

The Cape Times May 28, 1980

Tomatoes thrown at V d Ross

Staff Reporter

THE rector of the University of the Western Cape, Professor R E van der Ross, said yesterday that he would call the riot police to the campus again if the students took part in further disorderly gatherings.

Professor Van der Ross was addressing about 1500 students at a campus meeting yesterday.

Permission to hold the meeting was given by the chief magistrate of Bellville on condition that Professor Van der Ross was present.

Professor Van der Ross was pelted by students throwing tomatoes and eggs at the meeting.

On Monday, Professor Van der Ross called the riot police to the UWC campus. The police broke up a meeting in the university's cafeteria with tear-gas and a baton charge.

Professor Van der Ross said he had called the police to protect students who wanted to attend lectures.

Yesterday, students criticized Professor Van der Ross for calling the police. They said that as a "father" he should not have permitted the police to "beat us up".

Professor Van der Ross said students should be aware of the fact that their bursaries would be withdrawn by the Department of Coloured Affairs if the boycott carried on.

He was informed by the stu-

dents that the boycott would carry on today and replied that as long as it was peaceful and with no intimidation, police would not be called in.

A memorandum signed by the rector, which was handed to students and visitors to the campus, said that while a situation prevailed that prevented students who wanted to study from doing so, police would be present on the campus.

The police, the memorandum read, were not there to force students to attend classes, but rather to protect those students wanting to attend classes.

The police would stay on the campus until the situation returned to "normal."

Striking students were being kept liable for the payment of school and boarding fees and should not be under the impression that for the duration of the boycott payments need not be met.

The Cape Times

WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 1980

Keeping calm

THE arrests, detentions and baton charges of the last few days represent a depressingly familiar response of the Nationalist government to extra-parliamentary protest against the apartheid system. This response is even less likely to solve this country's problems than such essays in *kragdadigheid* have been in the past. Whether they will serve even the temporary purpose of halting the present unrest is problematic. It is regrettable that the initially calm and prudent response of the authorities appears to have been laid aside, temporarily at least, in favour of tough action.

While this kind of response is popular with some sections of the white electorate and represents an easy option for the Nationalist government, it is doubtful whether it serves the national interest. Take the Johannesburg incident for example. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the churchmen's protest in terms of the law, which will be for the courts to decide, the action of the police in taking two well-known bishops and other leading churchmen into custody was maladroit in the extreme. Instead of being warned to appear in court in due course, and allowed to go home, the bishops and their fellows were hustled into vans and locked up in police cells, where they spent the night. Their incarceration was no doubt blazoned across the front pages of newspapers throughout the world and will cause indignation and anger among Christians everywhere.

Then there was the curious use of tear gas and a baton charge at the University of the Western Cape. No doubt there will be an official inquiry to establish the facts. It appears that the police had been called to the campus to protect non-boycotting students from intimidation. But their

subsequent actions on the campus, in tear-gassing and baton-charging students in a cafeteria, were puzzling indeed — and certainly call for some explanation.

Whatever the justification, the effect of such actions on inter-group relations is unfortunate. Such actions are unlikely to help much to calm things down. Rather the reverse. Before the atmosphere deteriorates any further, the authorities should take stock. More than ever, tact and restraint are indicated, even in the face of a measure of provocation. The vicious cycle of violence and counter-violence, once it is unleashed, is not easy to bring under control. And if there are casualties and martyrs are created, it is only the cause of violent revolution which gains. On the not-so-long term, the only sensible course is to institute a credible process of *negotiation*, involving recognized leaders of all communities, to devise a constitution which will command the loyalty of all groups. Meanwhile, the first task of government is to calm the atmosphere. The situation is delicately poised. Clumsy, precipitate action by authority could be counter-productive. It was wise of the educational authorities to scrap the reported ultimatum to pupils, if ultimatum it was, and to abandon the plan of large-scale expulsion of the boycotters. This was never a good idea. It would have achieved nothing.

It is time that people in authority realized that much more is to be gained by tact and patience than by bluster and the big stick. At the same time, pupils, students, striking workers and everyone else should note that the authorities cannot be expected to stand aside if law and order are placed in jeopardy and the public peace is threatened. It is a time for cool heads and steady hands.

The Cape Times May 28, 1980

Van der Ross: 'Man in middle'

By **ROGER
WILLIAMS**
Chief Reporter

PROFESSOR R E van der Ross, rector of the University of the Western Cape, who on his own admission summoned the police to the university campus on Monday to deal with restive students, has become a symbolic "man in the middle" in the current deadlocked situation in coloured education in the Cape.

