

2. May 1981

Ripper trial may end quickly

Own Correspondent

LONDON. — The "Yorkshire Ripper" trial of Peter Sutcliffe, which resumes at the Old Bailey next Tuesday, may last less than a week.

Everything now hinges on his insanity plea, which is to be put to a jury. The Attorney-General, Sir Michael Havers, for the Crown, is expected to strongly oppose the plea.

On Wednesday the bearded, dark-haired Bradford lorry-driver pleaded not guilty to the murder of the 13 "Yorkshire Ripper" victims but guilty to manslaughter (culpable homicide) on the grounds of diminished responsibility. He pleaded guilty to seven charges of attempted murder.

Mr Justice Boreham, said he was extremely anxious about the plea of insanity and ordered a jury trial.

If the jury decides after hearing the evidence of at least four psychiatrists, that Sutcliffe was mad, grim details of how the ripper murders were carried out are unlikely to be heard.

And if the manslaughter pleas are accepted by the jury, it means the judge can pass life sentences — which can mean as little as eight years with remission — but he cannot dictate a minimum period of imprisonment.

If the jury convicts on murder charges the judge can recommend that 34-year-old Sutcliffe should serve a specific period in prison — possibly 30 years or more.

Soweto has 16 doctors, no chemists, court told

Own Correspondent

JOHANNESBURG. — A town planner who wrote a book on Soweto, Miss Pauline Morris, yesterday told the Rand Supreme Court there were no pharmacies in Soweto and only 16 doctors.

Miss Morris was giving evidence before Mr Justice Coetzee in the case in which the West Rand Administration Board is claiming R7 081 900 from the Santam Insurance Company, following the damaging of buildings and other property in Soweto and other black areas on the West Rand during the 1976 riots.

Miss Morris, who has written a book on Soweto, and drew up maps of the area which were handed into the court, yesterday sketched the history and present conditions of Soweto.

She described the moving of families from Sophiatown and Alexandra to Soweto. She referred to a book by Mr Kane Berman, who will also be called to give evidence in the case.

Single people — 6 494 of them — were moved to hostels in Diepkloof and Meadowlands. They were mainly contract or migrant workers, but also people who could not get other accommodation, she said. "Single" did not necessarily mean that the person had no family, she said.

In some hostels there were a few single rooms, but mostly six to eight people shared a dormitory, she said. Ablution blocks were few and there was a lack of privacy.

No food was provided but there were communal kitchens.

Adjacent to most hostels there were sports facilities and beer halls. There were no specially provided shops, although one could usually find hawkers nearby. The hostels were of barrack-type construction.

There were no pharmacies in Soweto and only 16 doctors. There was no private clinic. There was no orphanage and old-age home, Miss Morris told the court.

There was no commercial focus to Soweto at all, she said. There was a large number of small, scattered shops, but very few shops providing consumer goods.

The hearing continues on Monday.

Botha to move left or right — or stagnate?

Political survey



by
GERALD SHAW

THE 1981 general election will be carefully assessed to gauge its effect on the fortunes of the Prime Minister, Mr P W Botha, and of the Leader of the Opposition, Dr Van Zyl Slabbert, who is becoming a major figure on the political stage.

For the Prime Minister, the result is a setback, although his party retains a comfortable majority of seats in Parliament. Since 1948, Nationalist prime ministers have been expected to sweep all before them, going from strength to strength in the election stakes. This is an unrealistic expectation. It is unfair to Mr Botha to expect him to be still chalking up electoral gains — after 33 years of Nationalist rule.

Mr Vorster suffered a similar setback in 1970, losing eight seats, and the effect, with the emergence of the HNP, was to drive him back into his political shell. The enlightened rhetoric of the "outward" policy gave way to a rather more cautious and pragmatic style and a measure of political stagnation.

Will Mr Botha's setback this week, with the growth of the HNP vote, weaken his position in the National Party caucus? Is his leadership likely to be directly challenged? Is Mr Botha going right or left in response, or, like Mr Vorster, will he just stagnate?

Pulse of party

Mr Botha has called a meeting of the new caucus to take place in Pretoria on May 12 and it is unlikely that his intentions will be clear in his own mind before then, let alone be plain to political observers. He will want to take the pulse of the party, as it were, and see how much elbow room he is likely to have in the weeks ahead.

What will become of the President's Council as an instrument for negotiating constitutional change? Leaving aside the question of African political rights, on which most Nationalists remain obdurate, what about the parliamentary rights of the so-called coloured people?

Judging by remarks in the campaign by Mr Botha himself, by Dr A P Treurnicht and by Dr Munnik, the National Party has now closed ranks behind a reactionary constitutional policy which may maintain party unity for the moment but is hardly likely to find favour among coloured moderates, let alone the increasingly militant youth.

The most likely prospect is that Mr Botha will continue to play it cool after the election, taking the measure of the mood of the party. By moving into a conservative position, Mr Botha has been able to retain most of the massive conservative vote in the National Party. But the shift to the HNP is not inconsiderable. From an admittedly small base, the HNP vote is up as much as six or seven times in some seats, although the average is rather lower than this. Mr Botha now has a pretty good idea of the strength and likely growth potential of the HNP vote.

