



EPISCOPAL CHURCHPEOPLE for a FREE SOUTHERN AFRICA

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#80

15 October 1988

FROM A SOUTH AFRICAN PRISON

"

Johannesburg prison
Private Bag X04
Mondeor 2110

22 September 1988

Mr Edward Perkins
Ambassador to the United States of America
Pretoria

Sir,

As you are aware, there are thousands of people being held under the State of Emergency throughout the country, and some of them are in their third year.

We have not committed any criminal acts nor breached any of this country's laws.

We are simply being held for our avowed opposition to apartheid and all it stands for, and for our commitment to democracy and the rule of law.

One of the disturbing features to emerge from this Emergency is that detention without trial has effectively ended the schooling of thousands of students, who now constitute the majority of detainees.

Furthermore, we are being held under abject conditions, denied basic requirements such as newspapers and other reading material.

We write to you to enlist the active intervention of you and your government in pressuring the South African authorities to:

- Lift the State of Emergency
- Make an undertaking guaranteeing us against re-arrest or restrictions on our release."



(signed by 31 students, workers, a church field worker and unemployed persons)

A commission to highlight people's plight

By ANTON HARBER

THE Human Rights Commission (HRC), launched in Johannesburg this week, will bring a renewed focus on detentions, political trials, the treatment of prisoners and Emergency restrictions on meetings, individuals and organisations.

The two-year-old State of Emergency has taken a heavy toll not only of human rights, but also on those who have drawn attention to their abuse. This has meant less information and less protest about human rights contraventions, particularly since the banning of the Detainees' Parents Support Committee in February.

The launch of this high-powered commission — which brings together church, health, legal and political groups who share a concern about human rights contraventions — is intended to change that situation.

The five-person team is to highlight human rights issues "with special emphasis on repressive measures exercised by the state through security legislation (and) Emergency regulations". Its brief will be to investigate and monitor all violations of human rights in South Africa.

It will make known its findings through press releases, regular news releases and information sheets, monthly statistical reports, special in-depth reports and an annual report to the founding bodies.

Its guiding document will be the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The six organisations that came together to form the commission were the Black Sash, the National Association of Democratic Lawyers, the National Medical and Dental Association, the Southern African Catholic

Bishops Conference, the Five Freedoms Forum and the South African Council of Churches.

The commission is to develop an ongoing relationship with the United Nations Centre for Human Rights.

The five commission members are the Reverend Frank Chikane, general secretary of the SACC; Dr Max Coleman, an active DPSC member until its restriction; Professor John Dugard, director of the Centre for Applied Legal Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand; Sheena Duncan, past national president of the Black Sash; and Father Smangaliso Mkhathwa, general secretary of the Institute for Contextual Theology.



Monitoring human rights violations: (from left) Smangaliso Mkhathwa, Frank Chikane and Max Coleman at the commission launch this week in Johannesburg

Picture: ANNA ZIEMINSKI

WEEKLY MAIL, September 23 to September 29, 1988

The Bishop of New York

The Rt. Rev Paul Moore Jr.

1047 Amsterdam Avenue New York N.Y. 10025 (212) 678-6953

PLEASE NOTE NEW NUMBER:
(212) 316-7410

September 23, 1988

The Honorable P.W. Botha
President
Republic of South Africa

Dear President Botha:

I want to protest vigorously and unmistakably the escalating threats and violence directed by your Government against South African church leaders who, placing first their obedience to God, have dared to protest the relentless repression of their people, the Black and Coloured South Africans and Namibians.

The provocative content of your personal attacks on Archbishop Tutu and the Rev. Frank Chikane in recent months was clearly interpreted by some white South Africans as an invitation to bomb Khotso House.

I am consistently astonished by your failure to recognize that the utterly non-violent protests led by these church leaders, not all of whom are Black or Coloured, represent the final alternative to the wave of revolutionary violence that could tear South Africa apart. If these religious leaders' voices -- defiant at times but never preaching violent action -- do not succeed in bringing an end to the repression exercised by your troops to preserve an apartheid that is ultimately doomed, those leaders will be deserted by many who have followed them.

Your possibly fatal mistake lies in your assumption that desertion of non-violent church leaders by the repressed will lead to a state of abject submission. On the contrary, if non-violence and its passionate spokesmen are deserted, it will be because those who have followed their way until now will have concluded that the only chance for liberation lies in massive and bloody revolution. The seeds of the destruction of South Africa as you know it will have been sown -- ironically, by you!

