

STRAIGHTEN UP YOUR SHOULDERS! (1989)

THE DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN IN CAPE TOWN CAME TO A climax in the week before 6 September, election day. On 30 August about 170 women, including Leah Tutu, the Archbishop's wife, were arrested as they tried to march to the British Embassy from the Metropolitan Methodist Church. They wanted to hand over a letter, addressed to Margaret Thatcher as a 'wife and mother', protesting against death sentences and detentions. Two special courts were convened in the Cape Town Magistrate's Court and the marchers were arraigned in groups of fifteen to twenty in hearings lasting until after midnight.

The next day leaders in the churches, the trade unions, the UDF, educational institutions and a wide range of other pro-democracy organizations held what they called 'an emergency, *ad hoc* summit' at Bishops court, the Archbishop's office. They gave their backing to a national call for two days of protest on 5 and 6 September.

On 1 September Leah Tutu was arrested again – in the company of her husband and about thirty other leaders as

they tried to make their way from the cathedral to Security Police offices to hold a placard demonstration. Participants in the Standing for the Truth campaign had been brutally beaten outside the offices earlier in the day and leading Cape Town personalities were trying to continue the protest.

On Saturday 2 September, the Mass Democratic Movement planned marches to Parliament from three different points in Cape Town city centre. Tutu had reservations about participating: the marches he had taken part in tended to be relatively small protests dominated by clergy and he was concerned at the tendency of the police – as displayed in February 1988 – to treat him with kid gloves and then to deal violently with those who followed him. As a result he did not take part but remained on standby in case trouble developed.

Police broke up the marches after arresting dozens of journalists, photographers and camera crews. At St George's Cathedral the leaders were arrested. Then the police, in the words of a Dutch Reformed minister, Johan Retief, 'bunched the group together and started to hit the remaining people with batons and whips. Many people were hurt in this process and about 200 were arrested and driven away.'

At the Metropolitan Methodist Church police used other tactics. A friend of Retief, Pieter Schoombe, told the editor: 'A police truck with a water-cannon mounted on top entered Greenmarket Square [in front of the church] and stopped about twenty metres from the front row of marchers. The police began firing water containing purple dye at the marchers, almost flattening them on the road. The truck also fired at people on the pavement and the walls of the church, breaking church windows. It moved down Burg Street and as it came abreast with the building which houses the headquarters of the Cape National Party, a young marcher climbed up on it and redirected the water cannon at the façade of the building. He shoved a policeman who tried to stop him away with his foot and managed to colour the front façade of the building with purple dye. He then

jumped off the truck. This was met with loud cheers from the crowd. Shortly afterwards tear gas was fired from the police vehicle at the back of the column into the drenched crowd on Burg Street. Later I saw truckloads of people being taken away by the police.' The incident gave rise to graffiti declaring: 'The purple shall govern.'

The Archbishop was summoned to the Cathedral, where hundreds of marchers who had escaped arrest had gathered. The building was surrounded by police but Tutu and Dean Jones negotiated with them to allow the congregation to disperse after an impromptu service. This address was delivered to the shocked marchers and their supporters.

Just show me your hands, what are you carrying in your hands? Show me! Show me, show me . . . Your hands are empty, you've got nothing! Why are they so scared of empty hands? Why are they so scared of empty hands? Why is apartheid so, that they have got to deploy all those trucks and those men and some women, not too many women this time? It is important for you to know that all moral right is on your side. Yes, you may be clobbered, as some of you have been clobbered, yes you may cry, you may get beaten. But didn't we say, or were they only slogans, didn't we say that some are still going to be arrested? Some are still going to be detained. Some are still going to run the gauntlet of tear gas. Some are even going to die. Did you think it was figures of speech when we said that in a struggle there are casualties? Did you think it was figures of speech? It is not figures of speech. This is for real, this is for real. And we have committed ourselves, we have committed ourselves to this struggle until freedom is won.

But we shouldn't behave like those who think this prize is just a cheap little prize. The prize for which we are striving is freedom, is freedom for all of us, freedom for those people standing outside [the police], freedom for them! Because you see when we are free, when we are free, they will be here, they will be here, joining with us celebrating that freedom, and not standing outside there stopping us from becoming free. Actually no, you see, if we were free they would be at home watching rugby and it would be a match which

they would not be ashamed of. Because we would not be stopping the world and saying, 'Don't come and play rugby in our country until our country is free.' Because our country would be free.

I keep saying, 'Mr Vlok, Mr de Klerk [acting State President], just come here and look at what South Africa will become, what South Africa is going to become. Just look at all these beautiful people. Do you really think that these are terrorists? Do you really think that these are violent people? Why do you use violence?' They . . . won't answer me. But I will answer on their behalf: 'We use violence against them because there is nothing else we can use.' Apartheid is in and of itself violent. Apartheid is in and of itself evil, totally and completely. There is no way in which it can use nice methods. It has, *ipso facto*, to use methods that are consistent with its nature.

So my friends, do not sit there as if you have drunk an unexpected dose of castor oil. Don't sit there looking glum. Yes, I think you must feel a little sad. What were we trying to do? We were just trying to walk around our city. We wanted to walk around and look at our parliament, our parliament building and they don't want us to do that in our country. No, man, these guys, no man, really. So I say to you, you've got to straighten up your shoulders. Come on, straighten up your shoulders and say, 'We shall be free!' Come on, stand! Stand, stand! Stand upright! Here we go: 'We shall be free!' Now we say: 'All of us together, black and white, in a free South Africa.' Do you really mean that? Let those people [the police] hear. Do you really mean that we will be free? ('Yes!') Sit down. Now that is not just play-play, OK?

As we go out, some of us are going to try to stand around there. We have negotiated with the police, for what it is worth. We have negotiated with them that you will not be molested if you go out singly, if you go out singly. Please don't give them any excuse.

The address also dealt with the differences between the way the police treated leaders and their followers.

I am very conscious of the fact that I am a protected species. That is a dilemma, that when I say perhaps we ought to take a particular action, on the whole this protected species will be treated differently

from others of you. That worries me, that worries me. I hope you will understand that I need to be particularly sensitive to what I do. I can say, let us march and the chances are I could march for a few yards and they would pick me up . . . remove [me] from the scene, and then deal brutally with the other people. I need to be careful of how I involve you my sisters and brothers. And so you are aware that we have particular problems.

But I am going to be here. I am going to be here and I am going to stand around and watch that as far as possible with the Dean, and Bishop Charles [Albertyn] and Lionel Louw [Chairman of the Western Province Council of Churches] and others that the police do keep their undertaking . . .

Say to yourselves, in your heart: 'God loves me.' In your heart: 'God loves me, God loves me . . . I am of infinite value to God. God created me for freedom.' In your heart: 'God created me for freedom, God created me for freedom and my freedom is inalienable, my freedom is inalienable. My freedom is God-given, my freedom is God-given! I don't go around and say, *Baas* [Boss], please give me my freedom. God loves me, I am of infinite value because God loves me and God created me for freedom, and my freedom is inalienable, God-given.' Right!

Now straighten up your shoulders, come, straighten up your shoulders, like people who are born for freedom! Lovely, lovely, lovely!