



Umbutho Wamalungelo Obuntu CIVIL RIGHTS LEAGUE Burgerregtevereniging

Vol. 32 No. 6 NEWSLETTER MARCH 1986

TRIBUTES TO BRIAN BISHOP

The ANC, SWAPO, Catholic bishops of Cape Town and Oudtshoorn, and the UDF paid tribute to the League's Vice-Chairman, Brian Bishop, at a requiem mass in his honour attended by over 1 000 mourners at St Mary's Cathedral in Cape Town.

Sir Richard Luyt delivered an eloquent tribute on behalf of the League.

On behalf of the League and its Committee, Noelle Cox writes:

For all of us on the committee of the Civil Rights League of which he was first chairman and later vice-chairman, Brian Bishop epitomised everything needed in one fighting for the cause of civil liberty in South Africa today.

He had real empathy with the oppressed, and enjoyed the

trust, the love and the friendship of so many black brothers. His energy and vitality seemed endless and at times he could be brazen in his defiance of the authorities as he strove to bring the evils of the Apartheid regime into the revealing light of day.

He was a bridge-builder, courageous even possibly to the point of foolhardiness as regards his personal safety. His tragic and untimely death will be deeply mourned by those of all colours and races who value a man or woman for his or her intrinsic worth.

We on the committee feel his loss sorely, and we send our love and heartfelt sympathy to his equally dedicated and courageous wife Di. We trust that she will soon be sufficiently recovered physically to continue the fight for justice which Brian held so dear.

Bishop's Last Speech

Brian Bishop delivered his last public speech on Christmas Day 1985 in the Buitenkant Street Methodist Church.

FAFOD, the Friends and Families of Detainees, organised a special service for detainees. Brian spoke on behalf of the League:

"In angry protest 2 000 Capetonians attended a meeting at the City Hall in September 1948, and the Civil Rights League was formed.

Thirty-seven years later we see that the worst fears of the

(To Page 2)

(Continued from Page 1...)

league's founders have come true. South Africa is living in a nightmare on the edge of civil war. Civilized standards have been abandoned as the N.P. fights ruthlessly to stay in power.

But the ideals of thirty-seven years ago are still alive. We may be barred from the City Hall but we are gathered here; and if they bar these gatherings we shall meet somewhere else.

We are determined to institute justice and civilization and peace in our country as the government is determined to rule

by violence and fear. and we shall win, because our cause is just.

One of the Government's main weapons is detention without trial, a contradiction to the basic principles of civilization. The Civil Rights League re-dedicates itself to the fight against this evil. We shall expose its ugliness in every forum. We shall raise our voice so loudly that victims will know that although they are confined in solitude, they are near to us as part of a proud, caring and loving family, whose primary objective is their liberation.

War crimes fuel SPIRAL of VIOLENCE

League editorial

A chronology

1 Parcel bomb in Lusaka Post Office blows off left arm, and several fingers from right hand of ANC worker Paul Lobatsi Molele (CAPE TIMES, 14 December 1985)

2 Six killed and more wounded by A.N.C. landmine in northern Transvaal. (CAPE TIMES, 17 December 1985)

3 Six people shot by black camouflage cream-painted, Afrikaans-speaking white assassins at Maseru Party. (CAPE TIMES, 21 December 1985)

4 Five killed, sixty one wounded by bomb in Amanzimtoti shopping centre. (CAPE TIMES, 24 December 1985)

COMMENT

The Civil Rights League committee welcomes two commitments given by the ANC in Mr Oliver Tambo's statement of early January 1986, the first the SA Government permitted to be published in a quarter of a century.

First, Mr Tambo's statement that the ANC respects that a variety of political parties exist and will arise, is the most explicit commitment to date of the ANC to accept a multi-party state in South Africa under majority rule.

(Continued on Page 3)

(Continued from Page 2)

The League supports freedom of association and organisation, and feels that a constitution permitting competing political parties is a prerequisite for democracy.

Second, Mr Tambo's reiterated that it is against ANC policy to bomb civilian targets such as supermarkets, schools and cinemas. The ANC executive repudiated the bombing of Amanzimtoti supermarket, during shopping hours, in Natal.

The League notes that in November 1980, at the urging of the International Red Cross, the ANC became a signatory to Protocol One of the Geneva Convention. This binds it to refrain from attacks on civilian targets, and to treat captured South African soldiers as POWs.