Sincerely,

PM:bp


Bishop of New York

SOUTHSCAN

A Bulletin of Southern African Affairs



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SHOCK REPORT INDICATES MASSIVE WHITE SWITCH TO FAR RIGHT-WING PARTY

Johannesburg, SA—When South African negotiators this week pleaded "domestic considerations," they were probably more serious than the Cuban-Angolan team at the talks realized—with President PW Botha's ruling National Party facing the real prospect of losing their parliamentary majority for the first time in 40 years.

The result of a top-secret survey carried out recently by the South African Human Sciences Research Council for the government indicate that support for the far-right Conservative Party has increased to the extent that if an election is called early next year, as Botha had planned, it could result in a hung parliament, writes a correspondent in Johannesburg.

Although *SouthScan* has not had access to the report, reliable South African sources say the survey is conclusive—and could force Botha to look to the battered Progressive Federal Party, the National Democratic Movement and Dennis Worrall's Independents to stay in power.

The results are understood to have seriously shaken the government when the report was delivered about three weeks ago—and could explain Botha's tearful call for Afrikaner unity which startled television viewers at the time.

It also almost certainly accounts for the abrupt announcement this week of a vote-grabbing across-the-board 15% increase for civil servants—an increase which will cost the government an additional R3-billion officials acknowledge it does not have. Senior economics said it would have to come from increased taxation—probably General Sales Tax—which would have to be introduced early next year.

With rolled-over foreign debt repayments falling due in mid-1989, the announcement does little more than buy the government a few months before the next crisis.

While the report indicates a massive swing towards Andries Treurnicht's Conservative Party, say the sources, it also suggests widespread uncertainty among white voters about the viability of continued white domination.

Just over half the Conservative Party supporters polled believed the party's policies were unimplementable.

The survey comes as Botha celebrates 10 years in power, and his National Party 40 years of uninterrupted rule, with living standards throughout society drastically down since 1978.

A survey by Johannesburg's *Business Day* newspaper marking "Ten years of Bothanomics" indicated that consumer spending on all goods—except liquor—are substantially down on the 1978 figures, with fewer jobs available, more insolvencies, fewer companies launched, and business confidence down to 60% of the 1980 business confidence index figure.

While defence spending has peaked at R1 billion a month early this year, the survey suggests, the Rand's dollar value is a third of its 1978 worth, the consumer price index is up 300%, the agricultural debt 700%, personal savings down to 40% and government spending and annual interest payments in government debt up from R500m to R6bn.

A third survey, by the South African Institute for International Affairs indicates growing discontent at the vast government over-spending. Almost 80% of white working-class families believe the SADF already receives too high a percentage of the national budget, according to the SAIIR figures. And 68% of National Party voters oppose increased military spending—more than 20% up on the 1986 figure.

But with the military now Botha's major power-base, he appears to have little choice but to continue feeding it.

The collapse of support for Botha's government has revived an option devised by reformists in Chris Heunis' Constitutional Planning Department under the impact of mass black resistance in 1984. Arguing that parliament was no longer a viable route for reform, they advocated that Botha suspend parliament for a year—as he is entitled to do under the constitution—and draft a new, multi-racial constitution in which the right inside and outside the National Party could no longer veto major change.

Since then, however, Botha has given every indication of favouring rightwing support over the need to reform to survive.

The option, however, has been revived, and could be attractive to a government which, by giving the appearance of political reform, has lost rightwing support but by practicing extensive repression, has failed to make up for it anywhere else.

'55% CONSERVATIVE PARTY INCREASE IN TRANSVAAL' SAYS REPORT

Johannesburg, SA—A study done by the Johannesburg-based Centre for Policy Studies (CPS), shows that Conservative Party branches in the Transvaal have increased 55% since the general election last year, writes a correspondent in Johannesburg.

Now it is thought that the October municipal elections will not only be a test of the growth of the white right-wing. They will also demonstrate whether the ruling National Party will be able to entrench its position in areas where it made gains during the general election and hold the support of English-speaking voters in places like Johannesburg and Natal.

The CP is entering the final stages of their campaign supremely confident—especially in the Transvaal—and is using the local election as a test-run for the next general election. It is using the election as an opportunity to strengthen its grassroots structures.

According to the CPS study, CP branches in the Transvaal have increased 55% since the general election. In Klerksdorp 14 new branches were established in June this year and 28 in Witbank during March.

Party membership grew during May, June and July by a figure equal to the total membership enrolled during the first six years of the CP's existence.

The party's hopes of success have been bolstered by a number of successes in municipal by-elections across the country during the last year.

According to the CPS study it has won by-elections in the Transvaal in Benoni, Vereeniging, Klerksdorp and Westonaria among other municipalities.

In Natal it won in Ladysmith, in the Cape it has won in Bredasdorp, Kraalfontein and Malmesbury, while in the Orange Free State it has taken control of Parys and won by-elections in Senekal, Heilbron and Hertzogville among others.

