

seeds of its own violent destruction".

Violence today in South Africa is the arbitrary arrest of a person and his indefinite detention in solitary incommunicado, for the purpose of endless interrogation. Violence is punishment without trial where the Minister is policeman, prosecutor and judge and the person punished cannot even be heard or know the charges against him. Violence is a system of informers and arbitrary restrictions where the individual is unsafe and unsure of his actions or his future. Violence is the refusal to educate all sections of the population to the best of their ability. Violence is the forcible removal of persons from their homes and the breaking up of family life. Violence is the failure to provide sufficient medical care and food and allowing children, and men and women to die of starvation or preventable diseases. Violence is the regimentation of people and limiting their right to work, play, travel and live where they will.

Truth

This is the truth about our society today. But it is no longer sufficient to say, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free", for knowing these truths will free us only from the power of propaganda, illusion and the will to self-deception. We have to act on the truth to obtain justice and a free society. We can act as a university, we can act in the smaller groups that we choose to belong to, we can act in our professional, religious and cultural organisations, and in our work

situations. But first and foremost we must act as individuals.

To those who fear change we must show courage. To those who resist change we must show determination. We must remain firm in our resolve to bring about real and lasting change. We must at all times act with dignity but with decision. If we persevere we will succeed, And we will establish a just and free society for all.

No more marches?

There can be no doubt that the General Law Further Amendment Act is a further diminishment of the right to peaceful protest. Clause 15 removes from local authorities the power to decide whether or not protest marches can be held and vests this power in a magistrate. While it has in the past been possible for an organisation wishing to hold a protest march to make its representations to the local authority, there is now no provision made for such an approach. In fact, even if the local authority grants permission, this has to be ratified by a magistrate.

In any democratic country the rights of citizens to voice their public protest are jealously guarded. The authorities recognise their duty to protect freedom of speech and expression and to ensure the safety of those taking part in peaceful protest. The right to criticise is a fundamental ingredient of democracy and protest is an expression of that criticism.

In this country, however, criticism has been equated with un-South Africanism and protest with disloyalty. Over the years there has been a series of restrictions placed on protest by legislation and an increasing reluctance on the part of the police to afford the protection which it is their duty to provide.

The debate in Parliament has once again indicated that the Government has no interest in maintaining due democratic process and that the official opposition is no longer able to recognise this.

The real issue is not in whom the power is vested. The clause is a further violation of democratic principle and a diminishment of the right to protest. It is a sad reflection on political life in this country that Mrs. Suzman was the only Member to condemn this clause. It is a matter for shame that not a single member of Parliament supported her.

(Transvaal Region of the Black Sash)

