

## SOUTH AFRICA

### IN THE DOCK

This issue is a devastating indictment of the apartheid regime in South Africa. Our correspondents reveal how South Africa destabilises its neighbours and how its dirty tricks department operates throughout the world. We also reveal the plight of the homeless blacks, the use of torture on children by South African police and the systematic suppression of press freedom.

### SPIES PROVIDE CONVINCING PROOF OF SOUTH AFRICA'S

#### DESTABILISATION

##### STRATEGY

The trial of three young spies and the deportation of one of them to Zimbabwe has opened a new window on South Africa's destabilisation of its neighbours. A young Zimbabwean Trish Hanekom tells how she and her colleagues leaked a trunk-full of top secret documents proving South Africa's support of the MNR and the Lesotho Liberation army. Howard Barrell reports.

rather frail-looking 30-year-old

Zimbabwean woman, Trish Hanekom,

who was released in late

November from a 38-month term in

Pretoria's political prisons, has blown the lid

off the hitherto suppressed tale of how she

and two other young white South Africans

exposed intimate details of the Botha

government's destabilisation of its black-

ruled neighbours.

She, her husband, Derek, and a young

white South African Defence Force

conscript, Roland Hunter, managed, during

the course of 1983, to pilfer a trunk-full of

top secret documents from the Directorate of

Special Tasks.

The contents of some of the documents

obtained by the spy-ring found their way, it

is understood, to South Africa's main

liberation movement, the outlawed African

National Congress (ANC), as well as to

Frontline State security services.

The documents detailed, down to

minutiae, the full extent of South Africa's

covert destabilisation of its neighbours.

The story has emerged only now because

the three members of the spy ring were

charged on lesser charges than high treason

when members of South Africa's State

Security Council - including Justice

Minister Kobie Coetsee and Foreign

Minister Pik Botha - decided that the

documents were too sensitive to be made

available to court officials even at an in-

camera hearing.

The politicians were particularly con-

cerned that sensitive details outlining

destabilisation plans in Zimbabwe itself

should not become available, according to

Trish Hanekom.

The politicians pressurised state legal

officials to reduce the charges - in the

process causing a serious row in

government legal circles

The rings defence lawyers used the panic

in the state to push a bargain. The

Orphaned and helpless in Mozambique

courtesy SA's destabilisation war

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two Hanekoms were eventually charged only under the Internal Security Act for the possession of banned ANC material and distributing the statements of people who may not legally be quoted in South Africa. Derek Hanekom received two years.

Hunter, the pivot of the group, was charged under the Defence Act and Protection of Information Act, mainly with stealing documents or gaining unauthorised access to computerised information - and got five years imprisonment.

The story told by Trish Hanekom is backed up in all respects by independent legal sources inside South Africa and security officials in the Frontline States. Hunter was special assistant to Colonel Cornelius Van Niekerk, a senior officer in the Directorate of Special Tasks of the Chief of Staff (Intelligence) of the South African Defence Force, and worked out of the Zanza building in central Pretoria.

Van Niekerk headed "Operation Mila" - the codename for the programme of South African Defence Force covert support for the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR) fighting the Frelimo government.

'Operation Mila' was the model project - regarded as effective and cost-efficient - for other operations being run with the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA) in Lesotho, Unita in Angola and dissidents in Zimbabwe?

Trish Hanekom said in an interview in Harare, to which she was immediately deported in secrecy in November, after her release one week before the expiry of her sentence.

Trusted footsoldier

Hunter was Van Niekerk's trusted footsoldier - sometimes in military uniform, but often dressed in civilian clothes when it was necessary to prevent any impression of military involvement.

The Colonel apparently decided Hunter was altogether better suited than the other - young conscripts working on 'Operation Mila' to the kind of clandestine work that was done in the directorate. Hunter, who was brought up in Lesotho, was more intelligent and not crudely racist like his conscript colleagues.

Unknown to Van Niekerk, Hunter was feeding every scrap of information he could lay his hands on to the Hanekoms, who farmed in the Magaliesburg Mountains, just outside Pretoria. There, copies of many of the documents were buried underground in a network of contacts outside the country.