The party is virtually assured of winning all the Transvaal platteland towns—which it already controls at a parliamentary level. It is hoping to entrench this position on the reef and is fielding candidates in areas it has never tested before, like Pietermaritzburg.

Equally important is whether Colored, Indian and black voters will turn out in sufficient numbers for the government to claim support for what is essentially an extension of the tricameral parliament—plus blacks—to third-tier government.

The principle of "own" and "general" affairs underlies this restructured tier of government. The color coded local authorities dealing with their own affairs slot into the multi-racial Regional Services Councils (RSCs) for handling general matters such as bulk provision of services and infrastructure. (The original plan only included whites, coloreds and Indians in the RSCs; but following the 1984 Vaal township upheavals government accepted the need to include the black local authorities.)

Over the past few years government has committed itself to a certain amount of devolution. Under this policy local authorities have had the power to make independent decisions on a range of important issues, including the opening of public facilities to all races.

Through controlling the local authorities the CP aims to block integration at this level. It also intends to gain control of a number of RSCs as a means to obstruct these bodies from within.

One of the consequences of the CP's attempt to gain control of the local authorities is the politicization of local government. Never before has a local election attracted the hype of a general election.

While some authorities, like Johannesburg, have always been fought along party political lines, most towns kept away from party politics at this level of government.

Cape Town's council, for example, has a tradition of non-party politics and even in the election this October this tradition is being maintained. The CP is enthusiastically fielding candidates throughout the country. While the NP is also doing so in urban areas, in the rural Transvaal it is relying on "independents" to fight its cause.

While it claims this is to maintain the tradition of unpolitical local government, there is a suspicion that it is merely a device to avoid embarrassment at the polls.

Parties to the left of the NP, like the newly formed Independent Party are fielding very few candidates.

The Progressive Federal Party (PFP) are fielding candidates in a limited number of authorities. Its most aggressive campaign is being fought in Johannesburg where it is hoping to take control of the council.

For years Johannesburg has had a hung council although the PFP had had the majority of seats a coalition between the Independent Ratepayers Party and the NP has ruled the city.

As a result it has lagged behind other cities, like Cape Town and Durban in integrating facilities, like buses and swimming pools.

The NP is also making a determined effort to take the council. It won a number of traditional PFP seats in Johannesburg during last election and is hoping to capitalize on these gains.

In a change of tactic, the Johannesburg-based anti-apartheid group Five Freedoms Forum has advocated qualified participation.

Says a spokesman for the organization: "This is a strategic move to try and influence the city to have an anti-apartheid council and forms part of our Group Areas Act campaign."

"We are advocating a conditional vote not bound to any party and only for those individual candidates who endorse our manifesto which advocates the opening of all facilities and the better use

DON'T VOTE SAY CHURCH LEADERS

of resources for all races."

The question of whether to participate in government created structures remains the center of conflict in the Colored, Indian and black authorities.

It is illegal in terms of the emergency regulations to call for a boycott of the elections. (In an illogical exemption candidates standing for election are free to call for a boycott.)

However, the message has slowly seeped out that "the broad democratic movement" will not be participating.

Church leaders have been the most vocal in speaking out against the election. The most recent being the Methodist Church which has sent a pastoral letter to its congregants.

In the letter the heads of the Methodist Church have recommended that only municipal candidates who are openly committed to the abolition of apartheid are worthy of Christian support at the polls.

The letter condemns the ban on calling for non-participation and said that people had a right to condemn the election as abstention was probably the only way for some to give expression to their rejection of apartheid.

But calls for a boycott are not only emanating from the church. In an unguarded moment a provincial spokesman gave details of a grassroots campaign in the Pretoria township of Atteridgeville where street committees are organizing a boycott.

And last week Minister of Law and Order Adriaan Vlok told an audience that in Kagiso (outside Krugersdorp) slogans were recently painted on the walls of houses proclaiming, among others: "Welcome to Moscow, no votes."

He also mentioned an incident in the Vaal township, Sebokeng, where a house in which a councillor was holding a meeting about the elections was set alight by petrol bombs.

A number of activists have been detained over the past month in an apparent attempt to break the growing anti-election campaign in the townships.

The police are using the elections for anti-ANC propaganda. Following an announcement that they were expecting an increase in attacks in the run up to the election the police said that an "ANC terrorist" who was killed in a shoot-out in Cape Town was part of "a group sent to South Africa to disrupt next month's elections."

The most significant change in government policy since the last black local authorities elections in 1983 and 1984 is the decision to incorporate blacks into central government and other structures outside the 'homelands.'