Having conducted a conservative election campaign, proclaiming nothing very concrete in the way of change and re-

form, Mr Botha has still lost considerable support to the right. The HNP has come to the brink of a major breakthrough in terms of seats. For someone reared in the Malan tradition of maintaining Afrikaner Nationalist unity as the first rule of politics, it is an excruciating dilemma.

If he tries a balancing act, trying to satisfy both left and right, Mr Botha could find his position eroding in the caucus — to the point where an overt lead-



Dr Van Zyl Slabbert... a different kind of politician

ership struggle could break out. But a split would be certain if he moved decisively in one direction or another. And a split could mean a realignment of political parties and the loss of the Nationalist monopoly of political power.

If there should now be a leadership struggle, Transvaalers such as Dr Treurnicht, Dr Gerrit Viljoen and Mr F W de Klerk would almost certainly beat a Cape nominee, as long as the Transvaal vote was not split. Political observers say that Dr Treurnicht's star is waning and that Mr F W de Klerk and Dr Gerrit Viljoen are coming up fast. As things now stand, however, Mr Botha remains in the saddle. He retains the initiative if he wishes to exercise it.

The Leader of the Opposition has encouraged Mr Botha to see the growth of the PFP in the election as a mandate to the government to pursue change and reform with vigour.

In a typically positive and generous response to the result, Dr Van Zyl Slabbert said it showed that the time had come for clear leadership and systematic reform. Mr Botha should not take fright at the support gained by the HNP. He should press ahead with reform.

And how does Dr Van Zyl Slabbert himself now stand in the political stakes?

In this election campaign he has made a real breakthrough as a leader on the national stage. For the first time, he has been seen consistently and regularly on television in the way that the Bothas and other members of the cabinet are constantly in view. In an election campaign, the SABC could hardly keep the Leader of the

Opposition off the box.

The effect has been spectacular. It has mattered little that Dr Slabbert has had, say, only one-tenth of the exposure enjoyed by Mr P W Botha or by the Prime Minister himself. It was enough.

Here was a different kind of politician, without rancour, profoundly in earnest, yet obviously a man with a sense of humour, not inclined to take himself too seriously. What a change from the grim-jawed, eyeball-to-eyeball histrionics of some of his opponents, forever shaking their fists at fate and the forces of darkness!

As the campaign progressed, it was plain that the personality of Dr Slabbert, paradoxically the most private of men in his quiet family life-style, was making itself felt everywhere. Apart from his television impact, a back-breaking schedule of personal appearances day after day, night after night, in the major population centres of the Republic was paying off handsomely.

It was a punishing programme, possible only because Dr Slabbert is physically and mentally in peak condition and takes trouble to stay that way.

When he entered politics in Rondebosch some years ago the view was ventured in this column that in Slabbert South Africa had found, potentially, another Smuts or Hertzog, a leader with rare gifts of character and intellect. It was not a hasty judgment. Neither was it a flourish of journalistic hyperbole. There has been no occasion to revise this judgment. On the contrary.

The election result has been a personal triumph for a man whose generosity of spirit, courage and cool intelligence have raised the tone of our public life. It was a triumph, too, for Mrs Mana Slabbert and their close-knit family life. What a cruel twist, then, after the Slabberts' moment of triumph, for them to wake up in the choking smoke and fumes of a blazing house... with a shiver of horror as they thought of the danger to their sleeping children.

Protection

It will be some small consolation if it is confirmed that this was an accidental fire, not the work of some twisted fanatic, and that all the ghastly horrors of an Ulster-type situation do not yet apply. The government would do well to ensure that Dr Slabbert and his family are henceforth offered the same scale of protection as that accorded to cabinet ministers. Whether it was an act of right-wing terrorism or not, this was a chilling reminder of what could become an Ulster-style matter of routine in South Africa if men such as Van Zyl Slabbert do not succeed in their aims, steering our politics into the quieter paths of negotiation.

If there is some question now about the intentions and prospects of Mr P W Botha, no one can doubt that Dr Van Zyl Slabbert emerges from the election with his standing greatly enhanced.

Cape Times, Saturday
All is not 'rosy' in SA
2 May 1981
 Own Correspondent

ULUNDI. — The Republic Festival was being held to project a picture which suggested that blacks were accepted as full citizens of South Africa, the president of Inkatha, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, said when he opened a meeting of the central committee of the movement last night.

"We should refuse to be used by white South Africa to create a facade as if all is rosy in the South African garden," he said.

Chief Buthelezi maintained that the Republican Festival was being held at a time when blacks were being pushed out of the orbit of one common South Africa.

"This is done when the Republican government has told us repeatedly in recent months that they are not prepared to scrap influx control and the pass laws," he added.

Chief Buthelezi said that by staying away from the Republic Festival, blacks might convince the government about the iniquities of apartheid and make the government understand how much they resented denial of human rights and the various ways in which their dignity was assailed.