Trish Hanekom says the ring got hold of top secret information and intelligence documents with intimate details of how: 10 programmes for the pro-MNR Voice of Free Africa radio station were produced by 10 New Africa February 1988

Plk Botha wanted cover-up of destabilisation plans  
Defence Chief Malan - honest"

"much less than  
South African Military Intelligence and

then delivered by someone wearing civilian clothes to the Hillbrow Post Office Tower in Johannesburg for bmadmst.

0 Consignments of brand new AK47 assault rifles (with their serial numbers emsed)weretakenfromalargewarehouse in a top-security section of the Voortnekkerhoogte military complex just south west of Pretoria for delivery to the MNR

.These weapons and other arms were dropped to the MNR in Mozambique by Dakota aircraft, including the military coordinates for these drops.

0 Orders for agricultural tools, medicines, fertilisers, pencils (with "Made in South Afrim" erased) and even for headswrves for MNR rallies inside Mommbique were paid for,always in cash, by soldiers wearing civilian clothes.

0 A company called "Frame Intertrading", whichhadanairu'altatanairheldjust outside Johannesburg, was used as a front to transport oEicials and materials involved in "Operation Mila" around southern Africa

0 MNR leader Alfonso Dhlakama and some of his aides were taken around expensive manls clothing store by Hunter who had been given R5,000 of South Afrimn military money to kit them out in smart attire for a conference they were to attend in West Germany in 1983.

C Senior Renamo oHicials in mps in the Transvaal were paid wages by the Directorate of Special Tasks.

.MNR leaders in Malawi were paid by Hunter who was given cash by the Directorate to finance the necessary bank transfers, and;

0 the Directorate bought two mravans for Rename oHicialsineampsinthe Transvaal. As a result, in 1983, Frelimo soon knew intimatedetailsoftwombaseeampsin the Eastern Transvaal outside Phalaborwa and one outside Pretoria, and many other details of South African resupply operations fortheMNR,downtothelastAK47 and handgrenade.

Trish Hanekom believes Frelimois possession of this kind of information may have been a contributory factor in the South African Government decision to sign the Nkomati Non- on pact with

Frelimo, which occurred about six months after the Hanekoms were jailed. The South Aii'imn government, she believes, had to project internationally the image of a government which, although it might have been destabilising its neighbours, had now resolved to stop.

Hanekom believes she had a "moral duty" to undermine the covert destabilisa- tion operations. "I am a Zimbabwean citizen, and I have a very strong loyalty. But. the future of Zimbabwe is dependent on what happens in South Africa

'Ifanyofwhatwedidasm'stedthe Frontline States to better equip and defend themselves against the activities of the South African Defence Force, then, for me,

any length of time in prison was worthwhile."

She accused South African Defence Minister Magnus Malan of being much more than honest in a meeting with a group of United States politicians in Cape Town on November 10 at which he combatively claimed South Africa was not destabilising its neighbours.

"The pattern of destabilisation we exposed in 1983 continues in all its main elements today," she said. I

# SOUTH AFRICA'S DIRTY TRICKS DEPARTMENT

agents planned to kidnap ANC members in London. drug them and ship them back to the RSA to stand trial. has once again - like the earlier Irangate scandal - brought to the surface all sorts of speculation concerning South African military and arms deals", and mercenary activity. When the Director of Public Prosecutions in the UK dropped the charges against the kidnap conspirators. it left many questions unanswered as to the extent of South African covert involvement. '

The exact details of the plot remain unclear, there being some debate as to whether the kidnapping was intended for real, or was a cover for a more intricate plan involving a military coup d'etat in the Seychelles. What is certain, however, is that South African agents are working abroad, and seemingly making regular contact with MI6 and CIA operatives. in the Irangate hearings it was alleged that Lt. Colonel Oliver North promised to send South African technicians - amongst others - to help Iran service its military equipment. Whilst Colonel North's actions have been described as that of a "loose gun on the deck of state", the South African Government's actions appear analogous to that of a pirate vessel on the high sea of international politics. Comparison of Pretoria's activities with those described in the "Irangate" hearings is inevitable, for as North supplied arms to Iran without Congress' approval, there appear to be sectors of the SA policy-making establishment who are creating an international network for the covert supply of men and equipment.

