

Pukke bar Slovo, ET

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The decision had been a "painful" one for university authorities as well as the Student Council as both bodies were "convinced of the importance of freedom of speech", said Prof Reinecke.

However, he added that the university "had to recognise not only the students and staff" but also the "very important part" which outside supporters from the community played and their views had to be considered as well.

Mr Slovo called the decision an "unprincipled concession to the forces of intolerance".

"Democracy is being held to ransom by bullies," he said.

It is understood the university feared violence which has characterised meetings addressed by Mr Nelson Mandela at the Pretoria and Stellenbosch universities.

The banning is also based on objections against an "agnostic or atheist communicating his reasoning" to the campus.

Such an approach should have gone out with

the medieval inquisition, Mr Slovo said. It had not been his purpose to advocate atheism at the meeting.

It was a slap in the face for what he believed to be the positive ethical content of the great religions.

"In short it is, objectively speaking, a heretical decision," he said.

According to a statement, the decision to cancel the two speakers' engagements was taken by the Central Student Council (CSC) after a request from the university council.

The university council had asked the student body to "reconsider the engagements of these two people with the understanding that if these persons do appear, it will not have the university's approval or support".

"By implication, the Students' Council would have to bear the lone responsibility and the possible consequences," the statement said.

"Under the prevailing volatile political and violent circumstances it would be irresponsible of the CSC to leave the Actuality Week programme

unamended in the absence of official support."

The decision follows a call by students from the university for a maintenance of freedom of speech in reaction to the violent reception Mr Mandela had received on other Afrikaans campuses.

In yesterday's statement the Student Council noted the opposition to its decision by the organisers of the Actuality Week programme, the Executive Committee of the Political Council.

The CSC said that it was unanimous that the engagements would not affect the Christian character of the university. The decision had been taken because the objectors could not reconcile the atheistic and Communist views of Mr Slovo with this character of the university.

"Although Communism certainly contains a threat to the Christian view of life and the world, the CSC is convinced that a Christian university is precisely the place for a confrontation between Christian and Communist

to start," the student statement said.

An alternative programme, dealing with violence as a political instrument, as related to Christianity was being drawn up to replace Mr Terre'Blanche's address on Monday night.

On Tuesday night, which had been scheduled for a debate between Mr Slovo and a panel of reporters, representatives from the National, Democratic and Conservative Parties, as well as Jeugkrag and she chairmen of the Political Council and the Student Council, will discuss Christianity and communism.

On Wednesday night, Tom Petranoff will discuss the possibility of South African participation in the 1992 Olympic Games.

On Thursday, Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr Pik Botha, Labour Party leader, the Rev Alan Hendrickse, the CP's Mr Koos van der Merwe and Mr M Myeni from Inkatha will discuss South Africa's international position in the future.

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as speakers

By Cathy Thompson and Sapa

THE Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education has banned addresses by both the SA Communist Party leader, Mr Joe Slovo, and the AWB leader, Mr Eugene Terre'Blanche, scheduled for next week.

They were to address

the university as part of its Actuality Week, and the banning was a result of a flood of objections, mostly against Mr Slovo's visit, from supporters off-campus.

This was announced yesterday evening by the rector, Professor Carools

Reinecke, and Central Student Council chairman, Mr Gerhard Coetz-er.

Prof Reinecke said pressure from mainly Right-wingers, which had been in the form of objections and threats in recent weeks, "were not consid-

ered or tabled", but the decision stemmed from the objections of the parents of students, alumni and "supporters" of the university which had been received in the past few days.

TO PAGE 2

The Star 16-1-1992

A new book finds serious flaws in the long prosecution of the 'People's War' reports Stanley Uys

Did SACP sink armed struggle?

IF Stephen Ellis and Tsepo Sechaba are correct in their new book, "Comrades Against Apartheid", the ANC's armed struggle was not only a failure, but a failure directly attributable to the SA Communist Party, because it masterminded the struggle.

Stephen Ellis, former editor of Africa Confidential, and Tsepo Sechaba, the pen-name of an African who is still a member of both the ANC and SACP (and presumably still divulging confidential information), set out in their book to demonstrate that the SACP had a stranglehold over the ANC in the long years of exile (the book stops at February 1990, the dawn of the enlightenment), and that this stranglehold applied particularly to the armed struggle.

