Scourge of apartheid dies

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ARCHBISHOP Trevor Huddleston, who devoted much of his life to the struggle against apartheid, died yesterday, aged 84.

The archbishop, who received a knighthood in the New Year's Honours for his contribution to bringing about democracy in South Africa, was a founder of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in 1959 and became its president. His assistant, Jill Thompson, said: 'If we are called to serve Africa we can set no limits to ourselves.'

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tall white man in a flowing cassock who came into a hostel for blind black women where Tambo's mother was a cook, and raised his hat to her. For the first time, Tambo said, he realised that all whites were not the same.

As a priest in Sophiatown, Johannesburg, Huddleston witnessed the atrociousness of the forced removals and the community - a wound which never healed and which was

immoralised in some of the best jazz ever written by South African musicians in exile. The greatest of these musicians, Hugh Masekela, was given his first trumpet by Huddleston.

He wrote a book on South Africa, Naught For Your Comfort, 45 years ago - a blistering attack on the Group Areas Act which gave apartheid its backbone.

After his expulsion from South Africa, he was an inspiration for a generation which worked in Britain for apartheid's overthrow. He founded the Defence and Aid Fund which smuggled in funds to South Africa for the defence of political prisoners and the support of dependants. As he grew older he seemed to grow fiercer. He would return from visits to Tanzania incensed by the ruthless destabilisation of the region by the apartheid regime. His outrage and oratory filled meetings in the Royal Commonwealth Society ball.

He was an impetuous man, and lived to see his ringing pledge to outlive apartheid come true. He was impatient with his allies, too, and drove them hard. Everyone forgave him because he was equally hard on himself. But he liked a good do, too, and at his 80th and 90th birthday parties the singing and the food and drink outdid the speeches.

The archbishop had a private gentle side, too. He had a gift for communicating with children and was a friend to those he took on after apartheid had wounded them or their parents.
The Guardian Tuesday April 21 1998

This man of God

I MUST have been eight or nine when I first saw Trevor Huddleston, though I did not know that it was he, writes Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

My mother was a cook at a hostel for blind black women. Those were the days when South Africa's policies were only slightly less vicious than they became under the apartheid laws. If you were black, you counted for little in the land of your birth. As a black woman, you were even more disadvantaged, treated as a perpetual minor in the eyes of the law. Your mother was not well educated. In the eyes of the world, this lovely person was a nonentity. I was standing with her on the hostel verandah when this tall white man, in a flowing black sheet, glided past. He defied his hat to my mother in greeting. I was quite taken aback; a white man raising his hat to a black woman! Such things did not happen in real life. I learned much later that the man was Father Trevor Huddleston. That gesture left an indelible impression. Perhaps it helped me understand how I came to realise that we were precious to God and to this white man; perhaps it helped me not to become anti-white despite the harsh treatment we received as the hands of most white people.


Subsequently, I went to a high school in Johannesburg. The fathers of the Community of the Resurrection, of which Father Trevor was a member, ran a hostel for young blacks in Sophiatown, where I stayed. I made my first really good sacramental confession to him. His office would, one moment, have several of what he called his "creatures" playing marbles on the floor, the next it would be his meeting place with, say, Yehudi Menuhin, who came to play in Christ the King Church.

I used to sit on Trevor's lap, as did others of his proteges, among whom were Archbishop Walter Mhathu, of central Africa, and the jazz trumpeter, Hugh Masekela. Archbishop Trevor got Hugh his first trumpet as a gift from the great Louis Armstrong. When I contracted tuberculosis and spent six months in hospital, Father Trevor visited me nearly every week. How often do you feel this eloquent critic of the evil of racism.

There was one person who prickled the world's conscience about apartheid, Trevor Trevor Huddleston. With the Anti-Apartheid Movement, he made sure the issue remained on the world's agenda as a moral issue. One spectacular victory in 1963 owes a very great deal to the uniting efforts of the "Jerry" - the nickname he was given in Sophiatown.

He often said he hoped apartheid would die before he did. That happened. What a tremendous man he was. God certainly knew what he was doing when he created Trevor.
In this extract from Country of my Skull, ANITJE KROG describes the feelings evoked by NP leader FW de Klerk's testimony to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that the gross human rights violations committed in the past were due to the bad judgment, overzealousness or negligence of individual policemen.

