

SOUTH AFRICA: THE EXPLOSION MUST COME

Over the last two decades the political map of Africa has undergone enormous changes. Many peoples have thrown off the colonial yoke and won their political independence. Dozens of sovereign states have appeared on the map. Yet there still remains in the south of Africa an imperialist colonial complex that covers 4,500 thousand square kilometres and has a non-European population of some 32 million people. It is the largest colonial enclave in the world.

The Republic of South Africa, Rhodesia and the Portuguese colonies form this "devil's pact" or "unholy alliance", but the mainstay of the imperialist enclave is undoubtedly the Republic of South Africa. The Republic contains a mere six per cent of Africa's population and only four per cent of its area. But it produces about 25 per cent of Africa's gross output, 40 per cent of its industrial production, 75 per cent of its steel, more than 20 per cent of all types of power and 57 per cent of all electric power. More than a half of Africa's rail freightage and some 45 per cent of the continent's road vehicles are located in the Republic

of South Africa.¹ The country possesses a highly developed manufacturing industry, capable of producing the most varied commodities from agricultural machines to heavy armaments. Africa's largest White population lives here: 3,800 thousand people, 60 per cent of whom are Afrikaners.² These Whites enjoy complete political supremacy and have a powerful military machine at their disposal. Finally, South Africa is the country that receives the greatest backing from the major imperialist states. They are not in the least disconcerted by that special form of colonialism that has given rise to the regime of apartheid.

The special feature of South African colonialism lies in the "coexistence" within the same frontiers of "White" South Africa, a developed capitalist state that has now reached the imperialist stage, and "non-White" South Africa, a typical colony. In this sense apartheid can be said to possess the most despicable characteristics of both imperialism and colonialism.

When analysing the nature of South African imperialism, one must bear in mind that it is a variety of "local imperialism". This term was used by Lenin while he was describing British colonial settlements. He pointed out that local bourgeois groups were colonial exploiters twice over. They indulged in 1) "Great-Power imperialism (participation in the imperialism of Great Britain)". 2) "Local imperialism"—its "isolationism ... "exclusiveness".³ As though seeing far into the future, Lenin stressed that the principles underlying both tendencies were essentially the same.

The development of South African "local imperialism" and the emergence of its political superstructure in the form of the fascist apartheid regime cannot be divorced from the history of the National Party. The party grew out of Afrikaner nationalism, which has been carefully nurtured by the Afrikaner leadership. It has striven to provide the

¹ *Statistical Yearbook, 1968*, New York, 1969, pp. 349, 411-12, 585-86.

² The Afrikaners, or Boers, are the descendants of the first Dutch settlers. In their language (Afrikaans) the word *Afrikaner* simply means "African". The remaining 40 per cent are mainly of British origin. They are often referred to as "English-speaking" South Africans.

³ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 39, p. 532.

Boer farming and industrial bourgeoisie with conditions favourable to rapid development. Playing on the chauvinistic feelings of the Afrikaners, who have not forgotten their defeat in the Anglo-Boer war, the nationalists have spared no effort to gain the support of large sections of the White community. They have always been pathologically obsessed with race. While it is true that all the other parties and groupings that have been in power at one time or another also adhered to racist principles, none of them devised such a comprehensive and sophisticated system of racial discrimination as the Nationalists began to introduce in the form of apartheid the moment they achieved undivided control of the country in 1948.

In 1947, a year before the parliamentary elections, the Nationalists published their election manifesto, entitled "Race Relations Policy of the National Party". The document was put together by a group of professors at the University of Stellenbosch, notorious as the "brains trust" of Afrikaner nationalism, under the aegis of the racist secret society the Broederbond.⁴ The manifesto voiced the following basic principles:

"In general terms our policy envisages segregating the most important ethnic groups and subgroups in their own areas where every group will be enabled to develop into a self-sufficient unit.

"We endorse the general principle of the territorial segregation of the Bantu and the Whites....

"The Bantu in the urban areas should be regarded as migratory citizens not entitled to political or social rights equal to those of the Whites. The process of detribalisation should be arrested.

"The interests and employment prospects of the White workers in White areas will be protected."

