are profoundly aware of a happening deeper than what you see, of a different presence amongst you.

'This is my body. This is my blood. Do this in remembrance of me'.

Bodies and blood, blood and life: in South Africa we cannot forget the scarred body on the cross, when we are surrounded by so many other bodies,

that she gives her life for others'.

The Son of God left us a great commandment in the New Testament when he said: 'Love your neighbour as yourself'. I realised that I had to love God through people I can see, and live with, work with, eat with. To love people is to be in solidarity with them in their struggle for liberation.

Christians say they are members of one body, which means we are part of one life, the full life Christ offers us here and now, not one day in heaven. To be 'body' means to struggle for that full life

I am continually aware that I have grown so much more in faith since I became conscious of our struggle. To participate in suffering and struggle is to be creating with God a new people with eyes to see, ears to hear and a new perception and understanding of the world and the issues involved. This new understanding allows us a vision of a new, nonracial democratic South Africa.

To be a co-worker with God means we are building new people for the kingdom of God that is coming into being in our country. We do not acquire this 'newness of person' by talking of God all the time, but by positive actions in the liberation struggle. Too many have died, too many are in prison, too many are crippled in heart and body, too many merely exist without having real life.

But many more have hope, endurance, determination and faith. With faith nothing is ever lost. Faith assures us that 'the poor shall inherit the Earth and the mighty shall be brought low'. Faith says our struggle is legitimate and asserts we shall be free of apartheid oppression.

That opportunity to be a co-worker with Christ in the struggle for peace and freedom is what I find in our national liberation movement, the African National Congress.





The following is part of the Message the ANC presented to the Muslim Youth Conference that was held in Lusaka, in August 1988.

The African National Congress has always regarded the religious community in our country as an important component of our struggling people. We recognise the important role played by Muslim youth in our struggle for national independence, their close relationship with the democratic youth movement and the entire mass democratic movement in our country. A relationship based on the realisation that their future in a non-racial and democratic South Africa can only be assured if they participate in struggle and are part of the broader alliance which is committed to the eradication of apartheid from our land.

Our movement has not been a stranger throughout its years of struggle to our people in the Muslim faith. It is part of our history that we have had amongst our members comrades who came from the Muslim faith and some of them rose to leading positions, like the late Cde Dr Yusuf Dadoo. He was a member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC and the Chairman of the South African Communist Party. It is also history that many more Muslim individuals, leaders, and particularly youth have been involved and sacrificed their lives for the liberation of our country and continue to do so.

Since 1983, there has been a ground-

MUSLIMS URGED TO UNITE AGAINST APARTHEID

swell of Muslim involvement in the struggle against apartheid, especially in the Cape Province where we have a concentration of Muslims in our country. Democratic Muslim organisations have been formed, like the Call of Islam, which is affiliated to the United Democratic Front.

Our movement has always called for a unity of action by our people against the common enemy, which is the apartheid regime. The churches and other religious communities have responded positively to this call. We have seen Christians and Muslims being together in action ... in marches, and denouncing in one voice the draconian laws imposed by the evil and heretical apartheid regime on our people. This is the kind of development the ANC encourages.

We are often questioned as to our perception of the role of churches and other religious communities in our national liberation struggle. Questions such as, is the future of Islam assured in a free non-racial South Africa? Will there be a freedom of religious worship when the struggle is won? are often asked.

Our simple answer to such questions has always been that the future of Islam or any other religion will depend very much on the position they take during the struggle for justice, freedom and peace in our country. So that, when people of Islamic faith and their leaders choose to be on the side of the poor and oppressed and combat that which brings about these conditions, questions like these will not arise. When the revolution has been won, Muslims in our country will know and understand the new tasks presented by victory and how to accomplish them.

We appreciate the concern and the reason why some of the questions are being asked. It is in part a realisation by religious institutions that victory is in sight and that therefore there is a genuine

desire to know and understand what the future holds in store, a future in which the ANC is going to play an important part. We have also to realise that sometimes the questions are raised not in request for answers but as excuses for an unwillingness to take action against the apartheid system.

Since 1983 the regime has attempted with its so-called tricameral parliament to co-opt some of the people from the oppressed to be partners in apartheid, but it failed. It has failed to this day to create the National Council because it has been rejected by the majority of our people. Instead, all the regime's schemes have drawn thousands and thousands of our people into struggle for the final onslaught against it...

Internationally, the regime is being isolated and the ANC is being seen as an important factor in the resolution of the problems of our country. In many ways the regime is on the retreat and is incapable of extricating itself from the political and economic crisis which is of its own making.