The vocabulary around the truth commission has changed from phase to phrase, but the word that turns up most often is: underestimate. Everything about the dialogue of the commission has been "underestimated". The only nightmare is the possibility that the commission will stumble so badly that it wipes out all its success. Of,. ..'evacuation has become a popular word.

And this shortly before the commission has to pass its last two milestones. Two impossible ones: reconciliation and reparation.

And the two go hand in hand. The one cannot be without the other. If people don't get reparation, they won't forgive. If people are not forgiven, they won't offer reparation. Or rather, this was my thinking.

De Klerk was nothing more or less than a politician looking for a forum to sort out tensions in his own ranks. The single-minded strategy adopted in the questioning of De Klerk provided him with the stage he was looking for.

"Don't worry," someone says, "the commission has enough evidence on De Klerk. He will eat his words." And if he eats them, and has his nose rubbed in them, what will happen then? I wonder. Will he then be forgiven? Will people assist with reparation because they feel deeply humiliated? Will white farmers in small rural towns now work jointly for the benefit of those who suffered the most?

I take a Jewish colleague as an example. What does reparation mean? He provides an impressive list, ranging from pensions and free transport, to leaders kneeling at Jewish memorials. And money — money from the Federation of German Jews. But, he feels, the Republic of Germany was the largest contributing factor to the full industrialisation of Israel... I am perplexed. It is a very simple thing to piece together the imaginative document on reparation worked on some months ago. They could come up with nothing more inspired than a lump sum of money. No special study fund, housing subsidy scheme, pension provision, medical assistance — just a sum of money that the reparation has to dish out. And if it cannot afford to do so, the commission can wash its hands and say, "It's not our fault."
I also know better than to ask my Jewish colleague whether anyone was forgiven on the basis of reparation. Is contrition in the form of reparation then just as futile as denial?

And suddenly it is as if an undertow is taking me out... and out. And beyond me sinks the country of my skull like a sheet in the dark — and I hear a thin song, hooves, hedges of venom, fever and destruction fermenting and hissing underwater. I shrink and prickle. Against. Against my blood and the heritage thereof. Will I forever be them — recognising them as I do dally in my nostrils?

Yes. And what we have done will never be undone. It doesn’t matter what we do. What De Klerk does. Until the third and the fourth generation.

Famished. Parched, one waits for Constand Viljoen’s party to make its submission. They form a modest group. Viljoen speaks as if he wants to capture something, bring something back, confirm some essence of Afrikanerhood that is wholesome. I want it too — but at the same time know it is not to be. When Viljoen talks about how the British took away the land of the Boers, an English-speaking journalist mutters sarcastically, “Ah shame!”

I cannot help it. I spit like a flame: “Shut up, you! You didn’t utter a word when De Klerk spoke... Viljoen is at least trying.”

“You must be joking — this poor man is an anachronism.” My anger shrivels before his accent. And his Truth.

Viljoen was the only political leader who requested that a special reconciliation commission be set up in future to deal with “the hardening of attitudes I experience daily”.

After the first political submission in August 1996, I interviewed Archbishop Tutu. “Weren’t you irritated that you had to listen to four versions of South Africa’s past?”

He spread his four sunken fingers under my nose. “Four versions... four... exist of the life of Christ. Which one would you have liked to check out?”

I try another question. “Why did the last part of the ANC’s submission sound so paranoid? As if the whole world is in a conspiracy against Thabo Mbeki.”

Tutu tilts his head in surprise. “You should be the last person to ask me this. You are sitting with me daily, listening to what happened there. Many people are the second and third generation of being persecuted. And if you don’t know the past, you will never understand today’s politics.”

A friend who has emigrated visited me in the office. She answers a call for me: “It’s your child. He says he’s writing a song about Joe Mamasela and he needs a word to rhyme with Vlakplaas.”

She lowers the phone. “Who is Joe Mamasela?”

A massive sigh breaks through my chest. For the first time in months — I breath.

The absorption one has given up on, the hope for a catharsis, the ideal of reconciliation, the dream of a powerful reparation policy... Maybe this is all that is important — that I and my child know Vlakplaas and Mamasela. That we know what happened there.
Whites fight for last bastion

An Afrikaner backlash is tearing apart Transvaal's schools

by Angella Johnson
Schweizer-Reneke

THE PLAYING fields of South Africa are emerging as a new racial battleground as many former whites-only schools resist desegregation.

Tensions are simmering in small towns across the country and outbreaks of race war among pupils are increasing as a result.