"The choice before us," the manifesto declared, "is one of two divergent courses: either that of integration, which

⁴ *Broederbond* is the Afrikaans for "Band of Brothers". Formed in 1918, this secret society has become the main proponent of Afrikaner nationalist ideas. The ruling National Party is really a tool of the Broederbond. Since 1948 the posts of president and prime minister, as well as key positions in the state machinery, have only been held by leading members of the Broederbond.

would in the long run amount to national suicide on the part of the Whites, or that of apartheid...."⁵

Although triumphant in the 1948 parliamentary elections, the Nationalist Party was not prepared to implement the principles that it itself had proclaimed. That is why during their first year and half of office the Nationalists' racial legislation did not depart either in type or quantity from the norms of South African life. "Apartheid" remained a cheap election gimmick that could be gradually forgotten, as is often the case with election slogans in bourgeois countries.

In 1950, however, the country saw the first pieces of legislation to show that the Nationalists seriously intended to impart a real, practical meaning to the vague ideas of apartheid.

All apartheid legislation can be subdivided into two large categories: the first covers the laws and edicts that limit the social and economic rights of non-Whites, i.e., the norms that directly govern their economic exploitation; and the second category under this classification takes in the norms that restrict political and civil rights. It includes the laws and edicts that deprive non-Whites of any opportunity of protesting or struggling against their economic exploitation, and provides a legal basis for the conversion of four-fifths of the country's inhabitants into a vast labour pool, making them outcasts stripped of elementary human rights. All that remained was to select criteria for placing the inhabitants of the Union of South Africa into the various racial groups. This function is now performed by the Population Registration Act. Before the bill was introduced in parliament, Dr. Malan, the Prime Minister of the first Nationalist government, was quoted in *Die Burger* on February 21, 1950, as saying that "a national register is the basis of the whole policy of apartheid".⁶

The Population Registration Act stipulated that the population was to be broken down into three groups: Whites, Natives and Coloureds. Subsequently a separate group was established for Asians. Article 7 of the Act defines these

⁵ W. H. Vatcher, *White Laager*, New York, 1965, p. 136.

⁶ G. M. Carter, *The Politics of Inequality*, London, 1958, p. 81.

discriminatory types in terms of an obviously casuistic formula. It emerges that a Coloured is any person who is neither White nor Native. A Native is anyone who belongs, or is acknowledged as belonging, to any African native race or tribe. A White person is one who is "obviously white in appearance" or who is accepted as a member of the White race; but exceptions to this rule are persons who, although clearly white in appearance, are generally considered to be Coloureds.⁷

This "scientific" hocus-pocus provided the basis for a universal identification of racial affinity. A favourite method of the officials undertaking this classification was to stick a pencil into the subject's hair and make him bend down: if the pencil stayed in place, the person was African, but if it fell out, he was Coloured (they have finer hair!). However, when these "methods" proved inadequate, the officials started inspecting documents. This had thousands shaking in their shoes. As the old South African saying puts it: "Never try to find out who your ancestors were: you might become a Hottentot!" Even if one digs into the ancestry of those descended from the first Boer settlers, in some time-yellowed register one may stumble upon the fatal phrase "mother unknown". In other words, some distant forebear who was African or mulatto was quietly excluded from the family circle. Even if the skeleton has lain in the cupboard for a century, the Act of 1950 declares today's light-skinned descendants of such a union to be "Coloureds". In *The Anatomy of Apartheid* E. S. Sachs writes: "The tragedy of those people who had always considered themselves 'white' suddenly finding themselves classified as coloured is indescribable. There were many suicides, and disruption of families. In the same family very often some members are in appearance 'whiter' than the others; this has often been the case even between husband and wife."⁸

The next important piece of apartheid legislation was the Group Areas Act. It provides for the establishment of racial ghettos in which only a single racial group has the

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁸ E. S. Sachs, *The Anatomy of Apartheid*, London, 1965, p. 287.

right to own land and settle. The Act developed and particularised the line initiated in 1913 by the Native Land Act, which ushered in the principle of territorial segregation and the division of land-ownership rights between Europeans and Africans. This racist carve-up has produced the result that only 13.7 per cent of the country has been placed at the disposal of the 15 million Africans. The remaining 86.3 per cent, the most fertile land and the areas with the greatest mineral wealth, has been legally declared to be the preserve of the Whites.