We are asking you to support our struggle for national liberation and the establishment of a non-racial democratic South Africa, which will be based on the Freedom Charter, our programme. We urge Muslim leaders in the region to support the leaders and governments of the Frontline States in their endeavour to resist the pressures coming from Pretoria. To support them in their efforts to build their economies and reduce dependence on trade with South Africa. In conclusion, we ask you also to support the call by the international community and our people for the implementation of mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa. We all need to sacrifice in order to end the crime against humanity which apartheid is. Let this serve as an important catalyst for commitment by the Muslim youth and Muslim leaders in our region and the world over to end apartheid.

OUR GOD LIBERATES!

A Biblical Meditation by Fr F F Gqiba, Director of Chaplaincy.

'The Lord — and the Lord alone — is our God.' (Deuteronomy 6:4).

Here is recorded the most primary declaration of a faith of the early Hebrews, a faith from which our Christianity was to emerge six centuries later. The assertive affirmation is that the Lord (Yahweh = The one who is what he becomes) whom they worship, He alone is the true God, and He alone is to be worshipped.

This affirmation, as we will explain below, is made within the context of an experience of a great historical trauma and uncertainty. It was a time during which these people's faith was assailed by the cultural and religious subjugation they were subjected to after their defeat and enslavement by the Assyrians and the Babylonians. In the face of this they are reminded that:

'... the Lord is God, there is no other beside Him.'
(Deuteronomy 4:35)

Anything else besides this God, that the Israelites in captivity were tempted to believe in and worship, is an idol — the work of man's hands and mind, the worship of which is beautifully ridiculed by the Psalmist:

'Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; eyes, but do not see. They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make sound in their throats. Those who make them are like them, so are all who trust in them.'
(Psa. 115:4-8).

And the prophet Habakkuk makes the same point:

'What use is an idol when its maker has shaped it? It is only a metal image, a source of lies; or when the maker trusts what he has made? — he is only making dumb idols! Woe to him who says to a wooden thing, "Awake", or to a dumb stone, "Arise?"'
(Habk. 2:18-19).

The tremendous significance of this proclamation of the prophets, and the declaration of the uniqueness of Yahweh, can only be appreciated within the context in which these pronouncements were made.

According to B W Anderson (*The Living World of the Old Testament*, p. 290), the most significant development within Judah during the Seventh Century BC was 'the rediscovery of Moses', and that the greatest monument of this rediscovery is the book of Deuteronomy. This book, from which our main text is derived, is in other words, at the heart of the history of the Jewish people which covers the tragic

events of 586 BC, i.e., the vanquishing and taking of Judah into exile by the Babylonian Empire, and the ever-present threat of being totally annihilated by this powerful nation.

Now, in those days, the defeat of a people meant a defeat of their god or gods as well; and a victory was the victory of the god(s) of the conquering forces. According to the understanding of the day, it was Yahweh, the God of Israel, who was defeated by what the Israelites have all along viewed as the dummies of Babylon.

It is in the face of this national cultural and political humiliation and crisis, that the Deuteronomist reiterates his faith in this God of Israel. A reaffirmation is made that Yahweh alone is still God, and that the faith of the Assyrians and Babylonians are but idolatry — the stupid products of men's hands.

But what makes the Deuteronomist so sure that Yahweh is God and that all other gods are merely idols? What is definitive of a true God which differentiates 'Him' from an idol, a product of people's self-interest?

Over and over again, the book of Deuteronomy returns to the Egyptian experience. This is what sorts out a true god, God, from idols:

'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage ... remember that you were slaves in Egypt, and that I the Lord (Yahweh) your God rescued you by my great power and strength.'
(Deut. 5:6, 15)

It is in His mighty act of liberation, that Yahweh's uniqueness, and claim to being God rests. And therefore, it is only in a religious life which is committed to the liberation of the oppressed that true and authentic faith is distinguished from false, and thus enslaving, idolatry.

It is important, as well as interesting, to note that the cause of the fall of Judah in its combat against Babylonian imperialism, which was a sign of their abandonment by God, was largely because they had departed from the true faith of compassion for the socially under-privileged in their midst, and that later Judaic regimes had degenerated into virtual tyrannies.

Now, the beautiful thing about us today is that we are not just talking about the deity of a small 7th Century BC Palestinian tribe. We are in fact talking about the only God; we are talking about the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, in and through Jesus Christ the uniqueness of our God has been supremely demonstrated, even over

death itself — that final and ultimate enemy of humanity. We are talking about our God who in and through Jesus Christ demonstrated supremely that He is a God of deliverance, a God who liberates from oppression and bondage.