The Civil Rights League urges both the Government and

insurgents to adhere to Geneva Conventions.

This ensures the right to life, and other human rights, of members of the public. It also benefits both sides.

The League urges the Government to concede POW treatment for captured insurgents. Since this is of course conditional on the insurgents concerned having themselves adhered to the Geneva Convention, this is an incentive to the underground to refrain from war crimes.

The Government has once half-conceded this principle. It seized SWAPO members at Cassinga in Angola in 1978. The SADF then held them for about seven years near Mariental in what was, to most intents and purposes, a POW-type camp, prior to their release.

Report to members

Committee News

The Chair has the pleasure of paying tribute to numerous committee members for their hard work:

Barbara Grieve and Noel Cox, the Cleminshaws and the Cornells, and other committee members, laboured to ensure the success of the catering and other arrangements of the AGM.

The heaviest burden falls on the League's honorary secretary and treasurer towards the close of a year and start of the next. Bea and Doug Cornell rushed to fold and post the post-AGM Newsletter before departing on their Xmas holiday.

January sees the honorary treasurer soldiering through the annual renewal of membership fees.

This is the first year-end in thirty-eight years that the League's founding spirit and first secretary, Maggie Rodger, is able to take a hard-earned rest, and watch the breakers murmuring over the Glencairn sands!

PUBLIC STATEMENTS & LOBBYING:

The League's press releases are sometimes unpublished, or only partly published, or accepted by some newspapers, but not others, around the country. The Newsletter briefly summarises these, to inform members on what your League committee attempted.

(Continued on Page 4)

(Continued from Page 3)

Dot Cleminshaw, committee member, published letters in the Cape Town newspapers protesting against the banning of released detainees such as Abdulla Omar (FCCA) and Trevor Manuel (UDF), and querying the efficacy of judges visits to detainees.

She asked how frequently judges could afford the time to visit numerous detainees held in distant platteland and Karroo police station cells; and how the public could be informed of what the judges reported.

The Chair, Keith Gottschalk, sent to eight newspapers a letter expressing concern about his fellow -detainees, including Congregationalist and Lutheran clergy. In another letter, he called for the release of all detainees and political prisoners.

The League noted that as of August 1985, Nelson Mandela had been incarcerated for 23 years. The other Rivonia accused, had been imprisoned for 22 years, including the seventy year old Walter Sisulu, and Govan Mbeki, about 74 years old.

The Chair sent the CAPE TIMES a lengthy comment on a series of articles by Willem Steenkamp proposing police reforms.

The League's press release on the deaths of the Vice-Chair Brian Bishop, and member and MPC Molly Blackburn read:

"Molly Blackburn and Brian Bishop fought to the end for human rights in those parts of South Africa where the costs of opposing apartheid include death.

"The numberless victims of state harassment, assault and shooting they aided recall their concern. Political workers of their calibre will be missed in a free South Africa.

"The Civil Rights League salutes them. We pledge condolences and support to Di Bishop and all other bereaved, and commit the League to carry on their struggle for human rights for all South Africans."

TRIBUTE TO LEAGUE VETERANS

The League pays tribute to some of its founding fathers, and founding mothers, Barbara Grieve, Mary Livingstone & Oscar Wolheim who have stepped down from the Committee after service since the League's inception in 1948. They remain valued members of the CRL.

Writing a tribute doing justice to Dr Oscar Wolheim's numerous public careers would be an onerous biographic task.

His public service includes being:

- * A doctor of music, and Headmaster of one of the last racially integrated schools in the epoch of tightening school segregation during the 1930s;

- * Warden of SHAWCO for several decades;

- * Chair of the Cape Peninsula Fire Protection Committee during his "retirement";

- * Member of the Cape Provincial Council representing voters classified "Coloured" from 1966, and member of the Liberal Party and, later, Progressive Party;

- * founder of the Civil Rights League.

Without lengthy historical research, it still remains possible to say to Oscar Wolheim, Barbara Grieve and Mary Livingstone: thank you for all you have done for the League.

And for all you have done for South Africa and her people in some many different organizations.

Working for a just peace

The END CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN - to which the League is affiliated - writes:

We are embarking on a national campaign under the banner "Working for a Just Peace".