On the banks of the Harts River in the old Transvaal republic, at the foot of a hill known as Mamusa, the town of Schweizer-Reneke lies in a fertile valley shaded by handsome acacia trees.

With its wide roads and neatly laid-out colonial-style homes, it is like a quiet oasis surrounded by bushveld flatland. But a silent war against transformation is threatening to tear apart this apparent tranquillity.

The white population, about 10 per cent of the 85,000 inhabitants of this farming community, is fighting to hold on to what it sees as the last bastion of its cultural superiority — education. And the 400-pupil white Schweizer-Reneke High School, which has been forced to enrol 30 black and coloured Afrikaans-speaking children from the nearby township, seems destined to see its Waterloo.

Searing resentment at this 'invasion' erupted on the morning of 5 February, when four of the township pupils were attacked by white boys wielding cricket bats and sticks as they entered the school gates. Three black students were put in hospital for several days with head and facial wounds. Headmaster John Viljoen describes the assault as 'an isolated incident and insists the wounds were superficial 'plaster cuts'.

'It was not like what later happened at Vryburg,' he argues, referring to an Afrikaans town where the school was closed two weeks before the Easter holiday after violent clashes between blacks and whites. 'We are not a school where hate lives, as some have reported. I have tried very hard to integrate all the students.'

Many of his young charges, who were taking part in an Afrikaans song festival at the school last week, took a different line. They were almost conciliatory in their enthusiasm to demonstrate that integrated racial harmony is not on their agenda.

'Rainbow nation is kak [shit!]' exclaimed a pudgy youth, Piet van Rensburg. 'We're not interested with what happens in Johannesburg. We were raised on farms where black people work for us, not with us. Look how badly they lie! We don't want to mix with them. They have their place and we have ours.'

A bubbly blonde girl piped up: 'They just destroy things. My dad says they may run the country, but they won't run us here.'

The children have obviously learned their prejudices on the family stoop, as two mothers waiting outside attest. 'It's about knowing your place and not trying to be friends with people who you know don't want you,' said Ev Fouche. 'We have a right to be with our own kind. I'm not a racist, but it's about choice.'

She complained that blacks had all the privileges in the new South Africa. 'OK, we may have had things a little easy before, but why should our children have to suffer?'

Her companion, Marilize Rautenbach, believes whites are oppressed under the government's transformation policy. 'Everything the blacks do is right, but when we stand up for ourselves it is wrong.'

Despite its smallness, Schweizer-Reneke — named after two military leaders who were killed by the local black Korana people they found on the land — has flourished on the production of maize, groundnuts and livestock. It has also been a fertile breeding ground for white conservatism and for an active anti-apartheid movement. African National Congress stalwarts Esop Pahad and Ahmed Kathrada cut their political teeth in the town.

So did the mayor, Mpho Madevu, who confesses that the seeds of transformation have fallen on rocky ground: 'This is still a very conservative area and sometimes that makes for poor relations. They may smile at you, but you know you're not really welcome.'

Madevu and his wife, who teaches at one of the township's two high schools, are among the only three black families that have dared to move into town since the 1994 elections. Soon after moving in, Madevu was mistaken by a neighbour as a car thief while standing in his garage.

'I'm not saying all the whites here are racist,' he says. 'But mostly things have not changed much for black people here — especially the farm workers.'

Even before the school incident, tensions were high because of the murders of several farmers over the past two years. In the aftermath of each killing, farmers set up commando-style road blocks where blacks are assaulted or verbally abused.

Madevu, who once worked as a teacher in farm schools, met agricultural union representatives and warned that the killings could be linked to ill-treatment of farm workers over the years. 'They accused me of siding with black troublemakers, but they stopped the indiscriminate beatings on the road,' he says. The bodies of black men beaten to death are still occasionally found on roadsides in the province.

Another source of conflict identified by Madevu is in his own office. 'We have one or two die-hard conservatives working at the town hall who show respect for me because of my authority, but pretend they don't see me when we meet in the supermarket.'

Schweizer-Reneke and Vryburg, he argues, are not isolated cases. 'Things have only changed superficially in rural towns like this where the struggle for equality continues unabated.'
Tallest Jail May Cast Shadow on African City

PONTE CITY from Page 1

into a giant penal colony.

But the building's owners insist there is nothing fanciful about their proposal. The idea to turn Ponte City into a prison originated with United States architect Paul Silver, an internationally recognized expert on jail construction who first came to South Africa two years ago at the invitation of the Ministry of Correctional Services.

