

by CHRIS FREIMOND

Political Correspondent
CAPE TOWN. — The president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Dr Allan Boesak, was the main speaker at the national launch of the United Democratic Front in Cape Town at the weekend. Here is an edited version of his address.

"We have arrived at an historic moment. We have brought together under the aegis of the United Democratic Front the broadest and most significant coalition of groups and organisations struggling against apartheid, racism and injustice since the early 1950s.

"We are here to say that the Government's constitutional proposals are inadequate and that they do not express the will of the vast majority of South Africa's people.

"But more than that, we are to say that what we are working for is one, undivided South Africa which will belong to all of its people, an open democracy from which no single South African will be excluded.

"In recent weeks people have asked me with greater urgency than before: 'Why do you not see the positive side of apartheid?'

"Now when you are white, your children's education is guaranteed and paid for by the State; when your job is secure and blacks are prevented from being too much competition; when your home has never been taken away and the citizenship of the country of your birth is not in danger; when your children don't have to die of hunger and malnutrition and when your over-privileged position is guaranteed by security laws and the best

Nothing's positive in apartheid, says Boesak

equipped army on the continent — then I can understand why some people believe that apartheid has its positive side.

"But for those of us who are black and who suffer under this system, there is no positive side. How can we see something positive in a system which is built on oppression, injustice and exploitation?

"What is positive about a system which destroys, systematically and by design, the human dignity of people.

"How can apartheid be positive when in the name of Christianity it spawns policies which cause little children to die of hunger and malnutrition, which break up black family life, which spell out a continuous hopeless death for millions of black people?

"But we must also ask the question: What is positive about the Government's constitutional proposals?

"In order that there should be no misunderstanding, let me repeat the reasons why we reject these proposals.

"Racism, so embedded in South African society, is once again written into the constitution.

"All the basic laws, those laws which are the very pillars of apartheid — mixed marriages, group areas, racial classification, separate and unequal education — remain untouched and unchanged.

"The homelands policy, which is surely the most immoral and objectionable aspect of the apartheid policies of the Government, forms the basis of the wilful exclusion of 80% of our nation from the new political deal.

"Clearly the oppression will continue, the brutal break up of family life will not end. The apartheid line is not at all abolished.

"So while the proposals may mean something for those middle class blacks who think that the improvement of their own economic position is the highest good, it will not bring any significant changes to the life of those who have no rights at all, who must languish in the poverty and utter destitution of the homelands, and who are forbidden by law to live together as families in what is called 'white South Africa'.

"To be sure, the new proposals will make apartheid less blatant in some ways. It will be modernised and streamlined, and in its new multi-coloured cloak it will be less conspicuous and less offensive to some.

"Nonetheless it will still be there. And we must remember, apartheid is a thoroughly evil system and as such it cannot be modified, modernised or streamlined ...

"We shall not be satisfied as long as those who rule us are not inspired by justice, but dictated by fear, greed and racialism.

"We shall not be satisfied until South Africa is once again one undivided country, a democracy where there shall be meaningful participation in a democratic process of a government for all our people.

"We must turn to one other important question, namely the question of whites and blacks working together.

"This has been mentioned as a reason why the UDF has been so severely attacked by some and why they have refused to give their cooperation.

"They are saying to us that white people cannot play a meaningful role in the struggle for justice in this country because they are always by definition the oppressor.



Dr ALLAN BOESAK
Proposals inadequate

"I would like to say to those who think this way that I can understand the way they feel. We have seen with our own eyes brutalisation of our people at the hand of whites.

"But it is not true that apartheid has the support of all white people. There are those who have struggled with us, who have gone to jail, who have been tortured and banned, there are those who have died in the struggle for justice ...

"The struggle is not only against the white government and their plans, but also against those in the black community who through their collaboration see to give credibility to these (constitutional) plans.

"This country is our country, and its future is not safe

in the hands of people who despise democracy and trample on the rights of people, whether they be black or white.

"We want all our rights, we want them here and we want them now. We have been waiting so long, we have been struggling so long. We have pleaded, cried, petitioned too long now. We have been jailed, exiled, killed for too long. Now is the time."

The Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning, Mr Chris Heunis, declined to comment yesterday.

But the Leader of the Opposition, Dr Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, said he believed the UDF was a "very important and significant development" which the Government would ignore "at its and South Africa's peril".

LOOKING BACK RDM 22 Aug 1983

From the files of the
Rand Daily Mail
70 YEARS AGO
August 22, 1913

A POLL was taken in Cape Town today to decide whether a railway up Table Mountain should be constructed or not. The majority in favour was 1 725.

50 YEARS AGO
August 22, 1933

A PROPOSAL to remove 250 000 Jews from Germany and settle them in Palestine and other countries will be made at the 18th Zionist Con-

gress which opens in Prague today.

25 YEARS AGO 1958
August 22, 1958

MR C R SWART, the Minister of Justice, has the support of most members of the Cabinet for the leadership of the National Party when Mr J G Strijdom resigns.

THE BIBLE

"The unfolding of thy words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple."
Psalm 119:130
RSV