Local armaments production has grown to the extent that the RSA is now among the world's ten largest manufacturers and exporters of military hardware. However, as it has been Annseors (Armaments Corporation of SA) stated policy not to comment on rumours as to the extent of its arms production and transactions, it is naturally difficult to confirm this. Reportedly the RSA has sold equipment to Argentina (frequency-hopping radios captured in the Falklands are evidence of this), Chile. Greece, Iraq (100 6-5 howitzers were apparently exchanged for oil in 1982). Morocco (which involved the sale of Hater! armoured vehicles for use against Polisario rebels), Oman and more recently Sri Lanka, to whom Casspir/Bufiel-type mine-proof vehicles were supplied. Moreover, Right: The hard face at S. African security; below: Is the 'Cheetah' In fact an Iereell Kfir?

Recent revelations that South African according to diplomatic sources and commercial records, South African business , interests have allegedly been buying arms and military supplies through a Greek front company, and secretly trading them for oil from Iran. 'V ' ' g

Whilst much of the technically-advanced has been procured through equipment collaboration with Israel. at times the strength of this relationship is surprising. Reports that

israel recently supplied the Republic with between four and six Boeing 707 in-flight refuelling tankers. equipped with a sophisticated surveillance and intelligence gathering ELTA system, astounded many people. especially at a time when the Jewish state was seemingly distancing itself from Pretoria. However, speculation that Atlas Aircraft Corporation's up-to-date Cheetah ground-attack fighter is in fact an Israeli Kfir and not a modified Mirage as claimed. might indicate the extent of Armsco's and the RSA's leverage in the international arena: a godfather in the underworld of covert state operations. Nonetheless. in light of the ANC kidnap case and Lrangate, it is the use of SADF personnel and South African mercenaries abroad which is generating the greatest degree of interest at the moment. Pretoria still apparently finds it difficult to deny convincingly the roles of the SADF, Military intelligence and its National intelligence Service in Colonel "Mad" Mike Hoare's abortive Seychelles coup d'etat in 1981. the exact details of which still remain clouded by controversy. Ironically, it was Hoare who "succeeded" in making modern mercenary soldiering respectable for a brief period in the Congo in the mid-1960's. Leading the all-white and predominantly South African Five Commando, he successfully spearheaded Congolese military operations against the brutal and seemingly irrepressible adventure'xand pay!) which swelled the number of South African mercenaries in, later campaigns: in Biafra during the Nigerian civil-war: in Rhodesia; and now, allegedly, in Sri Lanka against the Tamil separatists and in supporting Contra missions aimed at usurping the Nicaraguan regime. However. as the "Lrangate" hearings have demonstrated, these types of often pseudo-state operations lend themselves open to the problems of inefficiency, lack of accountability, charges of illegality and, to bitter intemecine conflict of policy. indeed, Colonel North did not manage to secure the release of a single hostage with his arms deals; the exact beneficiaries of the profits derived remain unclear and. there is evidence of infighting between the National Security Administration. the CIA and the State Department.

"Destroyers of places"

The parallels with the Republic are obvious: especially involving the lack of accountability of the SADF-dominated State Security Council. the existence of which is unknown even to many whites. and the apparent conflict of interest between the "hawks" (ie. the SADF) and the "doves" (ie. the Department of Foreign Affairs) in the regional policy-making process. .

There exists another completely different social problem peculiar to the Republic's situation. In view of the RSA's security difficulties, and the concomitant combat training and experience of its young National Servicemen. South Africa could be entering a post-Vietnam veteran" type phase, where disenfranchised youth with nothing but military experience. unable to get civilian job opportunities. offer their skills to the highest

bidder. Are they creating a breed of mercenary like that described by Sir Walter Raleigh as: "Seditious, unfaithful. disobedient; destroyers of all places and countries wither they are drawn as being held by no other bond than their own commodity"? The spread of such a situation and the knowledge that South African arms might be supporting illegal regimes elsewhere, does little to enhance their pariah status and sett-conciousness abroad. The intra-state conflict of the policy makers aside. these covert activities iliustrate the paradoxical position of the South African government: the desire (and plea) for international acceptance as a stable. lawful and democratic regime, whilst engaged in a systematic and comprehensive range of covert operations funded or directed by state agencies.

A special correspondent  
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Morris examines the predicament.

