

# POEMS

by Chris Mann

## A PRAYER FOR MY WORK

If I do not speak of suffering  
it is because  
those who know its darkness do so.

If I do not mourn the hungry  
it is because  
they have no appetite for tears.

And since I produce my mutter  
in the same tongue  
as those I wish to see give place,

I will grumble and mock although  
too late each time,  
I realise I waste my breath.

I can discomfort them the more  
by loyalty  
until it disrespects the truth

which all of our ancestors share.  
May Dingane  
the Somersets and Piet Retief

and all of you who have found peace  
keep reminding  
us your children of your unity;

embrace us in the permanence  
of a friendship  
we need not wait for death to find;

and may you all speak through my work  
lest silence be  
the sweetest song I ever wrote.

## A REPLY TO CAMPBELL'S EPIGRAM

that the poet who offered his heart for a  
handful of South African soil exchanged  
a "handful of dirt for a heartful of slobber".

Campbell of course was one of the rabble  
Who wash their hands clean of the whole affair  
And then, in all their subsequent babble  
Employ the experience they couldn't bear.

## SIGNIFICANT QUOTES FROM MR KRUGER

\***Argus**, 22/5/76: By voicing their objections to the Promotion of State Security Bill in the Press instead of bringing them before his (Mr Kruger's) department the Bar Councils (Cape Town and Johannesburg) were getting into the political arena, "And they will find a fighter there. Then they must take what comes".

\* \* \* \* \*

\*By attending Braam Fischer's funeral the President of the Johannesburg Bar Council had "placed himself in the position where he can be accused of attending the funeral of a known communist". (**Cape Town**, 22/5/76)

\* \* \* \* \*

\*Mr Kruger said he would not use the provisions of the Bill to "wipe the Progressive Reform Party off the face of South Africa", though he agreed with Senator Horwood that the Party were "a danger to South Africa" (**Argus**, 22/5/76)

\* \* \* \* \*

\*He hoped he would not have to use the powers the Bill gave him, including the power to detain without trial. He said those detained under the Bill would be well treated. Their lives would be made as easy as possible . . . (**Argus**, 22/5/76)

\* \* \* \* \*

\*He could also appoint a Black person on the review committee which would investigate his actions under the Bill. (**Argus**, 22/5/76).

\* \* \* \* \*

\*He would not necessarily disregard the Committee's findings! (**Argus**, 22/5/76)

\* \* \* \* \*

\*He would not hesitate to use his powers against Black Power youth, the NUSAS Wage Commission and those who wanted to "besmirch" South Africa. The Commission was "trying to organise Blacks into trade unions to give them organisational power so as to use them for revolution . . ." (**Cape Times**, 19/5/76)  
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