When submitting the Group Areas Bill to parliament, the Nationalist leader Dr. Malan called it "the nucleus of the apartheid policy". Supplemented later by the Pass Law, the Separate Representation of Voters Act, the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act, the Native Urban Areas Act as amended in 1956, the Bantu Law Act of 1964 and many others, this Act deprived Africans and, later, other non-Whites of all or nearly all political and civil rights in "White" areas. The authorities enforce the Act systematically to deport various racial groups from areas that have been allotted to another racial group (usually Whites). Over the last few years alone the Group Areas Act has been invoked to drive about a million people from "White" areas. About a further four million Africans are liable to be resettled in the so-called "homelands" or Bantustans in the near future.⁹

The Suppression of Communism Act was one of a "package" of acts dating from 1950 that were to lay the foundations of apartheid. Supplemented later by the State Emergency Act and the Subversive Activities Act (better known as the "Sabotage Act"), it paved the way for turning the country into a police state. Having banned the South African Communist Party, the racist clique in power then outlawed the African National Congress and the Indian Congress, i.e., all the organisations that refused to compromise with apartheid.

The fact that the denial of political and civil rights to non-Whites (primarily Africans) is not an end in itself, but simply a means of economic exploitation, is amply

⁹ *Les Cahiers du Communisme*, Paris, March 1972.

illustrated by a series of prescriptive acts in the social and economic sphere. The apartheid legislation that exists on this level has no precedent in modern history.

The African's identity card, the so-called "reference book", alone is enough to arouse anger and indignation. It has special pages for observations made by employment exchanges, movement control and employers' signatures. The African is expected to have his identity card with him at all hours of the day and night. The slightest infringement of the Pass Law is punishable by a fine or arrest. Offenders are usually sent to work on farms. As a result, the tens of thousands of people who break the Pass Law have become a highly important source of cheap agricultural labour.

Noteworthy too is the Industrial Conciliation Act of 1956. When introducing it to parliament, the Nationalist Minister of Labour explained that it was a precautionary measure to protect the standard of living of South Africa's White workers: they were not to suffer as a result of proximity to another racial group which had a lower standard of living. The Native Labour Act of 1953 denied Africans the right to strike.

All non-Whites, and Africans in particular, are mercilessly exploited economically. The figures speak for themselves: the Whites, who make up less than 20 per cent of the population, receive 74 per cent of the national income. A White miner takes home an average 316 rand a month, but his African counterpart pockets only 18. In the gold mines the differential is even greater: 327 rand, as opposed to 16.¹⁰

The high level of exploitation is maintained in part by the system of migratory labour fostered by the restrictive laws of apartheid. Since the life of every African worker depends entirely on whether he will be allowed to live and work in some "White area", he has no say in choosing either the place or the type of work. The conditions are thus rife for capitalist exploitation on a prodigious scale. Racists also think that these conditions delay the formation of a highly organised proletariat among African workers.

¹⁰ *Les Cahiers du Communisme*, Paris, March 1972, p. 64.

The production relations that have been built up in the Republic are totally anomalous, and do not fit into the classical capitalist framework. The French journal *Les Cahiers du Communisme* points out that, as far as the African masses are concerned, there is no such thing as free labour, although this is normally a *sine qua non* for the development of capitalist production relations. This freedom is denied and at the same time many forms of forced labour have been preserved and are developing. The journal makes the point that, of course, free labour here means the purely legal right of the proletarian to sell his labour. After all, it is the possession of this right that distinguishes the proletarian from the slave, serf ... or the migrating worker in the Republic of South Africa who are denied this right. In addition, the existence and development of capitalism require that labour, like any other commodity, should be bought according to its value (or almost according to its value).¹¹

Nothing like this can be observed in the Republic of South Africa. From this point of view, apartheid is a system for exploiting labour whose renewal is not assured. This is not even considered, since the homelands always contain a huge army of landless and unemployed manpower. Thus it came about that over a period of many years forced labour and the rabid exploitation of the labour force temporarily supplied the South African ruling class with a gigantic accumulation of capital.