Asked to find a way of providing cells for at least 2,000 prisoners in or near downtown Johannesburg — the epicenter of a South African crime wave that includes 11,000 murders each year — he spent months inspecting vacant lots and existing buildings before he came upon Ponte City. "I went and took a look and realized it was absolutely perfect," he says. "It's a lousy apartment building, but a perfect prison."

Mr. Silver's proposal is to install decks in the central shaft, one every four floors, and to remove part of the outer wall over each deck to create exercise spaces big enough for indoor soccer or basketball. The apartments in the outer walls would be easily converted into cells — each with its own barred picture window. The prisoners would have plenty of time to enjoy the spectacular view because, he says, escape from the world's tallest prison would be all but impossible.

EW Johannesburgers take the proposal seriously, even if some who live in the building, Edgar Ramakgopa, a technician who shares an apartment on the 50th floor with five friends, jokes: "I like staying here very much. If they turn it into a prison, I will become a guard."

But according to Don Stewart, representative for the owners, Vicemus Investments Ltd., the building has already been rezoned and the proposal approved "in principle" by the government and city council. The government is expected to request a new Johannesburg prison this month, and Mr. Stewart says, the consortium is confident that it can deliver for about 250 million rand (650 million), 80 percent of the estimated cost of building a similar facility from scratch.

Critics say opposition is likely to grow as realization sinks in that it is not a joke. Henning Rasmussen, an architect, writer, and lecturer on Johannesburg's urban environment, says the idea of having the city skyline dominated by the world's tallest prison is "scary" and would do nothing to help the image of a city already generally acknowledged to be in serious trouble.

By day, the streets of the downtown Central Business District still bustle with office workers, and the end to apartheid restrictions on black movement has allowed street traders to flourish, giving an African air to what would otherwise look like a mid-size US city. But the often-magnificent buildings that tower above the streets are in many cases vacant or half-empty, abandoned by white-owned business in the flight to the suburbs.

At Christmas, the five-star Carlton - formerly Johannesburg's premier hotel - shut down because few visitors wanted to stay there anymore. In its latest year, the hotel provided armed bodyguards for guests who fancied a stroll outside.

Mr. Rasmussen says Johannesburg's future, like that of so many US cities that endured similar blight, lies in persuading people to live and work downtown. But unlike in the US, where urban "gentrification" has been led by affluent people fleeing boredom, traffic jams, and property costs in suburbs, the future of Johannesburg lies with the relatively poor black majority, he says. Several buildings are being converted into affordable apartments using a government grant designed to address serious shortages left over from the apartheid era, which ended in the early 1990s.

Whites may flee to the suburbs, Rasmussen says, but for many blacks, downtown Johannesburg remains "the place of gold," the descendant of the mining town that sprang up along the great Witwatersrand gold reef 112 years ago. A vibrant if harsh city of opportunity, it still acts as a magnet of hope for people from all over Africa. Thus New York once lured the poor of Europe.

Johannesburg "doesn't look good, and it doesn't look like it used to — some of the parks are now being used to dump vegetables or repair minibus tires," Rasmussen says. "It is now an African city, and it used to be a white city in Africa. But the process is a very hopeful one and positive. The problem is that the people who debate about Johannesburg are white."
For 20 years, the woman who bore Steve Biko two children was silent. Now she speaks to Ann Treneman about their passion and politics.

MAMPHELA RAMPHELE has had the kind of life that they make films about. She was a revolutionary and the long-time lover of the anti-apartheid leader Steve Biko. She gave birth to two of his children, the last one being born shortly after he was beaten to death in custody by South African police. For nearly 20 years she has let the gossip have its say and then decided enough was enough. The result was her autobiography, A Life, and a history corrected. It is not so much a case of Cry Freedom as Cry Foul because Ms Ramphele believes that she tells her own story best.

Now 50, Mamphele Ramphele is a major player in the new South Africa. As vice-chancellor of the University of Cape Town, she holds what may be the most important academic post in the country, and last week she was in London raising funds for it. She says she'd like to think she has redefined the role of vice-chancellor. Somehow, I don't think that is in dispute. Her visit to London also gave her an opportunity to tell her story, which you can hear today on BBC Radio 4's programme The Choice.

It is an amazing tale and, listening to it, you can't help but wonder if they made the wrong film. She admits that Richard Attenborough's film Cry Freedom did upset her.