11 South Africa, where 73% of the population has access to 13% of the land, about one in every six South Africans is homeless. In the urban area of Soweto near Johannesburg, one of the wealthiest cities in Africa, an average of 16 people live in each Soweto house which is a box-like structure divided into four small rooms. Official figures admit that there is a backlog of at least 342,000 housing units for blacks, not counting the inhabitants of the homelands, and a backlog of 161,344 in the non-independent homelands. 503,344 families are acknowledged to be without any adequate shelter.

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Influx control has been abolished and black South Africans are now allowed to work where they can, but they are not allowed to live where they like. Five million are homeless and there is no clear policy for their future. Patricia In September 1987 the Deputy Minister of Constitutional Development said that there is a total of 1,310,813 black squatters in South Africa, 850,000 of whom live in the Transvaal province. These are only the official figures.

Glenda Glover, a specialist in urban housing problems, told me that it is unclear how the Government arrives at its official figures. For a start it is difficult to define the term "squatter" in the South African situation. "Farm labourers, for instance, can be evicted at any time, as are domestic workers who live in the back yards of their employers' urban houses. These people

FIVE MILLION

HOMELESS.

31st:

Driven out of their homes, those children try to console each other would appear to be homeless too?

Glenda Glover is particularly involved in monitoring and advising shackdwellers between Johannesburg and Vereeniging south of the Johannesburg municipal boundary. Between the beginning of September 1987 and the first week of November 1987 there was what appeared to be a campaign of harassment launched against them by the authorities. There were 670 prosecutions for illegal squatting or for trespass, some people being arrested as many as four or five times. All the people appearing at one regional court.

Says Glover, "They have to appear in court within two days of their arrest. If there is no legal defence, our experience is that they are convicted and receive suspended sentences. We have been able to supply some legal defence for the 670. They're then granted bail, usually

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somewhere between 30 and 50 rands. Then they return to an illegal situation. While they are at work they are fine: influx control laws have gone and they are allowed to work in the city. But their living conditions are illegal. They don't have an alternative to that because of the housing shortages.

'They unit make themselves legal residents.'" 0

Until July 1986 when the influx control laws were abolished the people were expected to go back to their homelands even if they have lived in the urban area, for several generations. The Government sought a new solution to the problem by publishing the Orderly Urbanisation papers last year (1986), the effects of which have not yet been seen in action. It is now the responsibility of the Provincial Administrations to deal with the housing problem.

'Hopefully," said Mr Glover, "they will quickly identify land for informal settlements where people will be supplied at least with basic services such as water and sanitation, and then be allowed to erect shelters with a tenure of land."

A group of 2,600 shack-dwellers at Varkfontein near Benoni on the East Rand were encouraged to live there by a white owner in contravention of the Group Areas Act. He was not doing it out of the goodness of his heart of course, but was charging them rent of between 30 and 60 rand per housing structure. The white neighbours right wing lobby objected, so the Province, in cooperation with the town council of the black urban area Davyton, provided alternative land for these people which was suitable because it was in the same area.

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Luckily it so happened that the law provided for the expansion of that black urban area

'Now," said Ms Glover, we have to see what the Government is going to do in cases, where groups need to be settled near white areas where work can be obtained. People need housing where they live. They are very poor and must be transported to work. ;

We still have to see whether the Government or Province is prepared to provide land outside the black urban area. Neighbours also objected to the squatters at Wheelers Farm also south of Johannesburg, where between 7-9,000 people were squatting on 'white' land. The farmer was not in occupation and they weren't paying rent, so the province expropriated the land and declared it an emergency camp under new regulations. When for entry onto the land and how one lives on the land can be quite stringent, says Glover, "at Wheeler's Farm both the army and the police have in turn enforced permits and patrols which the Government argues are necessary to prevent an influx onto that land.

"The declaration of an emergency camp is at least a sign of recognition that these people exist on the land and need not be

dispersed by arrests and demolitions of their homes. There is the promise for them of some kind of security without the harassment suffered by other shack-dwellers in the surrounding area.