But a form of capitalism as perverted as this has its limits: the gradual running down of necessary manpower reserves makes the use of capital more difficult; the smallness of the home market retards the expansion of production; and labour productivity remains very low.

The country had been short of White workers now for a long time. Official circles in Pretoria acknowledge that, even if the whole White population were engaged in production, the annual deficit in skilled manpower would still run to some 12,000-13,000 men. Since the end of the sixties many sociologists, industrialists and chambers of commerce executives have stated that the shortage of skilled

¹¹ *Les Cahiers du Communisme*, Paris, March 1972.

workers is assuming frightening proportions and may affect the competitiveness of South Africa's whole economic system.¹²

Equally serious is the abnormal narrowness of South Africa's home market, caused by the poverty and low purchasing power of the 15 million Africans. Needless to say, no one at the top is thinking seriously in terms of altering the plight of the African population, and it is imagined that all problems will be solved by an export drive and the conquest of new markets, mainly in the free states of Africa. This, incidentally, is one of the hidden reasons for the Vorster Government's much-vaunted "new course", intended to "build bridges" with the continent's free countries.

Pretoria's "new course" in foreign trade remains controversial. Not all African capitalists have an interest in foreign trade expansion. Those who supply the home market consider this flirting with "foreign" Africans as an unnecessary luxury and a bad example which could, as they put it, have a negative effect on race relations in the Republic.

All this is taking place against the background of the collapse of apartheid's main contention. Time and experience have shown the absurdity of trying to herd the Africans into so-called Bantustans, thus ridding the "White" areas of them. The economy of "White" South Africa simply cannot survive without the hands of millions of Africans. Moreover, the Bantustans are unable to accommodate even one-half of the country's African population. Despite the Government's efforts, Africans escape from the Bantustans, since there is no work to be found there. Even official statistics are forced to admit that White areas are becoming "Blacker". The Stellenbosch academics produce alarmist screeds on the danger of a demographic "explosion", since Whites now form a dwindling proportion of the whole community.

As is usually the case, the objective difficulties acted as catalysts which stirred up and deepened the conflicts between different sections in the ruling party. During the second half of the sixties the supporters of the "pragmatic"

¹² *The Financial Times*, March 3, 1969.

approach within the National Party came to be called the *verlighte* ("enlightened") and their opponents the *verkramp* ("narrow-minded"). The latter adhere fanatically to the main dogmas of Afrikaner nationalism. In the autumn of 1969 the split that had long existed within the party culminated in the formation of a new party, the *Herstigste Nasionale Parti* (HNP), the "Regenerated" or "Reformed" Nationalist Party.¹³

Attempts are made in the West to depict Vorster and the whole ruling clique as being almost "liberal", comparing them with the extremists in the HNP. In fact, though, there has simply been a family quarrel in the racist camp. United in their wish to perpetuate the colonial oppression of non-Whites, different members of the Afrikaner elite disagree as to the ways and means of preserving *baasskap*, the rule of the White man. Incidentally, the opposition United Party has also spoken out in favour of *baasskap*. This party reflects the interests of the South African bourgeoisie mainly of British origin.

The internal contradictions of apartheid and strife among the Afrikaner elite are all factors that objectively assist the activities of the national liberation forces who are fighting the racist dictatorship. Nevertheless, the tasks confronting the South African patriots are hard enough. The Republic's ruling class is rich. It controls a powerful, well organised military and police force, and enjoys the support of both a sizeable section of the White population and the imperialist states of the West. There is one other feature which distinguishes the Republic of South Africa from the other countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, where the peoples struggled to drive out West European or North American colonialists. In those countries the liberation forces had to rid their territory of colonialists and their political administration, but did not have to crush an imperialist state machine as such. In South Africa the national liberation forces are obliged to destroy South African imperialism itself on its home ground.

The fight against the South African brand of fascism has welded together a united front of all progressive forces.

¹³ *The Cape Times*, October 27, 1969.

Communists have always been well to the fore. It was against them that the apartheid regime struck out first of all: the Suppression of Communism Act heads the list of restrictive and repressive legislation brought in by the Malan Government in 1950.