The intention still remains to limit as far as possible the number to be accommodated in these structures (*Southscan* Vol.3 No.2) and is the reason why the number of registered voters for the whole country is a little over 3m.

Nevertheless, black local authorities are now deemed a crucial cog in the constitutional reform program.

The passing of the Promotion of Constitutional Development Act earlier this year has further increased their importance. Under this legislation representation on the proposed national negotiating forum, will be drawn from regional electoral colleges, consisting in turn of representatives of the black local authorities.

According to the CFS study this linkage of the black local authorities with central representation means successful elections are crucial for government's reform plans.

The elections are also an integral part of the government's attempts to stabilize local government in the townships in the wake of the campaign to render them ungovernable. There are longer-term issues at stake as well.

The government's counter-revolutionary strategy aims at combining strong security action with a concerted attempt at improving the material living conditions of township residents.

This in turn, the government believes would increase support and legitimacy for the local authorities.

Funds are being allocated through the RSCs as well as from other sources and the National Security Management System acts in a coordinating capacity for many of these programs.

But CP policy aims at controlling the finances of the RSCs and blocking any redistribution of wealth.

Should there once again be a low percentage poll in the black local authority elections the legitimacy of these structures will once again be questionable.

Adding to the lack of credibility of the authorities is the calibre of those standing for election.

As the structures are unpopular those putting themselves forward are perceived—all too frequently correctly—as doing so in order to use their positions to enrich themselves. Allegations of corruption within the black local authorities are legion.

But even though potential candidates are in line to pick up monthly allowances in a number of areas it has been impossible to find candidates.

There have been insufficient nominations in Tembisa, two eastern Transvaal townships and a number of Eastern Cape townships. Initial reports indicate that there have been problems with nominations in Motherwell, Lingenhile (Cradock), KwaNobuhle, Ibhayi (Port Elizabeth), New Brighton, Zwide and Walmer.

In Soweto there were interested candidates, but in a surprise move a number were disqualified because they were in arrears with their rent. The CPS study questions the use of municipal councillors as a basis on which to secure some black representation of the proposed national forum (formerly the National Council).

It sees the nature of existing municipal leadership as a problem: "In the absence of national political parties contesting the elections, municipal leadership is localized to the specific township and is highly fractious and individualistic in nature. With few exceptions this results in almost continual leadership disputes around rival personalities and not on issues of substance or ideology." (A candidate in Soweto was recently murdered in a faction fight with a rival.)

Attempts to form national organizations around this municipal leadership have not had a good record and the CPS study concludes that "this leadership could, therefore, not deliver any defined national, or even regional, constituency in the proposed forum."

Pretoria backs down to defiant Tutu

David Beresford
in Cape Town

SOUTH Africa's Anglican Primate, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, yesterday underlined the state's powerlessness to deal with church civil disobedience by repeating his call to boycott this month's local government elections in defiance of the emergency laws.

The call came as the South African government publicly acknowledged that there would be no prosecutions against church leaders for flouting the emergency, on the grounds that it would give them "the martyrdom they are so avidly seeking."

Security police had already confiscated a tape-recording and notes of a sermon delivered by Archbishop Tutu with a view to criminal prosecution.

Opposition politicians ridiculed the government at the weekend for its climb-down. The leader of the official opposition, Dr Andries Treurnicht, said the decision was "ridiculous" — the Archbishop was "making fun" of the government and getting away with it. In a pastoral letter released yesterday — but written before the state's capitulation — Archbishop Tutu urged a boycott as "a clear message" to the government "that its vision for the

future, as well as its specific plans to achieve that vision, are wholly inadequate."

In an interview with *The Guardian*, he said the municipal councils being elected were "racially based" and that the elections were being accompanied "by an unprecedented level of repression". The councils were being used as a stepping stone towards a "national council" which would be undemocratic and "unlikely to produce just constitutional proposals."

Archbishop Tutu said church leaders were preparing for the "next stage" in their defiance campaign. They were likely to focus on the plight of detainees — possibly with church services outside police stations and prisons. "People have, I think, graduated from wanting to just pass resolutions," he said.

The irrepressible Nobel prizewinner also accused Mrs Thatcher of a "gross moral dereliction" in her stance on terrorism.

Seemingly anxious to get off a broadside at Mrs Thatcher, he criticised her for contradictory attitudes towards South Africa's African National Congress and the conflict in Angola. Referring to Pretoria's backing for the Unita rebels in Angola, he said that Mrs Thatcher, "who is a great one on violence and terrorism, has said nothing

about the South African government supporting what is a terrorist organisation."