A distinguished intellectual leader with an undoubted loyalty to his own people, whose fears and frustrations he has articulated in sometimes forceful terms from public platforms and in his writings, he has also demonstrated a strong respect for responsible conduct and for the maintenance of order.

His critics have on the one hand accused "Dick" van der Ross of selling out to Afrikaner nationalism by becoming part of its ideological machine; on the other of not exerting enough muscle in taking disciplinary action against activist students.

The dilemma in which Professor Van der Ross finds himself was reflected in the pages of the Cillie Commission report, on the wave of violence that rocked South Africa in 1976.

The commission said one of the difficulties encountered by the UWC rector was that he found himself with a divided staff, some of whom openly supported the students and others who

accused him of not acting strongly enough against the trouble-makers among them.

For perspective, in the agonized situation in which Professor Van der Ross finds himself, one needs to look at the track-record of this extraordinarily gifted man who is said to remain an enigma — even to those closest to him.

Dick van der Ross, now 58, can be recalled by many as one of the firebrands of the 1950s and the 60s — as one who denounced the apartheid system in the strongest terms. He was particularly incensed by the Group Areas Act and all it

rade to incite people to go on strike".

About the same time it was being concluded that it was Professor Van der Ross's "active interest in politics" that was behind the Provincial Administration's refusal to appoint him as head of the Hewat Training College, Athlone, on the recommendation of the Cape School Board.

This was also seen as the reason for a statement by the then Minister of the Interior, Senator Jan de Klerk, that Professor Van der Ross would be refused a passport if he succeeded in obtaining a post as a lecturer in Basutoland (now

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stood for, and in 1961 he told a meeting called by the Coloured National Convention that it was "a damned shame" that people were being pushed about at will in the implementation of this measure.

Such was the extent of this respected educationist's commitment to the fight against apartheid that he began drawing the interest of the security police, and he became a subject of discussion in the Provincial Council.

In May 1961 Mr E J Conradie, the Nationalist MPC for Gordonia, said he wanted to draw the attention of the then Administrator, Dr Nico Malan, to "certain coloured teachers such as Dr Van der Ross who goes along to the Pa-

Lesotho).

Although Professor Van der Ross held — and still holds — firm and decided political views, his tone has never been partisan, propagandistic or sectional. A man of universality and of deep insight into his fellow-man, he has always shown himself capable of taking the broader view, and of rising above group feelings.

He has also shown a deep awareness of the interdependence and of the common humanity of the various communities that make up the South African nation, and in his utterances and his writings he has shown himself able to feel real sympathy for Afrikaner and English-speaker, black and Asian in the South African milieu.

Solidarity with the banned, detained

The Cape Times May 28, 1980

letters

From Mr BRIAN BISHOP (Oranjezicht):

A GROUP of people is observing The Week of the Innocent from May 26 to June 2, as a mark of solidarity with those who are banned or detained without trial.

A great Christian of our continent, St Augustine, wrote: "Without justice what are kingdoms but robber gangs?" Justice demands that we are entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness subject only to the limitations of just laws applied justly. Article IX of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims: "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile."

The Universal Declaration was adopted on December 10, 1948, by every nation except Soviet Russia — whose contempt for human rights has been seen in Hungary and Afghanistan; Saudi Arabia — which had the world's only legal slave markets; and South Africa — whose new government was already sowing the discord that we are reaping today.

The new "order" of apartheid was only possible if the old principle of "law" was abandoned, and the National Party has voted itself Draconian powers. Victims of the administrative punishments have two things in common — they are law-abiding and they are effective. Because they are law-abiding, criminal law must give way to administrative action in silencing them. Their effectiveness in maintaining strong friendships across the colour line exposes the National Party's failure in this area.

Those of us who see the hope for future peace in our country flowing from a return to justice rather than from "measles maps" or constitutional wriggling must identify with the brave men and women whose rights have been violated because they preached a message of peace and reconciliation.

Because apartheid is a social and moral evil, we should

remember the banned political victims, including those who advocated peaceful political change such as Robert Sobukwe, Albert Luthuli, Steven Biko and Mrs Winnie Mandela, as well as the churchmen who in love have reached out to their neighbour, such as the Rev Beyers Naude and David Russell.

Those who wish to share in a very small way with the suffering of the banned and detained — and their families — are asked to observe a self-imposed house arrest from 6pm on Friday, May 30, to 6am on Monday, June 2, receiving no visitors and reflecting on those who endure unjust restrictions year in and year out, solely because they love our country and all its people.