In June 1955 the National Congress met. It was the most representative gathering in South Africa's history. It was attended by the African National Congress, the South African Indian Congress, the Coloured People's Congress and the Congress of Democrats (the party of European opponents of apartheid). Three thousand delegates from the length and breadth of the country adopted the historic Freedom Charter, which has remained the programme of struggle for all democratic forces ever since. The Charter called for an end to apartheid and the establishment of a democratic state in South Africa in which power would belong to all who lived in it—both Black and White. While voicing the demand for the complete equality of the different national groups, the Charter also expressed general democratic objectives: the return of all national wealth to the people, the abolition of forced labour and the handing over of the land to those who work it. The Programme of the South African Communist Party, adopted in 1962, defines the principal aim of the national liberation revolution in South Africa to be "to establish an independent state of National Democracy in South Africa".¹⁴

Before the onset of the sixties progressive organisations in South Africa sought to repeal discriminatory laws and struggled to democratise the country's political life by entirely peaceful, non-violent methods. However, the bloody reprisals taken against Africans at Sharpeville and Lang, as well as numerous other crimes perpetrated by the apartheid regime, which unleashed a merciless wave of terror, convinced the patriots that guns speak louder than words against an enemy who knows only the language of force. Speaking at a meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in Moscow, John Marks, the Chairman of the South African Communist Party, said: "When the people was deprived of all legal rights, when a campaign of terror broke out, when tens of

¹⁴ *African Communists Speak*, Moscow, 1971, p. 145 in Russian).

thousands of patriots were thrown into prison and reprisals became an everyday occurrence, the masses concluded that there was no other way to freedom except by armed revolutionary struggle."¹⁵

On the night of December 16, 1961, when the racist clique was celebrating its national holiday to commemorate the Afrikaners' victory over the Zulus in the battle of Blood River in 1838, Johannesburg and Port Elizabeth were shaken by explosions. They heralded the birth of a new militant organisation, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation).¹⁶ A pamphlet distributed by the organisation stated that in the life of every nation there comes a moment when it has to choose between whether to submit or fight. The organisation was determined to fight, using all methods necessary to attain freedom and democracy. Thus the South African freedom-fighters openly declared that henceforth violence would be met with violence, force with force.

The full weight of the punitive apparatus descended on the underground fighters. The Subversive Activities Act (or Sabotage Act) was quickly passed. The penalties ranged from five years' imprisonment to death. The idea of "sabotage" is very broadly interpreted in South Africa: it covers "any unlawful act" committed for political ends, including writing slogans on walls and taking part in demonstrations and illegal strikes.

But in spite of cruel repression, power substations and transmission lines were blown up. A bomb exploded in one of the ministries in Pretoria, and in Durban the office of the local Nationalist paper *Die Nataller* was damaged.¹⁷ As in any struggle, success alternated with failure, but new fighters took the places of those arrested or killed.

In the summer of 1963 the police raided a farm in Rivonia, near Johannesburg, and seized Walter Silulu, Nelson Mandela, Gowan Mbeki, Lionel Bernstein and other leaders of the national liberation movement. The authorities were jubilant. The press carried sensational announcements:

¹⁵ *International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, Documents and Materials*, Moscow, 1969, p. 268 (in Russian).

¹⁶ *Sechaba*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1972.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Plot foiled! African National Congress, Communists and Umkhonto we Sizwe prepared armed rising! Plotters routed!

Nationalist newspapers demanded the death penalty for all those arrested. A clumsy indictment which contravened all basic legal norms was concocted in a tearing hurry. Biased as it was, even the court had to dismiss the case. The prosecution was given time to prepare a fresh indictment. In the end, the defendants at the "Rivonia trial" were given stiff sentences under the Suppression of Communism Act, even though most of them were not members of the Communist Party.

The accused were fortunate in having a good lawyer, Abraham Fisher. It was largely his skill that prevented the racists from sending their victims to the gallows. This man's amazing story is evidence that even the Afrikaner elite is not immune to the virus of revolution.

