ANC proposes phasing out of sanctions

IN THE first serious review of international sanctions in 30 years, the African National Congress has recognised that they "are beginning to erode over a wide front", Fund"; the arms embargo should and that the "burning" economic remain, but the oil embargo could problems of black South Africans be modified. must be addressed by lifting some This radical reappraisal comes sanctions to provide money for during the lead-up to the Euro-

of blacks now, instead of waiting the EC. Nelson Mandela, the should continue until then. for further political transform- ANC's deputy president, has al- The ANC review points out that ation. It recommends launching ready written to the 12 EC heads for the first time in many years the an international appeal, with the of state asking that they "post-flight of capital from South Africa funds being disbursed by a coali- pone any decision" to lift sanc- has been reversed. At the same tion of "the ANC, the rest of the tions "until early in the New time, exports to black Africa have democratic movement and the present government".

"We cannot continue to call for lars of apartheid: the Land Acts the maintenance of existing mea- and the Group Areas Act. in the erosion of sanctions".

that "trade sanctions are making US sanctions should be lifted. little impact" on South Africa's

From Leonard Doyle in New York

Year". Diplomats predict that the grown to \$2bn (£1bn) per annum summit will announce that some despite sanctions. The recommendations are in a sanctions will be lifted as soon as confidential ANC discussion doc- Pretoria has moved to free the from the world has also ended and ument, Managing the Period of thousands of political prisoners the changes in Eastern Europe Transition, which has been ob- still in jail and parliament has betained by The Independent. It says: gun dismantling the remaining pil-

have suffered a major defeat as ident Bush is also likely to recomthe international community in mend next month that the strinfact acts in a manner which results gent conditions of the US Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Recognising for the first time Act have been met and that some

"What would then happen," the International Monetary having succeeded to persuade the ba's behalf with Washington.

world to lift sanctions contrary to the views of the movement on this matter". The document reveals that the fear that the Pretoria government is about to win a propaganda victory, has persuaded the leadership to move fast.

Up to now the ANC position has been that the changes that jobs, housing, education and pean Community summit in have already taken place in South Rome at the weekend, at which Africa will only be considered irre-The ANC says that it should Britain will be making its tradi- versible when the country has make a "public commitment to tional pitch for the immediate lift- adopted a new non-racial conaddress" the economic problems ing of some sanctions throughout stitution, and that sanctions

Pretoria's diplomatic isolation

have brought to power "forces with whom we have never had contact, some of which see us as friends of the Communist parties that have been ousted from power", giving Pretoria "new space" to expand its international political and economic contacts. The Soviet Union has opened an "interests section" in Pretoria despite ANC opposition and the document also reveals that Cuba economy, the ANC is prepared to document says, "is that the per- "is being encouraged by Pretoria" "discuss" their abolition. It is ception will be created that the to open diplomatic relations. In firmly opposed to the easing of fi- [Pretoria] government has scored return for this, diplomats say, Prenancial sanctions, "especially by a major victory over the ANC, toria has offered to lobby on Cu-



Inkatha supporters on their way to a peace rally in Tokoza yesterday, where they were addressed by their leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi. Clashes between rival groups in the townships have claimed at least 100 lives in the last 10 days Photograph: John Parkin/AP

Police look on as armed Zulus march to 'peace rally'

IN a visit which reinforced a sense of helplessness and despair, Nelson Mandela, his wife Winnie, various other black leaders, churchmen of all denominations and a dozen diplomats toured this township yesterday where more than 100 people have died in brutal clashes in the last 10 days.

Under the stewardship of the South African Council of Churches, the tour organisers, the VIP party saw more incinerated homes than they would care to remember; they talked to some of the thousands who have fled the violence and sought refuge on the lawns of a local hospital; they stared, or took photographs through their bus windows, as pro-Inkatha dwellers at Tokoza's single-men's hostel threatened them and shouted at them to go away; they talked to amputees and men with axe-wounds on their heads lying on hospital beds. They did not see any dead bodies because after a massive troop deployment Tuesday night things had, for once, been quiet.

Joe Slovo, the head of the Communist Party and close to Mr Mandela in the ANC executive, spoke to a man at the hospital with a heavily bandaged abdomen. Did the man have any solution to the violence? Mr Slovo asked. "I've no idea,"

little to stop the bloodshed which left at least 100 people dead. John Carlin reports from Tokoza came the reply. Walking down the hospital corridor Mr Slovo was asked whether he was a sadder and wiser man for the visit to Tokoza. "Sadder,"

forces would deal with this sort of thing." What he had in mind, partly, was the testimony he had heard earlier from the people at Phola Park, a muddy, smelly squatter camp on the fringes of Tokoza whose residents, previously ANC positions after experiencing wave after wave of attacks by Inkatha warriors in recent months. Again and again, fat women, lean youths, gap-toothed old men told the same story. Police vehicles escorted the Inkatha impis, battalions, to the area and provided transport for the furniture they looted; white men drove the Inkatha men to battle in ambulances or delivery vans; policemen opened fire on the squatters.

