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NEWS

Kaunda's gift to Maties: without freedom there can never be peace

PRESIDENT Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia would be prepared to meet his counterpart in South Africa if the country fulfilled its commitment to free elections in Namibia.

This was one of the undertakings Pres Kaunda gave the 18 University of Stellenbosch student leaders on their controversial visit to Lusaka in April which saw Matie SRC members meeting with top ANC officials in defiance of an SRC ruling on such talks. The group argued that the SRC motion did not preclude them from speaking to the ANC "as individuals".

They say Pres Kaunda expressed hope that South Africa's political problems would be solved. He told the students that he did not "hate Afrikaners, but rather the things that President Botha and his regime are doing".

Tour leader Mark Behr said the threehour breakfast meeting with Pres Kaunda was very fruitful. SRC president Pierre van der Spuy presented the Zambian leader with a bottle of Cape wine and a Matie tie. At the breakfast, Kaunda handed out the students' plates himself, led them in prayer, and with other Zambian delegates sang a folksong. The Maties replied with a Great Trek folksong.

On the question of sanctions, Pres Kaunda reportedly told the students: "Sanctions are the better of two evils, and are vastly preferable to bloody revolution."

Mr Behr said he told Pres Kaunda that it was a privilege for them as students to meet leaders who are not "accessible" to them within South Africa's borders.

"The most important gift Pres Kaunda gave us was the notion that without freedom there can never be peace in Southern Africa.

"Zambia experiences harsh economic problems, but the racial harmony is excellent. South Africa has economic prosperity, but racial hatred. The ideal is to work towards racial harmony combined with a workable economic system," said Mr Behr.

(With acknowledgement to The Star)

New twist to Mntonga case

THE Mntonga murder trial may not have seen justice done entirely, but it is seen as a step in the right direction.

Six Ciskei policemen, including two generals, charged with the murder of IDASA's Eric Mntonga were sentenced to between two and 12 years effective imprisonment last month.

Mntonga, who was co-director of the Border branch of IDASA, died in July 1987 as a result of assaults received while in detention in Ciskei. His body was dumped on a deserted Ciskei road, with stab wounds inflicted after his death, in a police cover up. The policemen were all found guilty of the lesser charges of culpable homicide and defeating the ends of justice.

While the leniency of the convictions and sentences was criticised by many observers, the fact that the trial took place at all was surprising, as the circumstances of Mntonga's death were initially covered up by Ciskei. The policemen were only arrested more than a year after the incident, as a result of a letter written by IDASA executive director Dr Alex Boraine to Ciskei authorities in which he named policemen believed to have been involved in the murder.

The trial of the six has not been the end of the matter.

A further two policemen are now facing charges of murder in connection

with the incident, after they were extensively implicated during the main trial.

In addition, a high ranking Ciskei policeman is facing charges that may relate to the case. Colonel Vuyani Genda was detained during the trial, and policemen said in evidence that this was because he passed on information to IDASA about the murder. Although Genda is now facing unspecified charges of treason, Ciskei attorney-general Willem Jurgens, who prosecuted the Mntonga killers, denied that this was related to the murder.

men were all found guilty of the lesser charges of culpable homicide and defeating the ends of justice.

While the leniency of the convictions and sentences was criticised by many observers, the fact that the trial took place at all was surprising, as the circum
"I'm delighted that charges were actually laid — it's almost unusual. It's so often that the police get away literally with murder," he said. However, he was disappointed that the sentences were so lenient. "I'm displeased, to put it mildly."

Dr Boraine said he was worried about allegations concerning Genda. "If he is in any way being charged with giving information to IDASA about the court case I must say I have never met the man or received any information from him," he said.

While Dr Boraine said that the case was "almost unique" in putting policemen on trial, he pointed out that "the whole thing doesn't bring Eric back".

Elnews