Abraham Fisher's ancestors came to South Africa more than 200 years ago. His grandfather was the President of the Orange Free State, and his father was its Chief Justice. Abraham was given a good education, and in the thirties he lectured in economics and law at Oxford. As befitted the scion of such distinguished Afrikaner stock, he made a "good match" and married the niece of "the" Field-Marshal Smuts, the old Boer commander and one of the founders of the Union, who had been the country's Prime Minister for many years. Fisher could easily have made his way to the upper reaches of the state hierarchy. Instead he preferred the hard road, fighting in the cause of communism.

While Umkhonto were persevering with their operations inside the country, giving the authorities much cause for concern, the organisation's high command was planning the second phase of the struggle. On the tenth anniversary of the founding of the African National Congress (ANC) the journal *Sechaba* reported that groups of Umkhonto fighters had made their way in secret to the friendly African countries, where they were now training for guerrilla warfare.¹⁸ In 1967 the ANC entered into an alliance with the Rhodesian patriots organisation, the Zimbabwe African People's Union

¹⁸ *Sechaba*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1972.

(ZAPU). Joint armed action by the partisans of South Africa and Rhodesia caused a real panic in racist headquarters in Pretoria and Salisbury.

South African Communists are playing their part in the military activities of Umkhonto we Sizwe. They have already proved their worth in battles with the forces of Vorster and Smith. Moreover, proceeding from the principles of Marxism-Leninism, the South African Communist Party (SACP) speaks out against rash, adventurist campaigns. All mass action, and even more so military action, must be meticulously planned, South African Communists make this point clear. It must also be appropriate to the objective situation, and start at the right time and in the right place. Although they are in the front line, Communists do not support the adventurist view that the incursion of armed guerrilla groups into South African territory will automatically spark off an uprising. The SACP emphasises that the men in the field are really performing a political function. Their action should organise the masses and rouse them to put up a fight on practical issues and voice their demands. Having carefully considered the question, a plenary session of the Central Committee of the SACP which was held in 1970 made a number of recommendations. In particular, it was said that the main military effort should begin in rural areas and be based there. At the same time there was a need for armed operations in towns.

As the anti-apartheid movement within the country grew in strength and size, so the criminal racist dictatorship increased the scale of its repression and stepped up measures to perpetuate its notorious baasskap. John Balthazar Vorster displayed particular talents in turning South Africa into a police state. During the Second World War he collaborated with the intelligence service of the Third Reich in planning a pro-nazi putsch in South Africa. Along with many other conspirators, Vorster was then arrested and spent some months behind the barbed wire of the Kofffontein concentration camp.

Combining the posts of Minister of Justice and Minister of Police in the Verwoerd Government, Vorster developed and improved the machinery of oppression. At his insistence, the police force was increased to 50,000 men by 1965. This was

supplemented by reserves of 20,000, and special police women's detachments.

The South African courts worked at such a pace that soon there were not enough prisons, whereupon Vorster drafted a law providing for house arrest for up to five years. People confined to their own flats are not allowed to see friends and relatives. Houses have become prisons. But the courts were unable to cope with the patriots and the hundreds of thousands of Africans who broke the numerous restrictive laws of apartheid. Then a law was drafted to bring in preventive detention: people could be put behind bars for up to six months without being charged.

After the death of Verwoerd, Vorster became head of the Government and again set about reorganising the political criminal investigation system. A Government decree established a special security force, BOSS (Bureau of State Security). General van den Berg, an old friend of Vorster's from his pro-nazi subversion days during the war, was appointed to take charge of BOSS. The Nationalist majority in Parliament amended the legislation, and the security force was given unique privileges. The publication or transmission of any information which BOSS judged to relate to matters of security was forbidden. The divulging of any facts about van den Berg's detainees was a crime punishable by a long term of imprisonment. Even the judicial authorities may be refused access to relevant information if BOSS considers it a threat to its own interests. The exclusiveness of BOSS's position in the state apparatus is underlined by the fact that its head is answerable directly to the prime minister.

Ex-SS butchers who fled after the defeat of nazi Germany found a use for their talents under van den Berg's wing. The names of the director of BOSS, the head of the police security service General Krüger, the Chief Commissioner of Police Jubert and the chief police investigator Swanepoel have a ring in South Africa today that is as ominous as the names of Himmler, Heydrich, Kaltenbrunner and other SS and Gestapo men once were in Europe.

