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at of religious obsession centres on
ic alienaton it has brought about in
,where the population is largely
Christian. The guerrilla war being
tinst Numeiri by the Sudanese
.beration Movement is led by John
tois described as a Marxist and has
;s with the Ethiopians. The
t in Khartoum now seems able to
e outside the main towns, accessible

SOUTHERN AFRICA

PLANNING FOR
A PEOPLEâ\200\231S WAR

Howard Barrell interviews
the ANCâ\200\231s Oliver Tambo (right)

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appears not to grasp his degree of
le is widely reported not to brook
m. His ministers are shufi- \202ed so
that
self-respect and
ms been lost. In Khartoum all
em to be made by the President. If
that any minister is engaged in
t action his resignation is promptly

their

plains the chaos and general state of
y which hangs over Khartoum
thing appears to concern the
, except internal security, control of
and the endless manoeuvring for
l â\200\224 off which the Sudanese

ntâ\200\231 lives.
Edward Kennedy, in his headline
campaign swing around Africa this
trently experienced the regimeâ\200\231s in-
himself. Assured by President
that refugees from Ethiopia in
fugee camps were being cared for,
is shocked to find mass starvation
all over the country on his inspection tour.
mandated action, it is reported, from
: Commissioner for Refugees, who
: food pouring into Sudan for
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relief. Yet, a week later, aid
in the same area were being forced to
;rain on the local market to feed
the local officials sat on a grain
brought in from the United States,
I had not received an order from
) distribute it.
The situation of the Ethiopian refugees is bad,
Sudanese themselves find seeing the
0 have no aid from international
s,
is worse. Some 40-50,000
families from the Western province of
who have been living on the charity
of the capital for months, are now
being shipped back to their drought
stricken areas. The government is refusing to
share with food, while they remain on
the outskirts of Khartoum in their miserable
3f those bused out of the capital
back, complaining that they were
:r a tree with a bag of grain and told
to till the parched soil.
Numeiri criticised the Ethiopian
for its drought on the grounds that
philosophyâ\200\231 was responsible for
agricultural disaster. He is now
popular because much of Sudan is
drought after three years without rain.
He now estimates that hundreds of
Sudanese are starving and that the
aid will easily reach a million by March,
but the country's harvest was again so poor.
The son of Mahmoud Mohamad Taha
was killed in the 200\231s opposition parties a martyr to
With the civil war in the South
deepening and the prospect of famine in
the country's political crisis is accelerating. Cl

Harare

WHEN AFRICAN National Congress
President Oliver Tambo repeated the slogan a
third time, the 500 exiled South African ANC
members packing the small hall in central
Lusaka could be forgiven for fearing that they
were to be subjected to a stream of rhetoric.

â\200\230La-lu-ta con-ti-nuaâ\200\231 shouted Tambo yet
again, dragging out each syllable. â\200\230Continuaâ\200\231,
responded the faithful, lists in the air.

He, like the Blacks and the few whites of all
ages sweating and singing in Lusakaâ\200\231s muggy
summer heat a fortnight ago to celebrate the '
ANCâ\200\231s anniversary had to accept the fact that
they and their forebears had struggled for 73

years and were still some way short of victory. Tambo told them as much. Indeed, as Tambo's former legal partner, the jailed ANC leader Nelson Mandela, once put it, the road to South African freedom is â\200\230no easy walkâ\200\231.

for

calling

One hopeful sign is the rising number of white South African journalists, academics and businessmen now either talks between the government and the ANC, or making pilgrimages to the ANC external mission headquarters â\200\224 down an obscure, littered Lusaka. One of President P.W. Botha's own MPs, Wynand Malan, is now among those calling publicly for talks with the ANC. He is from a new breed of Afrikaner nationalist, known as a oorbeli'gte â\200\224 that is, one of the â\200\230over-illuminatedâ\200\231.

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realisation

Tambo told me in an interview in Lusaka that he sees this snowballing white response arising out of the â\200\230the Botha government is fast running out of optionsâ\200\231. The government's new constitution has failed miserably to attract black support. Far from the ANC being crushed by last year's Nkomati accord between the Botha government and Frelimo in Mozambique â\200\224 the opposite has happened. Government attempts to keep the rapidly growing black union movement out of politics had failed. Late last year, South Africa witnessed unrest in black townships which Law 4 and Order Minister Louis Le Grange characterised as more serious than the Soweto uprising of 1976. Apartheid's inequalities and the insatiable demands of â\200\230securityâ\200\231 were major causes of the country's worst economic crisis in 55 years.