Mrs Thatcher had condemned the ANC as a terrorist organisation. "Why is an organisation (the ANC) which wants to get rid of a thoroughly undemocratic, thoroughly vicious government a terrorist organisation?" he demanded, "and one that tries to get rid of a government which is a popular government not so?"

He was dismissive of a possible visit by the Prime Minister — widely expected in the New Year. "She can come. To me it is an irrelevance. It does nothing unless it advances the cause of our liberation and helps to remove apartheid."

Asked if such a visit was not worthwhile if it would secure the release of Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Tutu said he had doubts if the ANC leader would want his release in present circumstances. "What is the point of Nelson being released when you have a state of emergency and he cannot participate?"

The Anglican leader was also critical of the Pope's recent tour of the subcontinent, for his blanket condemnation of political violence and criticism of boycotts. He said the Pope's position on violence was pacifist, which was in conflict with Roman Catholic teaching. "Otherwise how did people go to war against Hitler?"

Monday October 10 1988
THE GUARDIAN

SOUTHERN AFRICA PROJECT

Gay J. McDougall, Director

The October Elections in South Africa



* September 1988 *

Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law 1400 Eye Street, NW, Suite 400 ■ Washington, DC 20005 ■ (202) 371-1212

Background Paper

South Africa's upcoming municipal elections, on October 26th, have been touted by government officials to be the most important in the country's history, even more so than last year's general (whites only) election. The government boasts that for the first time in recent South African history, people of all racial groups will vote in a nation-wide election.

The electorate will choose members of local municipal governing bodies, often referred to as town councils. While it is true that people of all racial groups will vote, in true apartheid style, whites will vote only for white town councilors and blacks will vote only for councilors in the black townships.

The relatively modest status of the town councilors being elected, however, stands in sharp contrast to the much larger issues being put to the test in the upcoming election. The government has most at stake in the deeply troubled black townships where previous attempts to install local governing bodies brought the nation to the brink of revolution in late 1984 and 1985. Those local authorities were violently rejected by black township residents, with the result that the vast majority of them eventually collapsed. The government was forced to battle residents for control of the townships using maximum force and widespread detentions authorized under the State

of Emergency. With most opposition leaders now in jail and their organizations effectively banned, a relatively high voter turnout in the black townships would signal a defeat for the anti-apartheid groups and the re-establishment of the government's authority.

A high voter turnout for these municipal elections is also critical to the success of the government's proposed national negotiating forum; the centerpiece of its current vision of reform. The government hopes to build compliant black political institutions from the ground up, making the municipal level of government the primary building block of future black political structures at the regional and national levels. The semblance of democracy at the local level would create legitimacy for future higher-level institutions.

Finally, the municipal elections in the white areas will test the mandate of the Nationalist Party with regard to its proposed constitutional reforms and the Angolan/Namibian settlement talks. Weighing in the balance will also be control of the Regional Service Councils (RSCs). Among other functions, the RSCs control the flow of resources to the black township councils. The government hopes to provide enough financing to those councils to ensure their stability. The Conservative Party (the official

white opposition party in Parliament) has vowed to cut that flow of resources if they gain control of the RSCs. That would render a death blow to Botha's planned cooptation of the black township councils.

The Franchise - Who Will Vote

Black South Africans are designated to elect approximately 2,000 councilors to roughly 253 municipal bodies. But not every black South African will be eligible to vote. Millions of Blacks will be excluded.

Most of the exclusions are the consequence of the government's attempts to re-draw the map of South Africa along ethnic lines. Some 15 million Blacks considered to be residents of homelands will not vote, even though they constitute some of the largest urban townships in South Africa. Additionally, Africans living in 22 towns and settlements on Tribal Trust lands (areas earmarked for incorporation into homelands) will be denied a vote. Also excluded will be millions of black people designated as "squatters" because they live illegally in shantytowns around urban peripheries and thousands of black people who live in "white" residential areas, including black maids living in the backyards of their employers.

Securing black participation in the elections is so important, the South African government is expected to spend approximately R4.7 million (roughly U.S. \$2.4 million) on a public relations campaign to encourage black voting. The government has also proposed extending the voting over a three-day period and the widespread use of mail-in ballots to minimize possible intimidation at the polls. The government has made it a criminal offense to call for a boycott of the elections and has jailed opposition leaders known to oppose the elections.

Nevertheless, the boycott movement is gaining momentum. Before being severely restricted in February, 1988, the United Democratic Front, representing nearly 700 national and community

organizations of all races called for a boycott, stating that the elections "will not serve any meaningful role in bringing about justice, democracy and peace for the oppressed majority." The South African Council of Churches openly defied the prohibition against calling for a boycott by denouncing the elections as "a farce and a fraud" at its July, 1988 annual meeting. And on September 4th, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, from the pulpit of the Anglican Cathedral in Cape Town, called upon the country's 1.8 million Anglicans to boycott the segregated nation-wide elections. "I am aware of the penalties attaching to the call," Archbishop Tutu said. "I am not defying the government. I am obeying God." Calling for a boycott of the elections is an offense punishable by 10 years imprisonment or a fine of up to R20,000 (roughly U.S. \$10,000).

