

INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE & AID FUND
for Southern Africa

In consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
of the United Nations and UNESCO

Founder President Canon L. John Collins

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14th September, 1990

Dear E,

The last few weeks have seen dramatic developments in South Africa. The implications for IDAF have been no less dramatic; they affect all our work fundamentally, and suddenly.

The first major item is the Pretoria Minute, giving the outcome of the meeting between the ANC and the Government on 6 August, 1990. I enclose a copy of the minute, together with a copy of the ANC report-back to the people of South Africa in the Weekly Mail August 10-12, 1990.

The agreements reached in Pretoria represent a victory and a hope for the oppressed and dispossessed people of South Africa. All of you who worked so hard over so many years, to alert the conscience of your governments and fellow-citizens and who have raised money for legal defence and humanitarian aid for all those struggling against apartheid may feel justly proud that you have played a part in this great achievement.

We have always known that the aim of the work has been to make it unnecessary. We can now say, with confidence, that the end is at least in sight. However, before we pronounce an oration celebrating the demise of IDAF, we must face the fact that a period of great difficulty lies ahead, not least because dangerous and terrible things are still happening in South Africa.

This is how the Trustees and the staff at Head Office see the immediate future.

1. Programme I (Legal Defence)

This constitutes over half the total budget of IDAF, and under the terms of the Pretoria Minute, it should become largely unnecessary during the first part of 1991. Political trials are scheduled to cease by 31 December 1990; there may be disputed cases continuing until around April 30, but, by then, our legal work should be largely completed.

2. Programme II (Aid & Welfare)

This caters for the families of political prisoners and detainees. The Pretoria Minute provides for the release of such prisoners; and we understand that the majority should have been released by 31 December

— , 1990.

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES: Archbishop Trevor Huddleston C.R. (Chairman). Ernst Michanek (Vice-Chairman), Thorvald Stoltenberg,

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IDEAS FOR A MESSAGE FOR PUBLICATION IN

THE LAST ISSUE OF FOCUS, ALONGSIDE A STATEMENT FROM BISHOP TREVOR HUDDLESTON AS CHAIR OF THE IDAF TRUSTEES

Since 1967 the International Defence & Aid Fund has kept an invaluable record on behalf of the people of South Africa, first through its Information Service and since 1975 through Focus.

It has allowed the international community to understand the nature of the brutal repression inflicted by apartheid. At the same time it has, even in its reports on what happens in the prisons, police cells and courts and in the face of the guns of apartheid, provided a glimpse of the defiant heroism of the oppressed masses of South Africa in their refusal to submit.

With their victory and the end of repression in South Africa in sight, we would like to put on record our appreciation of this work.

Agreement has been reached on the definition of a political prisoner. Reception and rehabilitation of prisoners, and such aid as may be needed by them and their families, will be taken care of by the National Coordinating Committee in Johannesburg, based on the South African Council of Churches, with representation from the ANC, PAC, other organisations, and also by the ANC Welfare Committee. This machinery is being developed to take on the huge task of caring for all "Returnees", that is exiles and released prisoners.

3. Programmes III & IV (Information & Research)

There is no further role in "keeping the conscience of the world alive to the issues at stake", since it is precisely those issues that are being negotiated with the Pretoria Government by Nelson Mandela and the ANC.

With the lifting of censorship, information is now freely accessible inside South Africa, and is available to the outside world.

Staff at head office, with the heads of all departments have been examining these questions exhaustively, and discussions have taken place with the ANC at the highest level, and with some of our major donors. Any comments or suggestions you or your Committees may have will be very welcome and will be taken into account in the discussions that are now proceeding on these matters.

The roots of Defence & Aid go back some forty years, when, under the leadership of Chief Albert Luthuli, the African National Congress, supported by the Indian National Congress the Coloured People's Congress and the

Congress of Democrats began to intensify the struggle against apartheid. At

the same time, repression intensified steadily. After the Treason Trial (1956-1960) and the Rivonia Trial (1963), both largely funded by Defence &

Aid, more and more help had come from outside. In 1960, Oliver Tambo was sent abroad to organize external resistance, and he remained in close contact

with Canon Collins, & IDAF. From 1964 Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and

other ANC leaders were imprisoned on Robben Island. The internal South

African Defence & Aid Committees which relied on funds from IDAF came under

increasing pressure, and were forced to close when the "Defence and Aid

d Fund"

was banned. From beyond the reach of the South African Government, IDAF has

continued to this day to provide its legal and humanitarian aid. Oliver Tambo understood and supported the policy that funds be distributed without

discrimination for the benefit of all genuine resisters against apartheid.

Now that there is a real reduction in repression, and South African organizations are able to function freely and openly in their own country we

can hand over to them though they will need time to get organised.

However, our work is not quite ended, and we still need short-term support.

We have legal and humanitarian responsibilities to fulfil until these can be taken over by others. We need to achieve an orderly transfer of our work,

files and archives, and we have responsibilities to our staff. We shall have

to see out 1990, and at least the first part of 1991.

I know that everyone in the IDAF community world-wide will want to see our job through until it is properly completed. Meanwhile as one who has been deeply concerned in the struggle against apartheid since the late forties and early fifties, I would like to express my gratitude and admiration for the vital work that you have all done.

Yours sincerely

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Trevor Huddleston CR
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