he replied. "In any normal country the security

Every detail may or may not be true, for rumour acquires a life of its own in these circumstances. But what is certain is that police favour the Inkatha men — much loved by the white right - over the ANC, on which the majority of people

A VIP delegation visited the scene of recent township violence and heard how the authorities did

in Tokoza, as the majority in black South Africa, loosely bestow their political favours. It was a measure of the helplessness of the black community, and the ANC, that a five-hour meeting on apolitical by and large, have taken militant pro- Tuesday between an Inkatha and an ANC delegation yielded agreement on just one point: to call jointly on the government to deploy heavy police and army reinforcements to the area.

The government immediately responded and the people at Phola Park responded yesterday by shouting abuse and shaking their fists at every police vehicle within sight. The soldiers, however, were tacitly welcomed, benignly ignored, being viewed by residents, as even by most ANC offi-

Inkatha was less happy about the army's arrival but on Tuesday, hitting on a propaganda device to sow further confusion, some of its officials echoed the ANC cry and accused the police of bias against them. This made it all the more surprising that the Inkatha chief, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, should suddenly turn up at the Tokoza hostel yesterday morning in a police helicopter and accompanied by the Law and Order Minister, Adriaan Vlok – all the more surprising because he had turned down an invitation to join the Council of Churches delegation, saying his schedule was full. Thus Chief Buthelezi rejected the chance to do what he has clamoured for all year: to meet Mr Mandela. Persuaded, nevertheless, by

Invoking God's name 10 times, he issued an impassioned plea for black brother to stop killing

- the Inkatha supporters' identification in battle - he denied all responsibility for the violence, declaring: "All the reports that one hears about people with red bands being Inkatha people is

Then, with a clarity few people have managed, myth. he said who he believed was to blame. The ANC had called for a "programme of action" urging supporters to go on a mass recruitment drive, to concentrate power under the ANC leadership. Standard political behaviour, perhaps, in other latitudes. But Chief Buthelezi saw it differently. | conducting his own "forest clear-'Those campaigns will still cost us many more black lives than we have lost. We can talk about peace until we are blue in the faces, but so long as there are campaigns of this kind, I just do not see how we are going to attain peace."

After the speech, the chief's 3,000 supporters marched triumphantly through Tokoza laden with weapons and firing shots in the air. The police, said to be thoroughly investigating the causes of the township slaughter, looked on.

Mendes murder trial is

From Richard House in Sao Paulo

THE TRIAL of those accused of murdering Chico Mendes, the trade unionist, opened sensationally yesterday with a confession from Darci Alves Pereira, 23, that he alone killed Mendes after lying in wait behind his home. Mendes's environmental work in the Amazon earned him international acclaim before his death two years ago.

This confession supports the account he gave when surrendering to police four days after the crime. Darci Alves's father, Darli Alves da Silva, 56, continues to deny that he planned the killing. But the prosecution aims to prove that the elder Mr Alves and a number of other politically powerful landowners in Acre state named by Mendes shortly before his death are also guilty.

Rains in the tiny town of Xapuri yesterday delayed the start of what promises to be Brazil's "trial of the century". It is being conducted amid tight security and widespread fear that even if the men are convicted, they may still exact vengeance.

Five of the 21 eligible jurors fled the town after pleading illness, as did two prosecution witnesses. Brazil's police chief, Romeu Tuma, is watching the trial and has promised protection for witnesses, including the 15-year-old former employee of Mr Alves senior who says he witnessed preparations for the crime.

The little courtroom at Xapuri is also the stage for an intensely political investigation into the errors of a development model that meant savage treatment of both the forest and those, like Mendes, who lived in it. In the past two years more than 1,200 have died in a low-level war between the region's landed and landless.

While live television beams the proceedings throughout Brazil and beyond, hundreds of foreign environmental activists and media people have converged on the town to document the next chapter of the fast-growing Mendes

The Alveses are accused of killing Mendes at his home just before Christmas 1988.

This is the first time a landowner has been put in the dock for ance" in the lawless Amazon.

Darly Alves, with his five wives, four sons and entourage of pistoleiros (hired gunmen), is alleged to have ordered Mendes's death because the trade union leader's activities were preventing him from taking over land from rubber tappers to clear for cattle pasture.

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cials in all the townships, as a more impartial and effective presence.

Mr Vlok's invitation, he made his unexpected visit and delivered a speech.

black brother. With 3,000 men in red head-bands

just so much political hog-wash."