The book is in the hands of various reviewers on whose territory I do not propose to trespass. But I would like to offer a thought or two on the armed struggle, because although Ellis and Sechaba have pronounced its failure, it is still an issue of conflict between the Government and the ANC.

Also, the PAC and Azapo are trying to activate their own

armed struggles in what seems to be a rather desperate attempt to prevent being flattened by mainstream Codesa politics. Surely, armed struggle will lead the PAC and Azapo even further away from the mainstream?

When the ANC was banned in 1960, and decided to create Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), two communists, according to Ellis and Sechaba, were sent to Moscow to organise supplies. They were Joe Slovo and the late J.B. Marks.

This was the SACP's immediate advantage — it had the international connections, the backing of a superpower that was prepared to fund the armed struggle and provide its military hardware. It could create a dependence relationship with the ANC.

In the opinion of Ellis-Sechaba, the armed struggle profoundly affected the nature of the ANC-SACP alliance: the ANC lost the character of a mass movement and became more elitist. The SACP for its part had never been a mass movement, always seeing itself as a "vanguard" party.

Mr Slovo, the authors claim, was MK's chief strategist. He concentrated on developing the

SACP's strength in MK, believing that MK would become the ANC's most important department.

In this belief he was "vindicated". But at what cost to the ANC's structure as a mass movement?

The ANC-SACP did not expect to bring down the South African Government with bombs, but it believed the armed struggle would alter the political context, rendering the ground more fertile for future political action.

It would also be useful to test the mettle of cadres.

It would prepare the way for a "People's War" — local defence units with grenade squads and street committees who would be the nerve centre of an uprising.

MK's strategy was to establish bases in the frontline states and then infiltrate guerrillas and weapons. The key to the planned insurrection was for MK "to establish organised and armed squads ... which could operate autonomously inside the country".

Only then could MK consider that the phase of what it termed armed propaganda had passed indisputably into the People's War.

However the security forces "and both the means and the will

to prevent a popular insurrection by detaining any number of suspected organisers of anti-Government agitation or violence and by setting black communities against one another by encouraging the formation of vigilantes.

"Also, one by one, the policy of destabilisation ... closed down MK's networks and bases within striking distance of South Africa."

South Africa's neighbours paid a heavy price, too, for the armed struggle.

Ellis and Sechaba concede that the SADF took MK "very seriously", and that the armed struggle achieved what most armed struggles achieve — recruiting new members and keeping the organisation's name upfront.

But their verdict is that the SACP, and the ANC, "which looked to the party for strategic direction, placed too much importance on the armed struggle for too long.

"For all the period of exile, the party put its faith in armed struggle, believing that ... it was at the heart of its strategy".

The armed struggle, the authors claim, was central to the strategy of both the SACP and the ANC,

and it failed.

"The blunt fact is that MK failed to overthrow the South African state by force, which was its purpose ...

"The mobilisation of the entire resources of the state in a counter-revolution strategy in South Africa and the neighbouring countries, the Lesotho coup, and the effectiveness of Pretoria's espionage system added up to a comprehensive defeat for MK and the strategy adopted by the ANC and Communist Party since the 1960s."

Ellis and Sechaba place the blame for this defeat squarely on the SACP, which, they say, turned MK into its personal fief, and also that Oliver Tambo's leadership coincided with the SACP "gradually taking over the central role in ANC policy making".

The SACP, without ever being able to dislodge Joe Modise, packed key MK posts with its own men, particularly Chris Hani.

It was Mr Hani and Steve Tshwete, the authors say, who decided to attack soft targets — for which they were publicly repudiated by Oliver Tambo who sacked Mr Tshwete as political

commissar.

The ANC-SACP will argue that denied constitutional protest in South Africa and forced into exile, it had no choice other than to embark on an armed struggle. But the point Ellis and Sechaba make is that too much emphasis was placed on this form of struggle.

The authors portray ANC President Nelson Mandela in a more far-seeing role.

"Like de Klerk," they say, "he recognised relatively early that the time for armed struggle was over ... and that South Africans had to resolve their differences by political means."

"It is impossible to imagine any other person who would have had the authority and the vision to have accomplished this ..."

The question MK and its strategists should answer is whether the concept of a People's War (much of it learned from a visit to Vietnam) was ever a viable one.

It will be difficult enough to reconstruct South Africa through negotiations and consensus: through a People's War, the country would have been reduced to rubble. Any comment Mr Slovo? Mr Hani? □