

AP1985-2-12-24

Listen to America

Racism is very much alive

by Carolyn L. Bennett

Have you been listening to America? In these past two weeks when racism ran riot in Southwest Philadelphia? Were you listening?

I know there have been distractions at Geneva, Malta, Manila, Pretoria, spies and counterspies from Washington to Jerusalem. But were you listening to America—when she reached back to the racism of the early sixties and brought it full force into the streets of "Brotherly Love," where a Black man reigns as mayor of his urban, multi-racial metropolis of the eighties?

I was listening—when unnamed white terrorists ran riot against an interracial couple, vandalizing their home and causing them to shudder in their resolve; and against a Black couple, causing them to run for their lives. I was listening—when the Black mayor declared a state of emergency; and when a Democratic candidate for the Mississippi Supreme Court held forth at a news conference, declaring his support for segregation and repeal of the Voting Rights and Civil Rights Acts of the nineteen sixties. Were you listening to America?

Are you convinced that the spiritual growth of America has progressed not an inch since the days of segregated lunch counters, schools, churches, neighborhoods? Convinced that smoldering fires of racism wait just beneath the surface to burst forth in an atmosphere in which government tears away at fundamental structures of Constitution and Bill of Rights? Tells the people that Black Americans

are getting "preferential treatment" in jobs and housing? Paints rosy pictures of prosperity, when poverty seeps in at every level of society, except the level of the truly rich? Is there any wonder that people are confused and angry?

Are you listening to America? Are you listening, America? Are you hearing and seeing what's really going on in our land? Leaders posturing in high places doing important-sounding things while freer and freer enterprise allows/causes mismanaged corporations to rise and fall on a daily basis. Banks and savings and loans fail. Labor and management keep up a futile fight while industries shut down, labor is farmed out to countries with cheap labor, and goods are imported at higher profits to corporations. Leaders talking big talk on international platforms while mayor calls a state of emergency, a neighborhood is bombed, Pretorian style—and hundreds are left homeless and running for their lives. America? This too is America. Are you listening?

People confused, frustrated, angry, sensing their way of life thrust away from them by forces over which they have no control reach back to another era for a scapegoat: the Black American. And for an attitude and condition: Racism against Black Americans. But Black Americans are not the cause of our problems. Nor is Racism the cause.

Keep listening, America. And petition the government for resolution of real problems and for redress of justifiable grievances. Don't be fooled by the smoke screen. Keep listening—until you hear America.

Freed Winnie Mandela defiant on ban

JOHANNESBURG (AP)—Winnie Mandela, still pledging to defy a South African government order that bars her from Johannesburg and its surrounding black township of Soweto, left yesterday for Cape Town and a Christmas visit with her imprisoned husband.

Mandela, 50, who was arrested twice over the weekend in Soweto and spent Sunday night in jail, was freed on her own recognizance. Magistrate Hymie Brandt ordered her to appear in court Jan. 22 on charges of flouting the "banning" order that seeks to limit her contacts with other anti-apartheid activists.

At her court appearance, she said only, "Your worship, I understand English," in reply to a question from Brandt on whether she wanted an interpreter.

Mandela faces rearrest if she returns to Johannesburg—as she insisted she will.

"As far as I am concerned it [the banning order] is a non-issue—a law that should not be obeyed by any human being," Mandela told reporters outside the court.

"I shall be going back to my house in Johannesburg. . . I have committed no crime," she said later as she