In the last municipal elections, a popularly-supported boycott resulted in a black voter turn-out of only 6% in Soweto and about 15% in other parts of the central industrial complex known as the Vaal Triangle.

Black Local Authorities - The Bloody Past

The Black Local Authorities Act (No. 102 of 1982) gave a broad range of responsibilities for the management of local affairs to newly-created city councils, township councils and town committees--all labeled "local authorities." In theory, the black townships were treated as self-sufficient units, capable of financing their own functions. In reality, they lacked a tax base or basic infrastructure from which to raise funds to meet even the most basic demands for services.

From the outset, the "local authorities" were viewed by township residents as apartheid structures; imposed by the government in an attempt to strengthen separate development and lacking the power to change conditions in the townships. Township councilors have been condemned as government col-

laborators. Some have used their positions to engage in corrupt practices. Most have used their positions to better their own life-styles.

Many local authorities tried to generate revenue by raising rents, despite an economic depression and rising unemployment. The rent hikes sparked open rebellion in township streets. Rent boycotts in at least 54 townships drained municipalities of as much as \$500 million. In some of the most violent protests, the councilors became live targets of anger from fellow township residents. Several were killed. Homes and businesses of councilors were petrol-bombed. Under pressure from campaigns against them, many councilors resigned. By mid-1985, only a few of the black local authorities established pursuant to the 1982 Act were still functioning.

Out of sheer desperation, township residents moved to take control of their own communities. "Civic associations", "action committees", and "street committees" became vehicles for community control of the townships. "Civics" played multiple roles. They organized rent and consumer boycotts, street committees and people's courts. When necessary, they even arranged for garbage collection.

The State's response was to deploy vast numbers of police and troops in the townships in an attempt to shore up the black local authorities. A State of Emergency was declared under the authority of which more than 40,000 people were detained without charge. The activities of the civic associations were labeled treasonous and township leaders were tried for treason and subversion of state authority.

The October municipal elections will test whether the State's heavy-handed actions have battered black voters into submission.

The New Apartheid Vision - The Great Indaba

Over the past several months, the South African government submitted to Parliament its latest set of political

reforms designed to placate African political aspirations while guarding white domination. The scheme is built on the framework established by the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act (No. 110 of 1983) which created three parallel, but separate, houses of Parliament for the white, Indian and "coloured" racial groups. The key concept is that all governmental responsibilities can be divided into two categories: "own affairs" and "general affairs". The white, "coloured" and Indian houses of Parliament legislate separately with respect to "own affairs", issues that bear solely on their respective racial communities. South Africa's residential segregation, mandated by The Group Areas Act, makes local government fall neatly into the category of "own affairs". All three houses of Parliament must agree on legislation affecting "general affairs", for example, defense, foreign affairs, finance, justice or internal state security. Conflicts between the houses on matters of general affairs are resolved by the binding decision of the President's Council, which is controlled by President Botha.

The current constitutional scheme excludes Africans from participation in Parliament. When the new constitution was enacted in 1983, African political participation was to be restricted to the homeland governments and township councils. The reaction to that exclusion erupted into the violence that shook South Africa in late 1984 and which has only recently quelled.

President Botha's current proposals seek to make the reforms more attractive to black voters through the creation of new political structures to incorporate Africans at higher levels of government. In July 1985, the government unveiled proposals for the creation of regional councils to represent black people living outside the "homelands." The regional councils appear to be an alternative to establishing a fourth house of Parliament for Africans and would give Africans a middle-tier role in

government for the first time. Their authority, however, would be limited to "own affairs", that is, they would have no authority outside of the townships. More importantly, they are to serve as a basis for participation (by appointment) in what President Botha has described as "a formal forum for deliberation": the National Council.

The National Council, soon to be dubbed the Great Indaba, is the centerpiece of Botha's reform scheme. The National Council is to serve as a multiracial constitutional convention that would devise a power-sharing formula that would extend to the African community limited political participation at the national level. In the interim, it may also consider existing and proposed legislation of "national interest."

Initially, the forum is to have a black majority -- 30 of 46 members. The minimum black representation would include the chief minister and a legislator from each of the six nominally self-governing, but not yet independent, homelands. Eighteen members will be chosen from the nine regional councils. At least four members will be drawn from the Indian and Coloured houses of Parliament. President Botha, however, is authorized at his discretion to enlarge the membership by nomination to a total of 59 and to participate himself as the state president. That would allow him to effectively control any vote.