The journal *Sechaba* publishes the accounts of people who have managed to escape from apartheid torture-chambers. Their words convey a frightening picture of the tortures

employed by the South African Gestapo. One of the escapees, named Mbele, said that another prisoner, Cushela, was tortured for days on end, so much so that he asked to be shot. Police Captain Baker, to whom Cushela eventually said that he could not stand any more torture and that his head was splitting with the pain, replied mockingly: "The cause of your headache is that you do not want to tell the truth." Shortly afterwards Cushela was tortured to death.¹⁹

According to eye-witness accounts, van den Berg's prisoners are beaten and tortured not only by warders, but also by police and security service chiefs. The chief police investigator Colonel Swanepoel has acquired particular notoriety for his refined techniques. A former prisoner named Zimbabwe told how, under Swanepoel's supervision, he was tortured with an electric current and a needle was jabbed into his private parts. For many months after this the unfortunate man was unable to return to normal: "I could not sleep.... In very few moments I involuntarily jumped ... I felt as if the machine was still being used."²⁰

At the end of 1971 the country was swept by a wave of raids and arrests. Police agents tore into the flats of university professors, priests and the families of prominent members of the national liberation movement who were serving sentences in prisons and concentration camps. One of those arrested was a schoolteacher called Ahmed Timol. Three days later the authorities announced that he had committed suicide by throwing himself through the window of an interview room on the 10th floor of the Johannesburg police headquarters.

Shortly after this "suicide" the British press published an interview with Donald Morton, a Methodist minister who had fled South Africa fearing arrest. He said that he had received reliable information to the effect that the doctor who had performed the post-mortem on Ahmed Timol observed that his fingernails had been torn out, that his right eye had been knocked out and that he had suffered many other mutilations.

At the beginning of June 1972 foreign news agency reports

from South Africa began to read like accounts from a theatre of military operations. Spine-chilling pictures supplemented the descriptions of bloody police reprisals against those taking part in anti-Government rallies and demonstrations. There was one substantially new feature in the events: for the first time in the Republic's history White citizens fell victim to the mass terror of the racist dictatorship.

As often happens, it all seemed to begin with particular events. At the beginning of May 1972 the students of the African University of Toerfloop went on strike. They were protesting against the expulsion of the chairman of their students' council, A. Tiro, and against the whole unfair, discriminatory system of education for Africans. Non-Whites come in for rough treatment in South Africa. An order from Pretoria expelled all the 1,200 students, and the University of Toerfloop was closed.²¹

The authorities considered that to be the end of the matter. But it turned out that the main events were yet to happen. The National Union of South African Students, which embraces the White English-language universities, responded to the call of the African students and decided to show their solidarity by mounting a protest campaign at the beginning of June. This resulted in bloody reprisals against the peaceful student demonstrators.

Uniformed police and plain-clothes men charged into the groups of students, hitting out recklessly with their truncheons and half-killing passers-by. The Nationalist Party maintains that its nationalism is of a Christian type. But the unrestrained guardians of the regime rushed into churches and cathedrals, where their victims were seeking refuge, and continued with their excesses. Many uniformed policemen took the precaution of removing their number badges, so as to avoid identification. In Capetown, for example, such an incident took place in St. George's Cathedral, not far from the Parliament building. The Johannesburg *Sunday Times* wrote that the action of the authorities differed little from the well-known events at Sharpeville, and that police conduct was comparable with the wild outbursts

¹⁹ *Sechaba*, Vol. 5, No. 11, 1971, p. 2,

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3,

²¹ *Rand Daily Mail*, Johannesburg, June 6, 1972,

of the storm-troopers and brown shirts in nazi Germany.

In reply to the explosion of indignation throughout the country, Prime Minister Vorster hastened to lay the blame at the door of mythical "foreign agitators". Meetings and demonstrations were banned, but the ban was ineffective. Moreover, the scope of the protest movement and its slogans widened considerably. Factory and office workers, not just students, now joined in anti-apartheid demonstrations. For example, more than 10,000 people assembled on June 11 in the main square of Johannesburg. They carried placards and banners with the slogans "Down with apartheid!" and "Free the workers!"