"It has been proposed that these people move to a piece of land called Wildebosfontein north of Vereeniging, close to Everton - part of the sixteen kilometres away from where they are at the moment? . :

Geoff Budlender, Director of the Johannesburg Legal Resources Centre quoted another case; Wu 1985 the Government said there would be no more forced removals. That isn't the way it has panned out. Some communities which were under threat of removal have been empowered but there is for instance a community, with which I am deeply involved, at Brits - about half an hour from Pretoria. They have lived legally on their land in a recognised township for the best part of 50 years. The township is close to the city and industrial area. They can walk to work. The Government now says that all those people have to move to another township which has been developed about 25 kilometres away. That affects about 10,000 people. It was a policy decision which was taken before what was said to be the abolition of forced removals but in fact the Government is continuing to attempt to compel the people to leave the place in which they live and to move to a new township.

Disbelief and hopelessness stare those people, made homeless by apartheid laws, in the town. Often they must break the law to survive

"But this is really a testing ground as far as policy is concerned. If the removal continues it will be the clearest demonstration imaginable that the policy of forced removals for political reasons is still alive. What will happen it is difficult to say. There is still the possibility that the community will be reprieved although at present the Government is refusing point blank to do that.

"Well they may consider the matter closed, but 10,000 people at Brits don't. They are - resisting very strongly. They will not be moved. It is quite clear that they will not be moved other than by force and the question is whether the Government is going to send in bulldozers to shatter a settled community of 10,000 people. If they do it's going to be extremely unpleasant. It's a tense situation in which things can flare up pretty quickly. It will be extremely ugly if they attempt to go ahead, not because anybody wants it to be ugly, but because the people simply want to stay where they are and they've never been given any good reason why they should move.

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T&VER STORY  
CHILD TORTURE IN  
SOUTH AFRI

Shaken by the defiance of South African youth, the police and security forces have taken to the use of the most brutal forms of torture against defenceless children. A major international conference has provided convincing evidence that physical and psychological torture is widespread and the complaints of the victims are largely ignored by the authorities. Chris McIvor reports.

Bouras Nakhlobati is 16-years-old and comes from Tembisa township in the Transvaal, South Africa. At 3.30am on the 10th October, 1986, the house he was staying in with several other members of a student committee was surrounded by the SADF and members of the Special Branch. The door was kicked in and the six occupants of the house beaten with whips and batons for about forty-five minutes by a group of over 10 soldiers, most of whom were white.

During this time the students, all of whom at that time were under 16, were asked to identify each other as members of the ANC, though as Bouras claimed, none of them had any links with this organisation. Bouras was the only one to be taken to Tembisa police station where he was kept with several other detainees from other raids in the township in the open courtyard of the building. "All I had on was a pair of jeans and a thin shirt. We had to squat in the courtyard for several hours despite the fact that it was raining and we had no shelter. The police laughed when we asked them if we could move?,

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At 6am Bouras was taken into a room by himself and handcuffed to a chair. There he was attached to two electrodes and subjected to about 30 minutes of electric shock treatment. Once again his interrogators, one white, one black, asked him to identify his colleagues and friends as members of the ANC or other banned organisations. These questions were interspersed with blows to the head, face, chest and legs the marks of which are still visible to this day. "No, I was not formally charged. No one informed my parents. I had no access to a lawyer or legal representation. All I was told was that I had been pointed out as a troublemaker and that this was the reason I would be taught a lesson."

After two days of interrogation in Tembisa police station Bouras was then taken to Campden Park where he was handed over to a new set of interrogators who promised him that this time they would have no difficulty in "breaking him." The re-innements of the torture chamber in this institution placed Tembisa in a minor league. "They stripped me of all my clothes. Beaten and brutalised children contemplate a bleak future and put me inside a kind of diving suit which they fastened to cover my head. A rubber was inserted into my mouth so that I couldn't scream. Then they turned on the electric current. The pain was so intense that on several occasions I blacked out.

uAfter about 30 minutes I was taken out and then locked inside a ti'idge for whatil guess was about half an hour. Then I was returned to the suit and so it went on and omeasalsotakentoaroomwitharowof bright searchlights attached to a wall. I was tiedtoapoleandmyheadfastenedsothatI. couldnit move it from side to side. Then they put the lights on and left me for several hams."