Ershad charged with corruption

BANGLADESH'S deposed dictator, Hossain Mohammad Ershad, was placed under house arrest yesterday and charged with

embezzling state funds and smuggling gold and drugs. If guilty, he faces a possible death sentence. taken to well-appointed prison quarters: the old residence of the curtains were hung and air conditioners set humming, but the hurried workmen had failed to re-

pected to remain there until a government inquiry amasses evidence of his alleged corruption and he stands trial. His arrest ended a dangerous stand-off between the army and the caretaker president, Shah-

justice with a lot of moral author-

move Her Majesty's seal from the

front gate of Mr Ershad's new

penitentiary palace. He is ex-

From Tim McGirk in Dhaka

ity but little else. Forced to resign last week after widespread rioting, Mr Ershad barricaded himself inthrough the streets of Dhaka car- loyalty of the generals whom he rying a noose meant for him, the had pampered over the nine years fallen general, his wife and child of his rule with fat salaries, villas by his security men since martial were whisked from their sanctuary the size of airline terminals, and inside a military barracks by a lucrative business contracts. But heavily-armed police convoy and outraged by the government corruption, and sensing Mr Ershad's unpopularity with the people, the British High Commissioner. New military yesterday handed him over to the Dhaka police.

"The military wants to take a back seat and does not want to get involved in deciding what happens to him," said one diplomat. "There are those in the military loyal to him, but the bulk of them want elections to take place." After his arrest was announced,

crowds gathered shouting "Try Ershad, Hang Ershad". Jubilant students commandeered about 30 lorries and ploughed through the abuddin Ahmed, a former chief sea of gaily-painted cycle rickshaws in Dhaka's streets, heading

for the house where Mr Ershad was detained. The students had spearheaded the unrest against side a military base on the edge of the former dictator - who pre-Dhaka. He tried to win back the ferred calling himself a "Poet-President" - and they wanted vengeance for the 60 people killed law was invoked on 27 November. Police stopped the students a few miles from the house. In one of the lorries, the noose for Mr Ershad was still being held aloft. Police acting under the presi-

dent's orders also issued arrest warrants yesterday for Mr Ershad's 16 cabinet ministers, many of whom had gone into hiding. Their passports have been revoked to stop them from escaping Bangladesh. The UN envoy, Abul Hasm Golm Muhidin, who is Mr Ershad's brother-in-law, was sacked as part of a purge of senior diplomats appointed by the former military regime.

The portrait of Mr Ershad and political opponents is at odds them."

with his own self-image of a dapper soldier and philosopher. Coming to power at the head of a coup in 1982, the general said he would only remain temporarily in the presidential palace and that, like any good soldier, he belonged in the barracks. He carried out his promise to return to the barracks but built his presidential home inside and refused to leave it.

A foreign aid expert said that during the past two years of Mr Ershad's rule, corruption had passed "permissible" levels and was causing many nations to reconsider their \$2bn (£1bn) yearly help to Bangladesh's starving and flood-stricken millions. A Dhaka newspaper published a copy of a cheque for nearly £80,000 sent by the education ministry last May to the ousted ruler's personal account. Bangladesh has one of the world's lowest literacy rates.