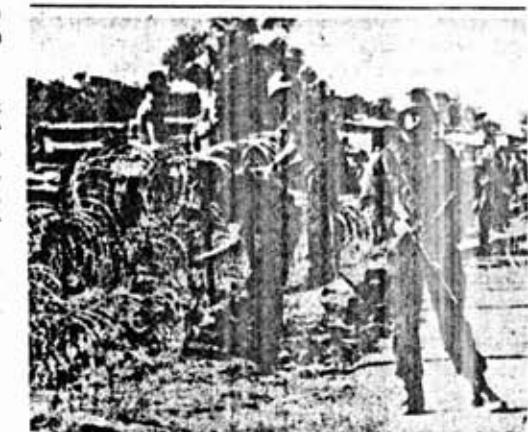
The National Council, as proposed, however, will not be a voting body. It will function solely in an advisory capacity to discuss proposed constitutional reforms and to make recommendations to the white dominated government. Its recommendations will be by consensus, not majority vote.

In addition to the regional councils and the National Council, President Botha has announced the possibility that he will appoint Africans to the Electoral College, which elects the President, to the President's Council and to the Cabinet.

At each level of Botha's reforms, however, there is an appearance of power-sharing which lacks substance.

The elements are consistent: 1) a fragmentation of the population into separate groups primarily along ethnic lines; 2) a preservation of the principle that the political rights of Africans who live in the bantustans must differ from the rights of those who do not; and 3) the limitation of black power to "own affairs" preserving for white decision-making those issues most critical to the national body politic as a whole.

In the words of Minister of Information Stoffel van der Merwe, the government hopes that its package of reforms will build "a critical mass of moderate support" to counterbalance the demands of more radical black leaders. The prospects for wide African participation in the National Council, however, appear to be bleak. To date, even Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi and other key black moderates have rejected the proposed council and refuse to participate unless Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners are released, the African National Congress is unbanned and the State of Emergency is lifted.



REPORT ON THE ARSON ATTACK ON THE OFFICES OF THE COMMUNITY RESOURCE AND INFORMATION CENTRE (CRIC).

The Community Resource and Information Center (Cric) is a progressive anti-apartheid research, information and training unit based in Johannesburg. Established in 1983, Cric services progressive trade unions, youth, student, womens and civic organisations.

On Monday, 4 April, 1988 at 3.00 a.m. the offices of the Community Resource and Information Center were attacked by several arsonists and set alight.

The fire raged through the open-plan office, destroying desks, chairs, irreplaceable papers, computer equipment, a photostating machine, and general office equipment and stationary.

The office is situated in the Highpoint building in central Hillbrow. It is on the first floor - beneath 29 stories of residential flats housing over 1 000 residents.

It is the third arson attack against Cric in less than two years. The first was at its previous offices in Freeway House in Braamfontein. This fire destroyed equipment and caused extensive damage to the interior of the building. Also in Freeway House were the offices of the Release Mandela Campaign, Saspu National, the Media and Resource Services, a printing press and others.

The second attack took place a mere four weeks ago. This attack was at the Highpoint office and was unsuccesful. The arsonists managed to enter the office at 11.00 p.m. on the 7th March. They managed to penetrate the security system at the Anglo American owned building. They did this, we believe, by entering the underground parking garage and using the stairs up four floors. At this time the stairs should not be accessible to the public, and are barred by a gate. However, the gate is faulty.

The office padlock was cut - and the lock taken. This prevents forensic experts from identifying the bolt cutters used by the arsonists. This shows the attackers as being intimately aware of police and forensic procedures.

The attackers apparently spent three hours in the office going through papers and ransacking the office. They constructed a pyramid of desks, papers and computer equipment on the floor in the center of the office, and doused it with petrol.

At approximately 2.10 a.m. cleaners heard a loud noise. When they went to investigate, they noticed the door was open and the lights of the office were on. The lights went out, and a white

man appeared briefly at the front door. He was about 1,75 meters, was of medium build and was wearing a beige-white garment.

Security guards alerted by the cleaners heard a loud bang as they rushed to the scene. On entering the offices they saw a small fire lit next to the pyre. It was apparently lit some distance from the petrol in order to give the arsonist enough time to escape. This he did by hurling a chair through a plate glass window and going through it onto an outside balcony. The intruder cut himself on the way out, leaving bloodstains on the curtain.

Guards chased the man, but he managed to escape over a rooftop in the darkness. Evidence suggests that his escape route was carefully planned.

In the meantime, the small fire was doused.