Alter three days in Campden Park, Bouras was taken to another prison where he was kept for three months before being released. Throughout his ordeal he was offered no access to a lawyer, received no visits from his parents and was never informed of any evidence which had implicated him in any criminal activities Despite severe burns to his body oomsioned by electric shock treatment and acute pain in his eyes due to the searchlights, he

## CHILD TORTURE

received no medial attention throughout his time in detention. Today Bouras finds it difficult to sleep, is unable to read or write because of his affected eyesight, is subject to recurrent bouts of fear and depression and finds it hard to meet his family and near friends and colleagues. In July of this year Bouras left South Africa and vows she will never return until the apartheid system has been dismantled.

William Modibedi is 11-years-old and comes from a township near Krugersdorp, South Africa. On the 6th of October last year he was sleeping with his brothers, sisters and mother in their small township house when the police arrived at about 1 o'clock in the morning. Four armed men broke down the door and woke up all the children. When William's mother tried to intervene as they took him away she was pushed aside and told to mind her own business. William was taken to Krugersdorp police station where he was kept for two months, again without being formally charged and without having access to a lawyer. During that time he was beaten and assaulted by various policemen and accused by them of burning down shops and cars and necklacing people who helped the police.

William's mother, whose other four children have also been held in detention, the oldest of which she claims has been raped, remembers when she was first allowed to visit her son. 'When I arrived at the police station to visit William I could see that he had been badly beaten. He was crying and several of his teeth had been knocked out.' In December William was released without any charges having been made against him. The marks of his experience, his mother claimed, are visible to this day, not so much in any physical marks of beating or torture but in the fear and anxiety which he is now expected to live with for the rest of his life.

Bouras Nakhlobati and William Modibedi were giving evidence at a conference in Harare on Child Repression and the Law in South Africa. The catalogue of horrors they revealed is only a indication of an increasing body of documentation which has been collected to substantiate claims that a systematic and widespread use of torture and assault is now being employed by South African police and military against the civilian population of the country. The use of torture and physical intimidation recognises no age limits. In Khorankoor police station in Bophuthatswana, in 1983 a 13 year old Tabesa Mapusa was shot in the back by SA Security forces in Botswana. She is now paralysed

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September an entire class of school children numbering 50 boys and girls were rounded up by the police and taken to the state mortuary. There they were made to lie on the floor and were beaten with wire whips

and siamboks for several hauls. Medial reports by prominent doctors, supported by photographs of the injuries sustained by these children were part of the evidence to substantiate their claims, but as yet no one has been charged or reprimanded with this act of brutality.

"80 per cent abused"

The documentation of such events has been systematic and meticulously carried out, claimed one representative of the Detainees Parent Support Committee (DPSC) at the Harare conference. "The Minister of Law and Orderf he continued, "has consistently dismissed our claims of physical brutality on the part of his police force as unfounded and lacking in evidence and has said that ifthis does take place then it is isolated and extremely rare. So we decided to ensure that our documentation of police brutality against children was as objective and as verifiable as possible." He cites a survey carried out in Cape Town in May, June and July of this year when a group of 83 children who had pa\$ed through detention were monitored by a gmup of doctms and lawyexs. Of the 83 cthmmwhoseagesmngedtioml4tol7, 64 complained of physical abuse and beatingsandmanyofthemhadswisto it. 60 per cent had developed recognisable psychological symptoms as a result of their ordeal. Reports from monitoring groups in other regions have pointed towards the same conclusions. In July of this year, for example, an oHicial of the Pinetown Child Welfare Society reported that in the organisation's experience I80 per cent of children passing through detention have been physically abused."

But as Don Foster, a psychologist at Cape Town University, pointed out, the definition of torture should be extended to cover those acts of psychological intimidation of children which are as acute as any physiwl abuse or actual violence. He believes that as  
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international attention begins to focus on this issue the South African police will be more tempted to employ these techniques, since they leave no physical scars and cannot be pointed to in a court of law.

By prolonged confinement, hooding, sham executions, he claimed, were now part of the repertoire of the South African State to terrify its opponents. Watching the torture of others or listening to the screams of detainees in other cells can be as terrifying as actually being kicked or beaten oneself: Even the fact of indefinite detention with no access to lawyers, family, friends etc is an act of brutality that many children have described as worse than the whippings they frequently receive."