The upsurge of student protests put an end to many of the myths that the Nationalists had been spreading for years. They claimed to have brought peace and order, but the country was yet again in a state of crisis. The Nationalists said that apartheid was supported by the majority of White citizens; but it was the White students who initiated the massive protests of summer 1972, and they were later joined by White factory and office workers. The Nationalists persist in their claim to represent all Afrikaners, but a statement condemning police atrocities was signed by 1,000 students at the University of Stellenbosch, the intellectual centre and "brains trust" of Afrikaner nationalism.

The point is that an ever growing number of White South Africans are beginning to realise that apartheid acts against their interests too, and not just against those of the Africans and Coloureds. The scales are falling from the eyes of people from various social strata, and they can see that apartheid has no future and that it simply means a denial of elementary democratic rights, terror and repression against all who disagree with Government policy, irrespective of the colour of their skin.

The international community does not accept the inhuman, barbaric system of racial persecution practised in South Africa. The colonialism and racism that flourish in the land of apartheid are in flagrant violation of both the letter and the spirit of the United Nations Charter. The Charter proclaims the right of peoples to self-determination, and outlaw colonialism. These progressive statutes with their

democratic and anti-colonial content were buttressed by the Declaration on Granting Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, adopted in 1960 by the UN General Assembly at the suggestion of the Soviet Union.†

South African racism is a question that is always on the agenda of the General Assembly sessions, meetings of the Security Council and other UN bodies. *Action Against Apartheid*, published by UNO headquarters, gives a long list of UN resolutions on South Africa, starting with the first session of the General Assembly, when the question was included in the agenda at the suggestion of the delegation from India.²² At the end of 1972 the 26th session of the General Assembly again adopted a resolution stressing that the inhuman and aggressive policy of apartheid practised by the Government of the Republic of South Africa creates a dangerous and potentially explosive situation in South Africa. Particularly significant was the holding in 1972 of a session of the Security Council in the headquarters of the Organisation of African Unity in Addis Ababa. It bore witness to the concern felt by mankind over the situation that has developed in the Republic of South Africa and the whole of South Africa.

The adoption by the 28th session of the UN General Assembly of the Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid has tremendous political significance. Drawn up at the instigation of the Soviet Union, the Convention defines apartheid as a crime against humanity, violating the principles of international law and posing a serious threat to international security and peace. The Convention lists the inhuman acts that result from the policy and practice of apartheid, and stipulates the criminal liability of persons, members of organisations, and state bodies and representatives committing these acts. The states that are signatories to the Convention are pledged to take legislative and other measures to combat the crime of apartheid and punish persons guilty of perpetrating it.

The same session of the UN General Assembly declared 1973-1983 to be the Decade for Action to Combat

²² *Action Against Apartheid*, United Nations, New York, OPI/364-08382, May 1969.

Racism and Racial Discrimination. In order to work out practical measures to implement the resolutions adopted, it was decided to call a World Conference on the struggle against racism and racial discrimination not later than 1978.

There is no doubt that one might today be talking about the apartheid system in the past tense, were it not for the broad help and support that the racists receive from the leading imperialist powers. Every year sees a growth in investment from Britain, the USA, the Federal Republic of Germany and Japan.... The invested capital yields colossal profits thanks to the merciless exploitation of the labour of millions of Africans. But it is not only economic benefit that impels the Western powers to look after South Africa and the other members of the "unholy alliance". From the international imperialist point of view, the White colonial bloc on the southern tip of Africa is an important strategic bridgehead and base from which to attack the free African states. That is why in the West there is so much zealous support for the idea of a "dialogue" between the Republic of South Africa and the free states of the continent. Through the agency of their South African "wards" the international imperialist forces would like to use neo-colonial methods to bring off a sort of political reconquest, a restoration "on the quiet" of pro-imperialist regimes in free Africa.

In the meantime Britain, the USA and other imperialist states continue to flout the resolutions of the various United Nations bodies concerning the elimination of apartheid: they deliver arms to the racists and sabotage the adoption of any really effective measures against the criminal racist regime.

And yet the days of the bloody dictatorship are numbered. The explosion that will destroy apartheid is inevitable. No one will help the ruling clique in Pretoria to perpetuate its monstrous system of national and social persecution. The peoples of South Africa will rid their country of the stigma of racism.