

WHITE ELECTIONS, BLACK ASPIRATIONS

A JOINT STATEMENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CATHOLIC BISOPS' CONFERENCE (30/4/87)

The coming days will be critical and dangerous ones.

As white South Africans prepare to go to the polls in an election which the majority of citizens regards as a charade and irrelevant to their situation and aspirations, black South Africans are crying out for justice and liberation.

Many of them are prepared to die for justice. Many of them are dying in circumstances, which can no longer be properly investigated and reported by the press.

Demands

Workers are angry and bitter as they demand the reinstatement of dismissed railway employees and protest against the killing of those who died in Germiston and Johannesburg.

- They demand that detainees be released and restored in safety to their families.
- People demand a stop to evictions in the townships.
- They demand an end to the state of emergency which is preventing even orderly organisation of opposition and which is fomenting tension, turmoil and chaos.
- They demand an end to the race-based system of government in South Africa.
- They demand their right to choose how they shall be governed.
- They demand their rightful place in the centres of political power.
- They demand that the land and wealth of South Africa be shared so that hunger and poverty shall no longer so sinfully exist in a country so bountifully endowed by the Creator.

Solidarity

The Church, as the bearer of the message of God's liberation power transforming all human life, stands in solidarity with all those who wish to throw off the shackles of these forces, including the political forces, which keep human beings in bondage and prevent them from accepting and enjoying the freedom which God has ordained for all His children.

We are deeply concerned at the possibility of eruptions of violent confrontations in the next days. Often in the past we have seen provocative actions by the security forces, which have led to violent conflict.

We, urge, with all earnestness at our command, that the government and the security forces desist from breaking up meetings organised by workers or the community and youth organisations. The right to meet is fundamental and is the only way in which people can come together to discuss and make decisions about orderly disciplined protest and opposition.