Now since the God of Deuteronomy is none other than God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore our unique and only God, we too carry today this faith and the message of the one and only God who delivers, who saves, who liberates. We carry this faith and this message today — today, that is in the very midst of the darkness that is enveloping South Africa, our beloved Land and our people.

The more gloomy the future looks to the men and women in the street, the brighter it appears when seen through the eyes of the God of liberation, who alone is God; the more hopeless the future looks to some, the more wonderful the hope for the future for us, for we know that our God acts and liberates at a time which neither 'Pharaoh' nor his oppressed slaves expect — at His own time, which is always the right time.

The hour is dark, and considering the mad obstinacy of the forces of oppression arrayed against our people, it might get darker still. Still more of our people will be maimed, more will die violently. And those who will forget that our faith is in a God of salvation will be tempted to give in. Yes! they will want to abandon our tested liberation wagon. But we who believe in the only, the supreme God, will remember that our God saves, and will save us, that he cannot be defeated by the idols of the militarisation of the apartheid state, its racism and exploitation.

The future of South Africa belongs to the God of our salvation, and not to any man, however, cunning. He is the God who is God because He always sides with the weak and the oppressed, the downtrodden, the marginalised and struggling. He abhors the arrogance of the heartless rich and the strong who like to play god in the lives of others, and he acts against them.

This, Sisters and Brothers, is our message today. We must be seen to live already that freedom that issues from God's act of salvation.

'For Freedom', says Paul to the Galatians, 'Christ has set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery' (Gal 5:1). Fortunately, through and within our vanguard political movement the ANC, we can and we do demonstrate that, notwithstanding (indeed, in defiance of) the bondage that prevails, we have already the liberty of those who believe and are in the God who alone is God.

Stand ye therefore firm!

Amandla!

Poems by: Dean T S Farasani, from his: *Justice In My Tears*, Africa World Press, Trenton, New Jersey, 1988.



Farewell to innocence

Farewell to non-violence;
Innocence, I'll never meet you again.
Until the work is done,
When apartheid is undone.
Then I'll be innocent again,
When violence is needed no more.
Don't push me too far!

Forward Umkhonto we sizwe.
Peace and I will never walk hand in hand
Until the boers are crushed,
When discrimination is history.
Then I'll love again,
When hatred is needed no more.
Don't push me too far!

Crush the SADF and security forces;
Life is not precious any more.
Until the boers respect our lives,
When minority rule is paralysed.
Then I will forgive again,
When anger is required no more.
Don't push me too far!

Slaughter them all wholesale;
Mow them down child and old
Until their pride is smashed,
When their ego is deflated.
Then I'll preach salvation again,
When hell has cleansed racist hearts.
Don't push God too far!

Dear God: a telephone call to heaven

Heaven number one?
 Yes!
 Who's speaking?
 Gabriel!
 May I speak to God?
 He is not here!
 Jesus?
 Not here!
 The Holy Spirit?
 Not here!
 When will they be home?
 They have no home!
 May I leave a message with you?
 No!
 Why not?
 It is not my duty!
 Am I speaking with heaven?
 Yes!
 Why can't I reach God?
 He does not live here!
 Where can I find him?
 Everywhere!
 He is not here.
 Where are you?
 In South Africa.
 He is also there!
 We've been looking for him since 1652.
 He is there!
 No. He is not here. Tell Him on his return that
 Mandela is in prison for life, and many more;
 Sixty-nine were shot by Christian forces on March 21, 1960;
 Six hundred students died in 1976;
 Steve Biko died in detention in 1977;
 Many more before and after that;
 Tens of thousands have been detained between 1984 and 1987;
 Children and adults;
 Thousands have died;
 The black version of his image has become baboon;
 The disease of Ham has turned into an epidemic among blacks;

We are hewing wood;
 We are drawing water;
 Cursed to the hundredth and millionth generation;
 White man's Bible declares:
 Pharaoh is on the rampage;
 We are scattered in his fields;
 We build pyramids;
 We put up cities;
 Forced to say thanks for every kick;
 We sacrifice our sons to the sun god;
 Only Moses is left among the reeds.
 On His way to the moon, let Him stop here for a day,
 To see for Himself what we've seen for years.