The ability of police and military authorities to employ such tactics against young children could not be carried out with such impunity without the complicity of the legal system in South Africa. As many delegates pointed out, this has now become an arm of the State and the former boast of the judiciary that it was one of the best and most independent in the world has now been revealed as a total fabrication. Under the present State of Emergency, for example, children can now be held in detention without access to any legal representation or their parents and without being formally charged.

The DPSC has estimated that between 1975 and 1985, a REPRESSION, 16 New African February 1988

Demonstrations against S. African child torture In Harare COVER 5 TORY

7,500-10,000 people under the age of 18 have been held under these regulations since June 1986. At the same time those children who are charged and placed on trial are imposed on a special court, but all this has meant is that the public, including parents, have been excluded from the courts in South Africa," claimed one lawyer, "are composed of a magistrate, a prosecutor and an interpreter. The children are not informed that they can have legal representation at a court hearing and in many cases where they do know they have been too frightened to ask the interpreter is very often in league with the prosecution and in cases which have ended have heard on numerous occasions interpreters distort the statements of the clients they were supposed to be helping."

Another important feature of South African legislation under the present State of Emergency is the immunity from prosecution that has been granted to police and military for acts of violence and in some cases murder. Of 406 complaints lodged in 1986 in Port Elizabeth against acts of police brutality only 6 were investigated and these dismissed after a couple of months. In a recent case in Durban when a 14-year-old youth brought a prosecution against the police for injuries sustained during "questioning" the court dismissed the case 'bullets and birdshot any more. The birdshot

recent years? As many delegates pointed out, the last decade has seen children experience of rising unemployment, anger '7 against the breakup of family life under the repressive backlash on the part of experiences in prisons have only hardened the country of apartheid. That is the major : brutalise the mother detained we are ' I and ordered the youth to be prosecuted for intimidating members of the police force. As a result of incidents like these many children and their parents are reluctant to approach legal institutions to demand redress in the name of the state. .v.:. 2 Mmm mity first mecum however, ? hash adm'eexious soon sequem. State violence has always been apart of the apartheid system but previously it has been limited to what individuals should be expected to get away with. Now that the State and the judiciary have signalled to military incidents of deaths among the general population resulting from military activities, ties" has increased dramatically. Within this general rule, children have not been excepted. Over 300 children have been killed as a result of police action over the last two years. 1,000 have been seriously wounded. A recent survey in Cape Town revealed that 55% of those who have died from police or military bullets had been shot in the back, another 15% in the side. As one doctor from Soweto testified, We don't see much of less serious injuries from rubber was characteristic of the state of emergency. Now the bullets we find are high velocity. At the same time at the beginning of last year most of the injuries were peripheral - that is arm, hands, legs etc - whereas now the injuries are more related to more organs, heart, etc. It's clear they are shooting to kill." More determined , But why this targeting of children in , i become an integral part of resistance to apartheid for several reasons. Resentment against an inferior education system, the labour system has given rise to an anger among the youth that has been translated into structured opposition against the State. . Student and youth organisations which have organised school and consumer boycotts and demonstrations have proliferated and this in turn has caused a Government authorities. Nevertheless as Nodea Molets, a 19-year-old youth who was detained in December 1985, concluded, We, I want to go back to South Africa. Our , us, made us more determined to rid our contradiction in Government policy of the last few years. The harder they oppose and:

uni: onCULH i"  
Publish and be banned

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The Weekly Mail, South Africa's only remaining liberal newspaper is " - surrounded by a sea of uncertainty and restrictive legislation. One false i move and it could be banned or permanently censored, already it has received an official closure warning. Patricia Morris reports, through a crisis. Seven "liberal" papers closed down. It wasn't a question of politics - at least, not ostensibly so. It was a matter of money. There simply wasn't the readership there had once been. Of course it one looks a little further one finds a political connection, as with most events in South Africa. The country had entered a new phase of "unrest". as the government euphemistically called it. and whites with the buying power were no longer interested in paying for doom-laden news which tried to tell it like it was. These closures and the simultaneous retrenchment of journalists left a massive hole in the South African media. Little relevant news managed to filter through the censors and the existing self-censoring reportage. the state of emergency regulations, and the State's resistance to divulging information. Then two retrenched journalists from the Fiend Daily Mail, Irwin Manoim and Anton Harber, took a gamble and set up an alternative weekly newspaper. the Weekly Mail. They started with a staff of three. Two years on. they have a staff of 25, ten of them reporters. With additional contributions from freelance journalists they have established what serious readers believe to be the only surviving uniformiy worthwhile newspaper in the country. The Weekly Mail has survived economically because, as a bleary-eyed Manoim put it to me in a shambolic set of offices (the Mail's premises yet again on the move in search of cheap rents), it is "a tighty-run cottage industry". The reason for the sand-blasted eyeballs was that he'd been up most of the previous night distributing the week's edition: the driver had been off sick. There can't be many national newspapers whose editors will make the deliveries when a crisis sets in. On what grounds can one make assertions about the Weekly Mail's importance? Its sales, says Manoim modestly. are 20,000; its readership an estimated 70,000. In a country with four million whites, less than half of them English-speaking, this figure is nothing to be modest about. An important factor for the Mail is that not all its readers are white. What are the black readership figures? "It's difficult to estimate. When we did a reader's survey we deliberately didn't ask people their race because that's a South African cliché," he replied with a smile. "All we know is that most leading black activists. trade unionists, people on Robben island, read the Weekly Mail. Our reporters find that if they go into a black area and say they're from the Weekly Mail, there's IN 1985 the South African press went Hall's editors Manoim and Harber - 'und-blaated Wt name recognition. So it's clearly known." Their original purpose was to cover the

"unrest" which by 1985 was getting minimal coverage in the South African press. "We thought," Manoim told me. "there should be a paper which brought news. to white readers especially, at what was happening on the other side of the line. The whole point about apartheid is that it seals people off from one another. So it is quite possible to live in a white city and not know what is going on in the rest of the country."

But it's become increasingly difficult to find out what's going on. Contact networks have been broken up: many people who formerly provided a source of news have been detained or have gone into hiding. While of late newspapers have less information about events. Manoim concedes that there is relatively less to report on than there was during the earlier period of the state of emergency. in urban areas the "unrest" has to a large extent been crushed. and events in rural areas remain barely accessible. However, there is no shortage of copy arriving on the editors' desks. Throughout the country small news agencies have sprung up which cover events in the immediate vicinity. The Mail makes a careful selection from this supply, most of which is rejected on the grounds that it is not thorough enough. "A lot of leg work is necessary to prove one's case," said Manoim. "because all the odds are against one."

He was referring to the legal tightrope - or something more akin to the plank - which conscientious editors have to walk. Recently about seven newspapers - not including the Mail - received "warnings". A warning is a letter indicating they have been named in the Government Gazette, after which they have one more chance. If a paper makes another slip it can be closed down for a period or a censor is appointed to keep an eye on it.

"There's definitely a game in progress as to who they choose to warn at a particular time. But nobody's quite sure what the rationale behind it is. Some of the recent recipients of warnings have been surprising choices - some right-wing publications for instance.

"There's a distinction," says Manoim.

"between what they would take you to court on and what they would issue a warning on. They issue warnings on the basis of published articles for which they can't prosecute because they don't breach any regulation. Essentially it's fairly vague: undermining the security of the State or promoting the aims of a banned organisation.

"Recently, for example, The Sowetan was warned over an article it published about the Free the Children conference in Harare. The item appeared in about the same form in virtually every newspaper in the country because it came from a major news service. Presumably they singled out The Sowetan because it has a wide black readership." The Weekly Mail itself has a number of prosecutions pending. which have yet to reach the courts. "These things drag on for a long time," said Manoim, "perhaps because the State's cases are not as good as they would like them to be." Most of the pending

prosecutions have to do with the Police Act, which is designed to protect the reputation of the police force. Any accusation against the police force has to be proven to be true and the assumption is that the police version is true until proved otherwise.

"It's a tricky balance," said Manoim. "On the one hand all the cards are in the State's hands; and on the other, if they take something to court it may prove embarrassing to them because witnesses may reveal details hitherto undisclosed." '

While the Weekly Mail's readers may by now take for granted its regular appearance, the editors don't.

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"I don't think we've ever been in a position where we think more than two weeks ahead. Everything is very arbitrary. For some time the minister has had the power to close down newspapers and he can use it whenever he chooses. It's that kind of uncertainty which is the most difficult to work with." I

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