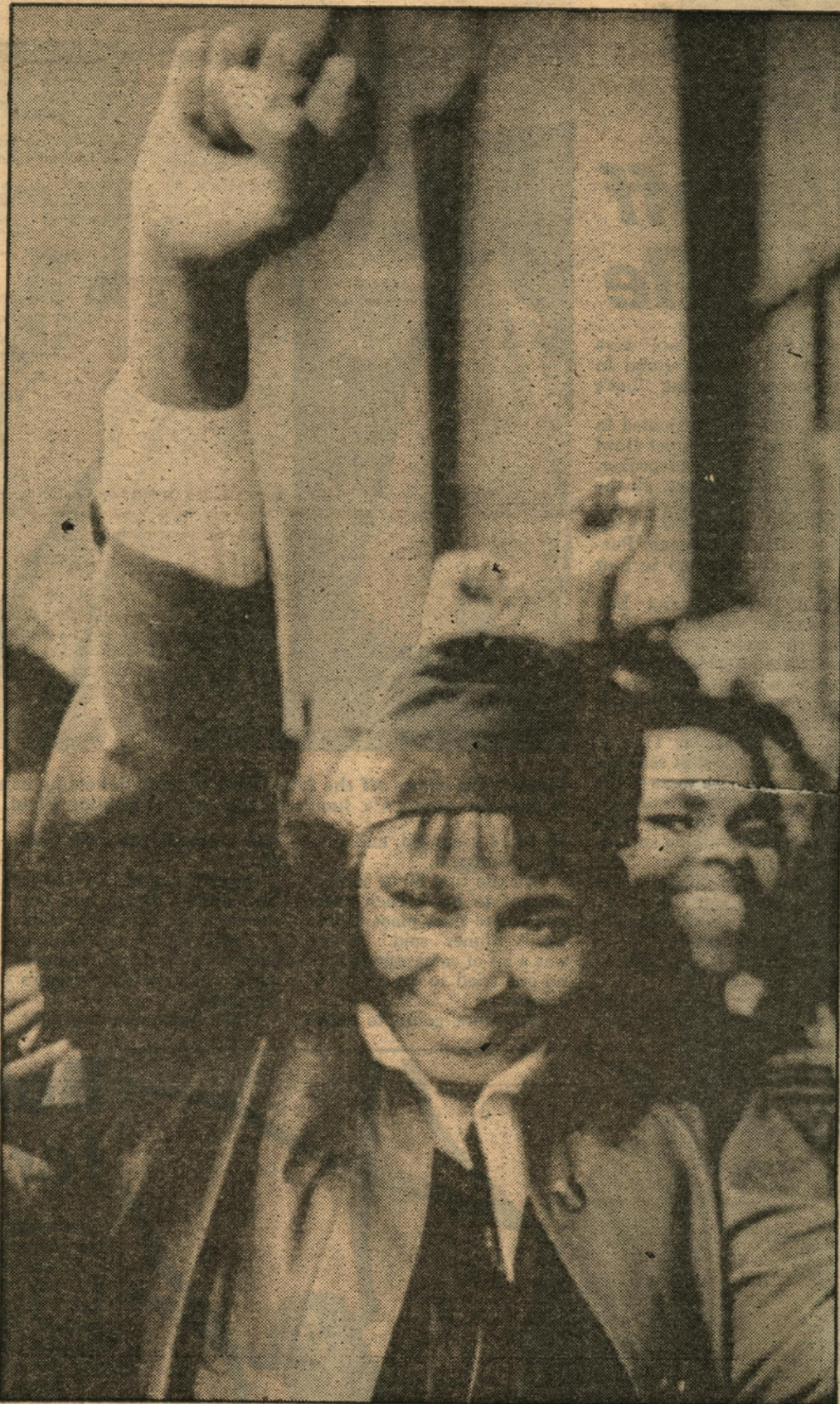
arrived at Cape Town airport.

Mandela's husband, Nelson, 67, leader of the outlawed African National Congress guerrilla movement, is serving a life term in Cape Town's Pollsmoor Prison for plotting sabotage. Although imprisoned since 1964, he is generally regarded as the major leader among South Africa's 24 million blacks.

Mrs. Mandela, who in recent months has emerged as the most vocal public critic of apartheid, has spent most of the last eight years banished to a remote rural town, Brandfort. But she left in August after an arson attack she blamed on government agents.

Law and Order Minister Louis le Grange announced Saturday that Mandela now could live anywhere but in Johannesburg and its environs, but still may not go to political rallies or be quoted in South Africa.

Authorities have prevented a family Christmas for the Mandelas. Mrs. Mandela might be able to talk to her husband for 30 minutes or so. And, depending on the guards, he might be able to touch his children. The couple have two children, Zinzi and Zenani, and three grandchildren.



Associated Press

Anti-apartheid activist Winnie Mandela leaves court in Johannesburg, South Africa, yesterday after she was released on her own recognizance. Hours later, police surrounded her home and threatened to rearrest her.

6 whites die in S. Africa blast

From Sun-Times Wire

DURBAN, South Africa—A bomb exploded yesterday in a resort shopping arcade crowded with sun-seeking Christmas vacationers, and authorities said at least six whites were killed.

They said scores of other people—perhaps more than 60—were hurt when the bomb went off in a trash can in the Sanlam Center, 200 yards from the Indian Ocean beaches of Amanzimtoti, 20 miles south of Durban. Killed were two women and four children.

Black nationalist guerrillas were blamed for the bombing, the second-worst in South African history.

