

Billy Nair after the British Consulate sit-in which focussed attention on detention without trial. The government's new strategy now is detention with trial - through treason charges.

Treason for patriots

The charge of high treason brought against Dr. Essop Jassat, Cassim Saloojee and 14 other NIC and UDF officials is an attempt to crush open protest, to disorganise the democratic movement and to scare our people into quiet submission.

At a time when the government is presenting a reformist image to the international community, the treason trial has clearly exposed the government's true intention. Reform is merely a velvet glove covering the iron fist of repression.

The arbitrary detention of our leaders on the eve of the tricameral election and the subsequent charge of treason is an indication of a government on the defensive. This desperate act by the government signifies the growing strength of the democratic movement against apartheid.

Our leaders were charged with high treason at a time when the Government was under increasing pressure internationally to abandon arbitrary bannings and detentions without trial.

The consulate sit-in by our leaders was successful in exposing detention without trial.

Consequently the government has devised a new strategy to achieve the same ends. It has decided to charge

its political opponents, but it has firmly refused bail. In other words, the government has abandoned detention without trial for detention with trial.

The object of the treason trial is to immobilise UDF and Congress leadership for a lengthy period while the government conducts a very slow trial.

The Attorney General of Natal (a government employee) has steadfastly refused bail. Our leaders have already spent seven months in prison with the actual trial date set only for May 30.

This new strategy of detention with trial exposed the clear manipulation of the law by the government. No amount of the due process of law can bring about justice. The entire system of apartheid laws are unjust. They aim to maintain an unjust system.

In the eyes of the majority of South Africans their leaders have committed no crime. They have all been part of the just struggle for democracy. We can only warn the government that by narrowing the space for legitimate protest they are driving our country to greater conflict and bloodshed.

We stand by our leaders and demand their unconditional release.

ORGANISE OR STARVE

All over the country, more and more people are facing hardship and insecurity. Every day people are losing their jobs.

To make matters worse, the price of goods and services, have soared in recent months.

The drought and high transport costs are not the only reasons for these increases. White farmers, on whom the government is dependent for political support, and big food companies, hungry for profits, are insisting on these increases.

And the government has refused to increase food subsidies which are needed to keep prices down.

Bus and train fares, and the price of petrol have also risen. And in many parts of the country, our people have been faced with increases in rent and electricity.

Why is the cost of living rising?

In the kind of economic system we have in South Africa — the big farms, factories and mines are owned and run by a minority of the population. Their main interest is in the profit they can get from the work of others. In their search for profits, prices are increased.

To increase the amount of goods produced, more and more use is made of expensive machines. The cost of these machines is passed onto the consumer pushing prices up even further. And since machines replace labour, many people lose their jobs. When people are too poor to buy the goods produced by industry, profits fall and more people are laid off.

This is why, even when companies are making high profits, there are not enough jobs, and the basic essentials of life — food, clothing and shelter — are not available at prices we can afford.

There are other reasons why the economy is in a mess. The low value of the rand, poor gold sales and the drought have all contributed.

But this is only part of the



Controlled by the government, silent on township unrest and treason charges, the MP's use the peoples' money to play politics. We demand their resignation.



story — most of the problems we face today result from the government's mismanagement of our money. We as taxpayers, are being forced to bear the burden of the high cost of apartheid:

- The new constitution has cost the country a fortune. R53,7 million was spent on new buildings for the tricameral parliament. This is to say nothing of what was spent of official residences, salaries, motor cars, body guards and other perks for Indian and coloured MP's. And the government keeps telling us it does not have enough money to build houses for the people!

- Vast sums are spent on the army and police to protect the interests of the white minority. This year 17% of the budget was set aside for the army. Last year R1,5 million was spent every day on the war in Namibia. Should we not ask what South African soldiers are doing in a country which belongs to the Namibian people?

- In South Africa there are 18 separate educational authorities. Would it not be more just, efficient, and less expensive to have a single education department for all South Africans.

- The cost of the enforcement of the pass laws, the cause of so much suffering among African people, also comes from our pockets. Last year R60 million was spent on

the administration of the pass system.

Apartheid then, is not only unjust, it is expensive. We are being milked to pay for a system which services the interests of a minority of the population.

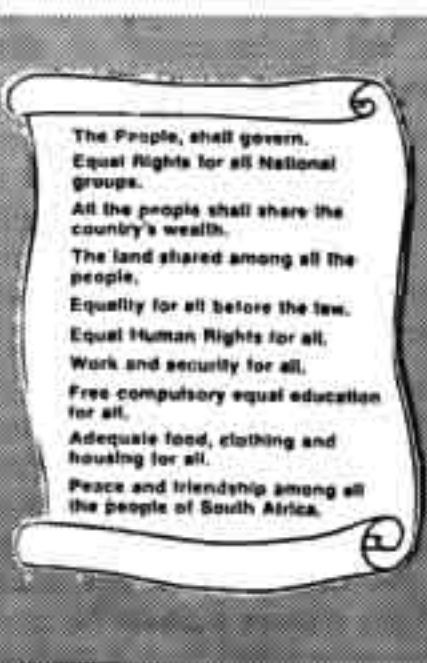
Taxes, rents and rates are all going up. But we are being asked to tighten our belts, to build our own houses, to pay more for education. Is this not the government's responsibility?

Life under the Nationalist Government is becoming harder for our people. This is why there is unrest in so many parts of the country. When GST was raised in July last year, the residents of Tumahole, staged a protest march. In the Vaal Triangle people have been resisting rent and service charge increases. Just as we did in Lenasia and in Actonville in 1983.

African children are saying no to inferior education, just as Indian and coloured children did in the 1980 school boycotts. And after our experience in Lenasia and Actonville on the day of the election can anyone doubt that the police use violence against people protesting peacefully.

In these hard times, we have only one choice. To Unite! Join civic, womens and other democratic organisations and stand up for our rights!

30th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FREEDOM CHARTER



The People, shall govern.
Equal Rights for all National groups.
All the people shall share the country's wealth.
The land shared among all the people.
Equality for all before the law.
Equal Human Rights for all.
Work and security for all.
Free compulsory equal education for all.
Adequate food, clothing and housing for all.
Peace and friendship among all the people of South Africa.

1985 is the 30th anniversary of the Freedom Charter and democratic organisations countrywide are celebrating its adoption at the Congress of the People on 26 June 1955 in Kliptown.

The Freedom Charter is a document which sets out the type of South Africa our people want.

Against Group Areas and all attempts to dispossess people of their rights in the country of their birth, the Charter says: South Africa belongs to all who live in it,

black and white. It rejects undemocratic rule when it says: The people shall govern.

It speaks to the needs of those whose labour is exploited at slave wages when it declares: The people shall share in the country's wealth.

It condemns life under unhealthy and overcrowded conditions in wendy homes, backyards and garages because of apartheid policy and says: There shall be houses, security and comfort. It rejects white minority rule and domination by any sec-

tion of the population when it says: All national groups shall have equal rights. Thus ensuring for all people a secure and democratic future in South Africa.

Only with the implementation of the Freedom Charter will apartheid violence, suspicion and conflict be destroyed. This is why the Charter declares: There shall be peace and friendship.

The Freedom Charter is the most democratic document ever produced in South Africa. The people themselves made this Charter.

Months before it was adopted, the Indian Congress and its sister organisations in the Congress Alliance went from door to door gathering the people's demands.

The people elected delegates to the Congress of the People where they unanimously adopted the Freedom Charter.

And now 30 years later, when not a single demand of the people has yet been met, we endorse the Freedom Charter and re-dedicate ourselves to achieving its demands.