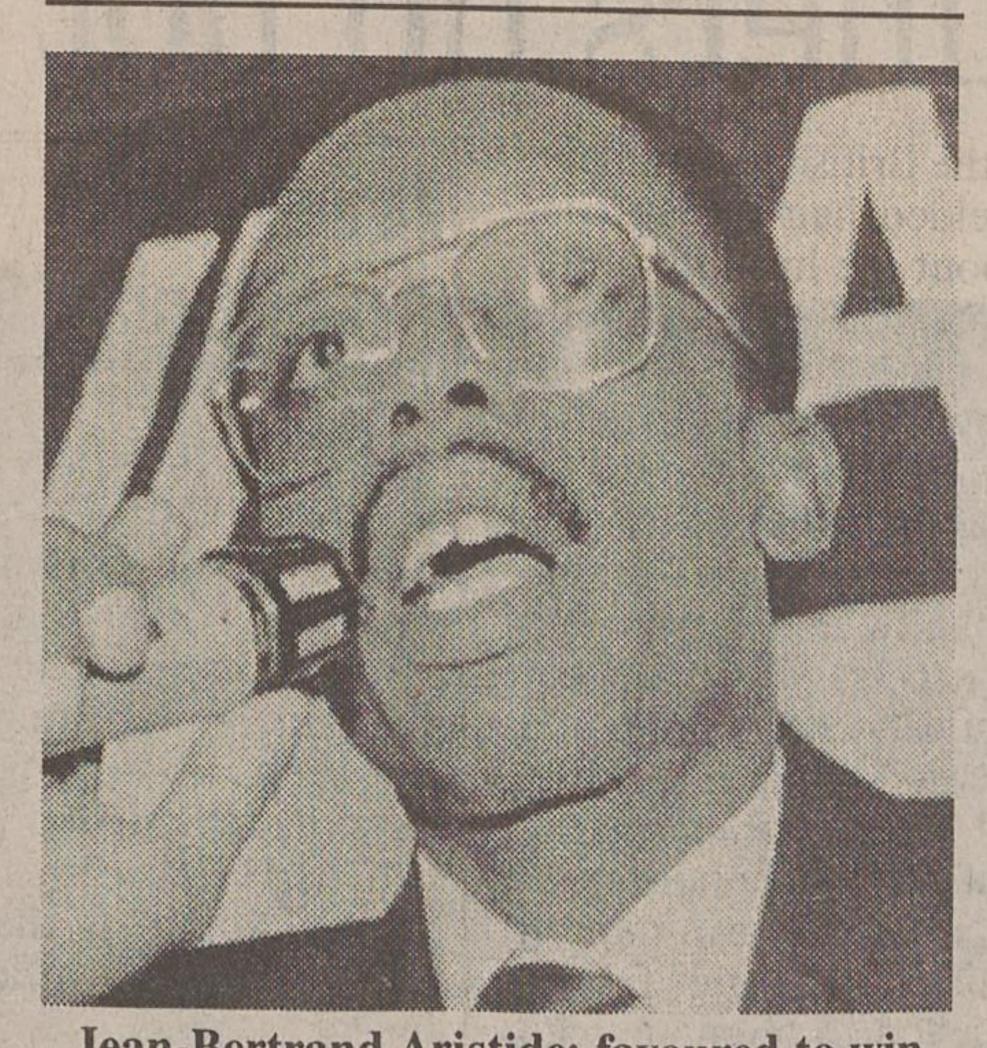
As for Mr Ershad's poetry, he told a BBC interviewer that he had spent the last few days writing poems. When asked to recite a line or two, he apologised hastily: sketched by his former officers "I can't. You see, I'm still writing

Priest-president may govern Haiti

ON 15 October, Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide ordained that it should rain. The heavens opened and, so the story goes, it poured for six weeks, ending two years of drought. The facts may not altogether bear out this tale, although the rainfall in November was unusually abundant. But Haiti, with its rich traditions of voodoo and magic, is superstitious and such accounts are quickly enshrined in local legend. Also on 15 October, Father Aristide chose to announce his presidential candidacy for the elections this Sunday. Haitians celebrated by forming long queues outside voter registration booths which had previously received few visitors. The priest is now a strong favourite to

Father Aristide has challenged the feudal order of Haitian society for more than a decade, arousing such emotions that his supporters ascribe supernatural powers to him and his enemies will not rest until he is dead. Those capable of a more rational analysis credit him with a powerful ability to capture the mood of a desperate country, where life expectancy is 53 years and the average yearly income is \$300

There is no mystery to Aristide," says Jean Claude, a philosophy teacher and friend of the priest. "It's simple. He is a man who has understood and denounced the misery of the Haitian Leople. He teaches Christian charity." American diplomats have called him "a Marxist maniac", but have recently promised to respect the outcome of the election. The US ambassador has recently courted Father Aristide. A From David Adams in Port-au-Prince



Jean-Bertrand Aristide: favoured to win

breakfast meeting on Tuesday was described as "friendly", and the priest later flew to Venezuela for talks with President Carlos Andres Perez, regional peacemaker and close ally of George Bush.

Devotees of the 37-year-old priest say the mere fact that he is alive and standing for office is a miracle in itself, given the half-dozen assassination attempts against him. His worst enemies are the remnants of the Tontons

Macoutes, the former militia created to enforce the brutal and corrupt Duvalier dictatorship which gripped Haiti from 1957 to 1986. The Macoutes remain the best-armed and most violent men in the country, and like to refer to Father Aristide as "Attila" or "the demon Aristide".

His supporters call him "the saviour of Haiti" and often refer to him as though he were a latter-day Christ. His humble roots and courageous social work in the slums of Port-au-Prince have created a common cause between his candidacy and the desperate plight of Haiti's poor. "Our past is a very heavy burden, loaded with injustice, distrust of humans, illustrated by the misery and bestiality of some," says Jean Claude. "Now someone has arrived and is preaching human dignity. That can't be

bad. That's what Christ did." "I am not the Messiah. The Haitian people chose me," Father Aristide told a small group of journalists this week in one of the hiding places he has been forced to use since announcing his candidacy. But some have detected a megalomania in his language that has aroused a fear that the proximity to power may

have gone to his head. Father Aristide is a liberation theologian, dedicated to the Catholic church's direct involvement in social and political issues affecting the poor. "It is only through the human dimension that we can understand the divine dimension of Jesus," he says. "That is why I accept that the man-priest and the man-president can be complementary to each other."