Bonds linked to cost of living

From Miss GRACE POWIS (Claremont):

I READ with interest a letter from Mr H C Hartley (Cape Times, May 13) regarding Dr Martin van den Berg's suggestion that the minister of finance should issue bonds for senior citizens coping with the ever-rising cost of living.

As another octogenarian without medical aid, and a single woman to boot, I heartily support this and trust that the government will act with speed to put it into effect.

Collection

From JOY SANDERS and JACQUELINE MALCOLM, co-conveners of collection, South African Institute of Race Relations:

WE ASK the courtesy of your columns to express our appreciation of the public response to our street collection, held on May 17.

Thanks to our collectors and donors, the Cape Western region of this institute is the grateful recipient of the sum of R1 613.96.

Caring for children

From the Rev BRUCE R DUNCAN, superintendent, Cape Town City Mission Homes for Children, W O 272 (PO Box 41, Hanover Park, 7782):

YOUR REPORT "No one would take the children" (Cape Times, May 17) drew my attention, and I would like to reply so that our generous and warm Cape Town public can be fully aware of the situation facing us in child care. The lady who contacted the police would be happy to know that the two children who were destitute were given the shelter of our child care centre over the weekend and then our social worker took them to responsible authorities on the Monday. The parents were traced and the children have since been reunited with the family.

Second home

The tremendous need for child care facilities in Cape Town is another reason why our organization is presently raising funds to build a second children's home, and our plans, model and arrangements are complete. We are one-sixth of our way towards our proposed target and the Urban Foundation have given us a proportionate sum towards the erection of the creche section of our new complex.

If any folk would care to join our team in caring for children and would like to assist us they are most welcome to send donations for our second child care centre.

We have just completed the International Year of the Child and do trust that the spirit enshrined therein might live on.

Minister under fire in Burger

Political Correspondent

THE Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, Mr Braam Raubenheimer, yesterday came under strong attack from the political columnist of the Cape Nationalist newspaper, Die Burger.

The columnist, Mr Paul Greyling, accused Mr Raubenheimer of making a "shocking remark" about media coverage of conservation issues, and suggested that Mr Raubenheimer was ignorant and that the minister's undoubted talents might be better used outside the Cabinet.

The column raised several eyebrows in Parliamentary circles, particularly in view of the fact that Die Burger is the Cape Nationalist mouthpiece and the Prime Minister, Mr P W Botha, is the Cape National Party leader.

Mr Greyling's objection concerned Mr Raubenheimer's reply during a debate on Monday to a Nationalist request for conservation to be promoted in a television educational programme and for the help of

newspapers to be enlisted.

He said it was a "sour and undeserved" reaction of Mr Raubenheimer to say television and newspapers needed sensation to promote nature conservation and they would not regard an issue as newsworthy unless it was accompanied by some form of agitation.

Mr Greyling said this was shocking and the kindest thing that could be said about it was that it was evidence of ignorance. He pointed to regular "unsensational and agitation-free" TV nature programmes

and to the regular conservation column in Die Burger.

"Apparently Mr Raubenheimer is cross with some newspapers for personal political reasons.

"If, for this reason, he also wants to live in enmity with TV and the newspapers concerning the important work of his department of environmental conservation, one wonders whether his undoubted talents might not be used better elsewhere," Mr Greyling concluded.

No clash sought with govt — Tutu

The Cape Times May 28, 1986

JOHANNESBURG. — The 53 church leaders, including 10 women, who marched to John Vorster Square police headquarters yesterday, did not seek confrontation with the government, the general secretary of the South African Council of Churches, Bishop Desmond Tutu, said yesterday.

Addressing a press conference after his release and that of 52 others from police custody, he said they had marched "for a peaceful purpose".

For the first time, churches showed their loyalty to God, the bishop said.

Bishop Tutu said that after yesterday's march, South Africa would never be the same again — "change is on our doorstep".

He realized that not all churches were in favour of what had been done. But he would like to emphasize that

most of those who took part in the march were members of the SACC and were present at the council's national conference last month.

"They understood what the SACC stood for. Members of the SACC represent a total of 15 m Christians, which is not an insignificant figure.

"The SACC is dedicated to bringing about a non-racial society which is fair and just. The security of the white man lies in people being treated as people," Bishop Tutu said.

The bishop said the only remaining question was when and how South Africa would change.

He said the march by the clergymen had not been a trifling matter, but that it had been "very costly". Some of those who marched risked being shunned by their own congregations and others by their superiors. — Sapa