The ECC seeks to show that there are forms of national service which contribute to the building of peace and a better society, rather than fighting in a war against fellow South Africans.

We aim to involve all

interested in CONSTRUCTION NOT CONSCRIPTION through projects which will take place over a three week period in April. These include enviromental work, clearing a playground, building a cycle track, renovating 'vagrant' shelters and planting low cost vegetable plots.

As an ECC affiliate, the Civil Rights League sends a representative to participate in ECC planning and decision-making meetings. All members are asked to diarise and support the following forthcoming events.

CALENDAR

<p><u>THURSDAY 13 MARCH - 8 pm</u></p> <p>Open Forum Meeting. About the campaign. Why we are launching it; what it involves.</p> <p>Congregational Church Hall RONDEBOSCH</p>	<p><u>SATURDAY 5 APRIL - 9-30 am - 3 pm</u></p> <p><u>E.C.C. FAIR</u></p> <p>Stalls, games, music, creche. Videos for young and old. Come and browse, buy, and find out more about ECC, our work and our other affiliate organisations.</p> <p>WATCH FOR POSTERS FOR VENUE</p>
<p><u>TUESDAY 1 APRIL - 8 pm</u></p> <p><u>Projects Meeting</u></p> <p>How <u>you</u> can get actively involved in "Working for a Just Peace"</p> <p>Congregational Church Hall RONDEBOSCH</p>	<p><u>MONDAY 21 APRIL - 8 pm</u></p> <p><u>Meeting to close campaign</u></p> <p>St Thomas' Church Hall RONDEBOSCH</p>

PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT THESE EVENTS

Contact the E.C.C. office - Cor. Bowden & Main Roads, Observatory - (Telephone 479-170) between 10 am and 2 pm, with any donations for the Fair - RUMMAGE - BOOKS - WHITE ELEPHANT ITEMS.

Any League member who is prepared to help run stalls is requested to please contact the Civil Rights League Secretary - Tel: 693-510.

TORTURE DEBATE CONTINUES

Dr Wendy Orr submitted to the Supreme Court of the eastern Cape 93 more affidavits from detainees describing how the Special Branch allegedly tortured them. This included one from Dennis Neer, General Secretary of the Motor Assembly and Components Workers' Union of South Africa.

Mr Louis le Grange, Minister of Law and Order, claimed that "only" 138 detainees had complained of assault. (Cape

Times 14 December 1985)

The Police arrested an eight year old child, Amos Khubheka. His father noticed "a huge bruise" in the centre of his forehead. He was crying. The police refused to release him into the custody of his parents.

The Middleburg Magistrate, before whom the eight year old was charged with "intimidation", refused him bail. (WEEKLY MAIL 7 Feb 1986)

LEAGUE PROTESTS R.S.C.

The Civil Rights League urges members to write to their local authority and to newspapers protesting against the Government's gerrymandering with Regional Service Councils. The R.S.C.'s force city councils to work with precisely the Coloured Management Committees and African Community Councils so spectacularly rejected by the majority of people.

LEAGUE HOUSEKEEPING - FINANCIAL REPORT -

The Financial Report for the year ended 30 June 1985 was presented by the Honorary Treasurer at the November AGM and tabled for the scrutiny of members.

League expenditure, mostly on printing and secretarial expenses, was R 2 442. Income, mostly from membership subscriptions was R 2 596.

The auditors, Pim Goldby, certified that your League's financial documentation fairly presented the financial position of the League, and was in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

TWO MONTHS OVERDUE

Membership fees fell due for renewal on 1 January 1986. The League thanks over one hundred of our members for promptly renewing. A gold star on your receipt is the League's "thank you" for becoming a donor member.

MEMBERSHIP FEES MINIMA

Donor Membership: at least R20
Ordinary Membership: at least R7
Pensioner Membership* at least R2
(* including pensioners and other members of limited means, students, unwaged and low-waged members.)

Overseas airmail subscription to the newsletter, with rising postage, is at least R12 per year. Rates obtainable on application to the secretary.

Please post your membership renewal fees now to:

The Secretary
Civil Rights League
P.O. Box 394
CLAREMONT
7735

Phone: (021) 693-510 - (Afternoons).

CIVIL RIGHTS LEAGUE

✉ P.O. Box 394 • CLAREMONT • 7735 • ☎ Telephone: (021)693-510