â\200\230So, for the regime, things are getting out of hand, and the ANC remains intact. That is basically why these white voices have arisenâ\200\231, said Tambo.

OPTIMISM IS A REQUIREMENT of 73 I years in the i-\201eld. And Tambo does not lack it - thought this soft-spoken and thoughtful lawyer is not given to the normal extravagance of most revolutionary rhetoric. He does not doubt that those surrounding Botha (for whom the vision

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of South Africa's future is visible only down
gun sights) will soon seek to reassert themselves
to halt this (premature) talk about talks with
the ANC.

Tambo rejected press reports that there had
already been talks between the ANC and the
South African government late last year. There
had been no such talks, negotiations, contacts of
any kind, he said. He laid down two broad
conditions under which talks might occur: one,
that Botha agree
to negotiate over the
modalities of putting an end to the system of
apartheid with the goal of a united democratic
and non-racial South Africa: two, that the ANC
get a clear mandate from its supporters inside
the country to enter such talks.

to

The ANC, Tambo said, is now in the midst of
preparations for
a major consultative
conference this year the first since 1969. The
dates and location are being kept secret in order
to avoid a South African raid. Between 100 and
200 delegates are likely to attend. The major
focus will fall on military strategy and the need
to extend the ANC's underground activity
inside South Africa, said Tambo.

Following the anti-ANC security pacts
signed by the Botha government with
Mozambique and Swaziland, the ANC must
develop methods of sustaining and expanding
political and guerrilla activity inside South
Africa which depend to a lesser extent on transit
through, and support from, neighbouring
countries.

Tambo is confident that it can be done. We
have never proceeded on the basis that we are
going to rely on the ability of neighbouring
states to support our struggle - invaluable as
that support is. Armed struggle is coming on
within South Africa. There is a lull now, but it
is a short lull
relatively. That is because

arrangements are being made, organisation is taking place. And it is all going to develop within South Africa", said Tambo.

TAMBO INDICATED that guerrillas in the ANC's military wing, Umlzhonto We Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), may not be required to exercise quite so much caution in future to avoid inflicting casualties on civilians. "Over the past 23 years armed struggle has consisted largely of attacking economic and similar targets of sabotage. Now and again, the

struggle has manifested a shift towards what are called "soft targets". The general preference for "sabotage in the past is going to come under very serious review", he said.

But the ANC said in an official statement from Lusaka last week that whatever military escalation took place, ANC attacks would not be "specifically directed at any civilians". He ~ expected that guerrillas would in future also "combine armed struggle with political mass actions. We think the two belong together".

He was unhappy with the way the ANC underground had been operating inside the country. "We certainly don't think it has been working well". He hoped that the conference would promote to more senior positions some of the thousands of young black men and women who have joined the ANC since the 1976 Soweto uprising. He came out clearly in favour of opening the ranks of the ANC's top administrative body "the national executive committee - to non-Africans for the first time. The conference would test opinion on this issue.

Until now, a small though significant number of whites, Coloureds and Indians have served on other top ANC bodies with Africans "occasionally authorised to take decisions in the name of the executive. But we cannot mark time when we have grown to be the embryo of a future non-racial South Africa. We must move forward and reïect in our structures the kind of South Africa that we say we envisage", said Tambo. He thought it likely that the conference would endorse the political strategy set out at the last consultative meeting in Tanzania in 1969. This is based on the forging of political unity between all sections and classes of the black population (together with South Africa's few "progressive whites") in a national liberation struggle in which a primary position is assigned to the black working class and its interests.

Left-wing pressure at the conference for greater emphasis on the role of the black working class could cause problems. The issue has been thrust to the fore in South Africa, where some of the major black unions have indicated a preference for "non-involvement" with multi-class political groups. These "independent worker" unions did, however, combine with multi-class organisations in a two-day general strike in the Transvaal last November, which brought South Africa's economic heartland to a virtual standstill.

But Tambo expected â\200\230no problemsâ\200\231 on this score. He pointed to the two-day strike as evidence of a â\200\230very substantial shift on the part of the workers towards the acceptance of the view that they must be part of the popular mass struggle.

â\200\230I think the conference will (decide) that the ANC must take steps to help in the organisation and mobilisation of the workers, not just in the cities but also among the unemployed and the' farmworkers as part of the national liberation effort.â\200\231

What Tambo terms â\200\230popular mass struggleâ\200\231 is one area where the ANC appears well pleased. He estimated â\200\224 probably realistically â\200\224- that the considerable amount of organisation inside the country over the past two years mobilising Blacks against the new. constitution meant about â\200\230two million' people were now involved in the struggle against apartheid in a reasonably active way.

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New Statesman 25 January 1985

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