

PC11/5/2/5/67



P.O. Box 71,
Hilton.

26th August, 1976.

The Editor,

Sir,

Medder B, the old mine complex, is back in use again. At the time of Sharpeville this was where all sorts of people were detained without trial. Sixteen years later it is filling up again, with people detained without trial. If detention without trial failed to squash opposition to its policies sixteen years ago, what on earth makes the Government think it will now ?

Since 1960 hundreds, if not thousands, of opponents of Nationalist policy have been detained or banned, Hardly a year has passed without some new security law, more drastic than the last, being put on the Statute Book. It is hard to recall any time, since Sharpeville, when at least one political trial has not been on the go. Each year, since then, defence expenditure has rocketed.

To what end has all this been ? What security has it brought to White South Africa, and to Nationalist Afrikanerdom ? None at all that I can see. In the outside world, in spite of nearly thirty years of propaganda , apartheid is more detested than ever. At home, after nearly a generation's experience of having Nationalist policy imposed, by the full might of an authoritarian state, first on their parents, and then on themselves, its rejection by young Black South Africans appears to be complete. Who in his right mind imagines that this attitude of the world and young Black South Africans will ever change now?

All the vast security apparatus Mr. Kruger and his predecessors have erected since 1948 hasn't helped them at all. It certainly has not brought their supporters security. There is only one way in which that will be achieved. It is by talking to the very people who are being detained today, and others, in gaol and out, who have opposed apartheid for years. With them the Nationalists can still work out a secure future for themselves and their children, but, without them, they never will.

Detaining and silencing your opponents is not only totally objectionable, it is also highly dangerous, not least for those who do it. It fosters the illusion that all is well in the world when, in fact, it may not be. One had only to read the things the Nationalists were saying the day before Sewete first exploded to see how little they now know about what goes on around them.

Instead of locking up Black leaders ~~isfixxxxxright~~ Mr. Verster should be sitting down with them and listening to what they have to say. If he cannot bring himself to do that soon, he, and nobody else, will be condemning us all, Black and White, to that future which he ^{rightly} regards as too ghastly to contemplate.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Brown.