While the police were notified almost immediately, they only arrived on the scene 11 hours later. They had, in the meantime, been notified on four subsequent occasions.

The Cric staff, on advice from the fire brigade, dismantled the petrol soaked fire hazard. We also called an independent forensic scientist to assist with investigations.

We discovered three or four different sets of footprints, a set of fingerprints as well as the bloodstains. The petrol container was also found and taken for analysis.

All the information at our disposal was made available to the police who, up to the present, have made no further contact with us and whc appear to have achieved little in their investigations. They have, however, threatened to prosecute our independent forensic expert for obstructing them in the course of their investigations.

That this attack on the Cric offices failed, was purely due to the chance discovery of the perpetrators by the office cleaners. There can be little doubt that the arsonists were quite professional and knew exactly what they were doing. Indeed, evidence presented by the forensic scientist employed by Cric, indicates that the arson attempt followed the exact pattern of some other such attacks on the offices of trade unions and other anti-apartheid organisations in recent months. The same forensic expert was also involved ininvestigating and analysing some of these other attacks.

Less than a month later, on the 4th of April at 3.00 a.m., arsonists once again attacked the offices to finnish the job which had previously failed.

The pattern was virtually identical. Instead of entering the

building by the stairs, however, it appears that this time the office block was penetrated through a window which was broken into on the same level as the Cric office. Thereafter, the padlock on the Cric office door was cut through and once again removed, the door forced open and the petrol soaked pyramid of office furniture and papers was again constructed.

Undisturbed, the arsonists were able to lead a trail of petrol across the office floor to the door dousing the photostat machine along the way. This petrol fuse was then lit enabling the arsonists to make good their escape while the fire in the office sprang to life.

Once again the building security guards were quickly alerted and they rushed to the scene where they attempted to fight the fire with available fire extinguishers. The fire brigade was called and arrived shortly thereafter - accompanied by the police, who had apparently also been notified. The fire was then finally doused by the fire department.

Although there are reports that two white men were seen leaving the building shortly before the fire was discovered and that some men were chased by police in Hillbrow shortly thereafter, these reports have yet to be verified or confirmed by us.

The damage caused to the Cric offices has been conservatively estimated at being worth R100 000. This cost cannot compensate for the loss of original research material, packages and dossiers compiled by Cric researchers and staff.

(Included please find some photographs which give some indication of the extent of the damage to the offices and equipment)

These attacks on the offices of Cric do not take place in isolation. In the weeks following the June 1986 fire at Freeway House, several members of the Cric staff were detained without trial by the South African "security" police. Once again, in the week following the failed attack of 8th March 1988, two more members of the Cric staff were detained without trial under the government's repressive emergency regulations. This brings to five the number of Cric staff members currently being held in police custody. For some, their sentence without having been legally convicted of any crime has already exceeded two years.

The Cric Board of Trustees has also been hit by repression. Peter Mokaba, the President of the South African Youth Congress and Cric Trustee was detained days after the failed attack. Albertina Sisulu, also a Trustee, was banned and house arrested at that time.

Currently in police custody are Cric staffers:

* Moss Chikane, on trial in the 'Delmas' treason trial, has been

in police custody for over three years;

* Elleck Nchabaleng has been in detention for over 19 months. His father, Peter Nchabaleng, was UDF President until he died in police custody in 1986.

* Connie Hlatswayo, Cric Administrator, was detained on the first day of the current emergency. She has been in detention ever since. It is her second detention since she joined Cric in 1985.

* Mike Seloane, Cric researcher and Mamelodi Youth Organisation General Secretary, was detained the day after the attempted arson. This is his second detention in the current emergency. He was detained for over 9 months in 1986/ 87.

* Kgaogelo Lekgoro, Cric Youth researcher and Southern Transvaal Youth Congress Publicity Secretary, was detained on March 14. He has been in detention several times before, and his home has been petrol bombed on two separate occasions.

Other Cric staffers have also suffered state action in the past few years. Deacon Mathe, Cric youth co-ordinator and national organiser of the National Youth Organisation, was forced out of the country last year after continual harassment of him and his family. Stanza Bopape, also in the Cric Youth department, was detained for nearly a year. He was eventually put on trial under the Internal Security Act, but was acquitted.

Cric is just one of many progressive organisations subject to this kind of state and 'right wing' harassment. The staff believes it is because of their anti-apartheid activities that they are subject to both formal detentions and trials and anonymous attacks. It is clear the police perpetrate the formal repression. It is unfortunate that they are then the only ones who can be charged with the responsibility of catching the perpetrators of the informal violence. As the record shows, the police have arrested none of the anti-progressive criminals despite a clear pattern and plenty of evidence.





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