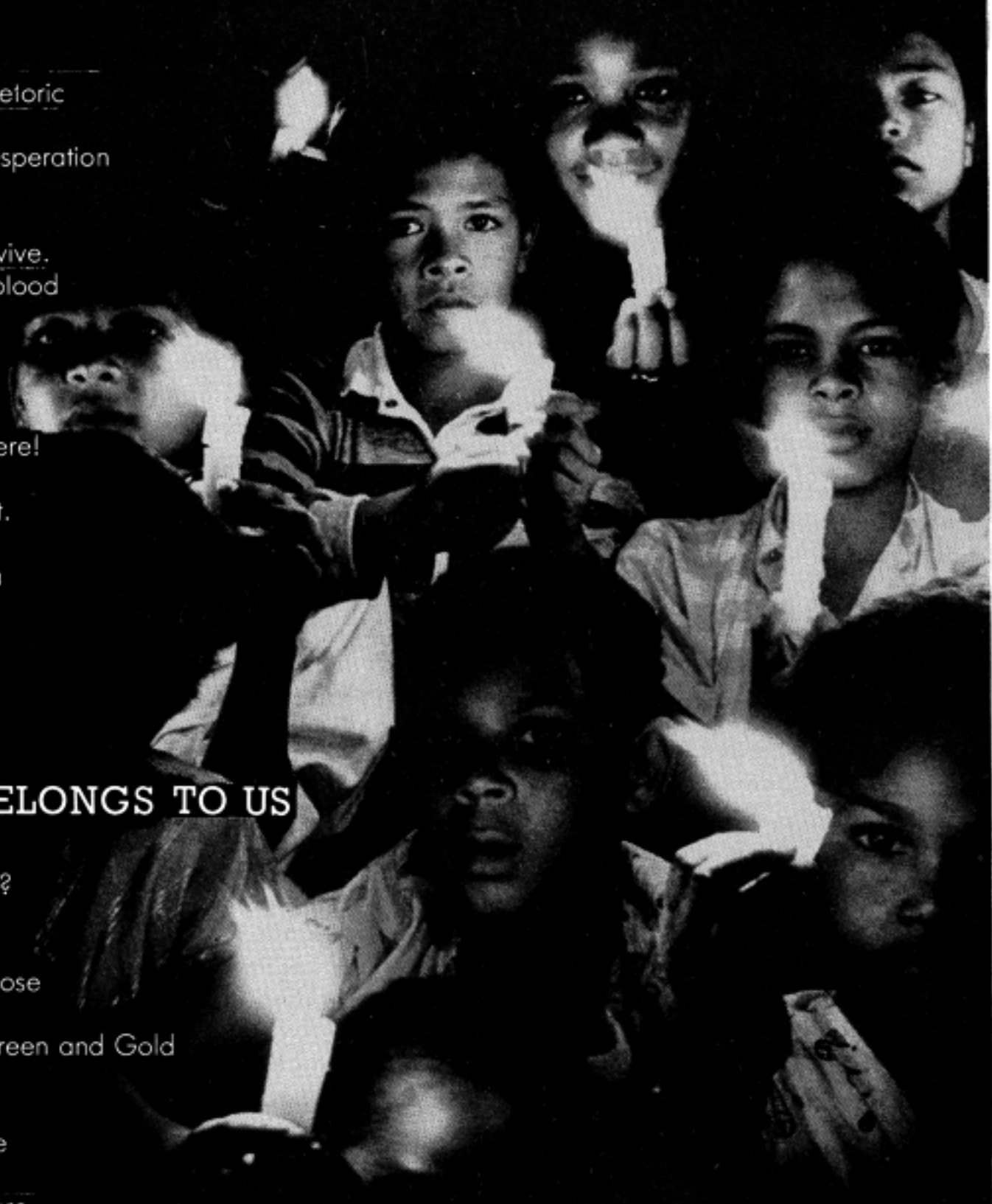
Poems by Patric De Goede, former YCW activist from Cape Town, now working as a printer
in the ANC department of Publicity and Information.
Dedicated to the children of South Africa.

DE PROFUNDIS — A CRY TO THE WORLD

Out of the depths
we cry to you the world
Please hear our voice
Don't heed the hollow rhetoric
of our oppressors.
Don't hold our acts of desperation
against us.
How else shall we
defend ourselves and survive.
Our streets run red with blood
our blood.
Who but you
are we able to turn to...
for you are humankind.
You are the world out there!
For God's Sake
help us remove the tyrant.
—Out of the depths
of Apartheid South Africa
we cry to you
Please hear our voice.

TOMORROW BELONGS TO US

Tomorrow belongs to us
What shall our future be?
Sheltered in the palm
of Congress hands
we have nothing left to lose
but our chains.
Working under Black, Green and Gold
learning of the things
that we were never told.
— that shall our future be
Building up our country
For all, the wealth to share
No more sickness
No more hunger
No more degradation
No more hate
Tomorrow belongs to us
that shall our future be.





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