As rescuers rushed among dazed, stumbling survivors, wounded children in bathing suits and rubber sandals screamed hysterically while crawling through pools of



Associated Press

An injured black woman is taken to a hospital in Durban, South Africa, after a bomb exploded in the Sanlam Center, killing six whites.

blood. "It was just too horrible," said Larry Oosthuizen, who owns a store across the street from the site of the mid-morning blast.

"There were bodies lying mutilated on the ground. There was thick, black,

smelly smoke all over the place.

"Women were running around, holding their children, screaming. There were people, children covered in blood." No one immediately

claimed responsibility for the explosion. But Law and Order Minister Louis le Grange, who interrupted his vacation to visit the scene, called it "the kind of cowardly act we have come to expect from the African National Congress," the main guerrilla force fighting the apartheid system under which the nation's 5 million whites dominate 24 million voteless blacks.

Le Grange said the international community has a moral responsibility to ostracize the ANC for the "dastardly deed of the most horrendous nature."

The outlawed group has taken responsibility for many recent bombings in South Africa. Yesterday, it refused comment when messages were sent to its regional offices in Lusaka, Zambia. On Saturday, a limpet

mine, an explosive device that attaches to metal, went off beneath a van parked in central Durban and wounded eight people. The ANC planted land mines that killed six whites on Dec. 15.

The most deadly ANC strike was in May, 1983, when a car bomb killed 19 people on a crowded Pretoria street and wounded more than 200.

After 16 months of anti-apartheid unrest in which only a few of the 1,000 people killed were whites, 13 whites were killed in nine days through yesterday.

In Soweto yesterday, police shot to death two blacks after anti-government demonstrators refused to disperse.

Five people also were wounded when police opened fire with shotguns and tear gas, authorities said.

THE CITIZEN COMMENT

24/12/84

No to ANC

THE STATE PRESIDENT, Mr P W Botha, has firmly put the kibosh on rumours that the Government intends to hold talks with the banned African National Congress.

"It is not Government policy to negotiate with organisations engaged in promoting violence with South Africa," he said, responding to an unsubstantiated report in a Johannesburg newspaper that four National Party members were to travel to Lusaka early in January to negotiate with the ANC.

No National Party member would be allowed to do so, said Mr Botha. "It is not Government policy to negotiate with organisations engaged in promoting violence."

"We are always willing to talk to groups of people in South Africa who follow the road of constitutional development, but not to those who are fostering violence."

We agree with his firm attitude.

For one thing, the ANC, with its terror attacks, has a lot to answer for.

Secondly, there is nothing to suggest that the ANC is prepared to abandon violence.

Besides its "military" objectives, it has taken its battle into the townships directly and through front organisations.

It has no wish to end the fight except on its own terms, and that means Black Marxist rule.

So what purpose would be served by the Government having talks with the ANC?

Those who favour such talks are obviously imbued with the false notion that there can be no solution to the country's problems without the ANC.

But to ask Mr Botha to talk to the ANC would be like asking Mrs Margaret Thatcher to resolve Northern Ireland's problems by talking to the Irish Republican Army.

Or asking Israel to discuss Middle East peace with the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

No-one gives his enemy that kind of legitimacy.

Any talks with the ANC would also strengthen the hands of the Right-wingers, who would claim that the Government was soft on terrorism.

Since the swing to the Right, particularly among Afrikaners, is very marked, it would be foolish for the Government to give the impression of appeasement.

A great deal has been made of the survey by the Human Sciences Research Council which showed that 42,9 percent of the 1 000 people interviewed favoured negotiations with the ANC, while 43,9 percent were against and 13,3 percent were uncertain.

The survey was held in September, before the two-day stayaway and before the continuing unrest resulted in the army being called in to assist the police in the townships.

In the last three months there has been a hardening of White attitudes. This was confirmed by the support the Conservative Party received in the Primrose by-election.

We, therefore, do not accept the survey's finding as reflecting the true mood of the country.

In any case, we do not place much store on opinion polls.

We need only refer to the HSRC's more detailed survey carried out in Randburg to show how misleading polls can be.

Most people were said to favour opening facilities in Randburg to all races, yet the Progressive Federal Party, which had arranged the poll and had hoped to introduce the contemplated changes, lost power there mainly because of opposition to mixed amenities.

To put it bluntly, this is no time to talk to the ANC (whether there will be any time when this is desirable is a very moot point indeed).

We have to change, for our own reasons, at our own pace, in directions only we can determine.

The ANC cannot help to determine that course, because it does not support reform of any kind. It wants victory through the barrel of a gun, or by destabilising the townships so that they are ungovernable.

It is an organisation that favours revolutionary and not evolutionary change.

While it persists with this policy, the Government would be bonkers to talk to it.