"I was concerned about a distortion of history by somebody who didn't really know Steve and who was trying to project Steve as a Gandhi of sorts, which he wasn't," she says.

She is a small woman with a big laugh. Her story begins at the University of Natal in the late Sixties. She arrived from her village, unsophisticated but a fast learner, and immersed herself in student politics. "We actually started believing that we were not going to die as the slaves that our parents and our grandparents had been. We were convinced we were going to see freedom in our lifetime," she says. "We worked every day, absolutely fired by the knowledge that freedom was going to come." She knew, even from the first, that Steve Biko was the stuff of history. "He was absolutely stunning, very attractive, very jovial, larger than life." She describes a life of politics and parties and talks of her love for Biko only in superlatives: it was a relationship, she says, that degenerated into passion.

But then, for someone in love, she did something odd. She married someone else.

"Naivety is the thing when you are young. You really have great difficulties making serious assessments. So even though I was madly in love with this man, I went and married somebody else because I had made a commitment to do so. Absolutely stupid." Not breaking the engagement is the defining regret of her life. "Steve knew I was making the wrong decision but there was no way he could convince me. His last attempt to do so was in a letter which went right into the hands of my fiancé and which I never saw. If I had, perhaps it would have had some impact. But the rest is history." And, then Steve Biko got married. "Which was also a foolish decision," she says, "but there you are. A comedy of errors and a tragedy." Her marriage did not last long. Her husband was jealous that she and Biko were still involved with politics together and, at some point, stopped trusting her. "Then obviously I was more open to a passionate relationship with Steve. In any case, it was a fire that had simply been covered with sand. Gradually the sand blew away and flames erupted." Biko stayed married but the affair continued. Mamphele got pregnant with their first child in 1973. The baby, a daughter, died from pneumonia. "We decided not to have another child until we had sorted out this three-cornered relationship," says Mamphele. "He was married and his profile was too high for us to be seen acting irresponsibly. So we decided to be good citizens." At this she bursts out laughing. What did that mean? "Simply that we practiced birth control." But then the police cracked down and that was no longer possible. "That's why I have the police to thank for having this beautiful son. So the Lord works in mysterious ways.

At the time of Biko's death in 1977, Mamphele was in hospital with a threatened miscarriage. "I got a phone call from one of our friends and I can still hear what she said. It really was like a searing pain that goes through you. You think, 'I won't survive this; it is impossible for me to survive the death of this man'. And yet you do, because you have no option."

At the time of his death, Steve Biko had started divorce proceedings. "So that was the ultimate blow to finishing what had been unfinished business."
Shaka statue casts a giant shadow over South Africa

Alec Russell in Durban reports on controversy over a Zulu hero

THE long and bloodstained shadow of King Shaka, the Zulus' warrior founder, is once more looming over South Africa because of a controversial plan to honour him with a giant stone statue.

In the nearly two centuries since Shaka's imposis (regiments) carved out his empire in a series of brilliant but genocidal campaigns, historians have clashed repeatedly over his record.

Whites saw him as a barbaric dictator while blacks hailed him as their Napoleon and independent spirit.

Now plans to build a 140-foot stone statue to him at the entrance to South Africa's largest port have rekindled the dispute which goes to the heart of post-apartheid politics.

The blueprint is for a grass-skirted Shaka complete with a head-high rawhide shield and spear towering over the city on the bluff opposite Durban harbour. It is intended to be part of a grandiose "rebranding" of both Durban and South Africa. Its backers excitedly compare it to the Statue of Liberty or the Eiffel Tower and say it is time South Africa had a monument untainted by apartheid.

But it has provoked outrage. Environmentalists say the proposed waterfront site is home to several protected species. Historians are quarrelling over how to portray Shaka and whether he should be fat or thin.

Many local whites and Indians are concerned because both the region's old enemies, the Inkatha Freedom Party and the African National Congress, are believed to be backing the project.

Their fear is that the statue symbolises the two parties' new, cosy rapport, which risks sidelining non-Africans from politics.

Critics are also wary of lionising a black despot at a time when South Africa is trying to move away from its divided past. "I'm having to tread very carefully," said Eric Apelgren, who is half Swedish and half Zulu and is co-ordinating the project on behalf of the tourism authority of KwaZulu-Natal.

"The idea was to make it a statue of unity. But there's always been this suspicion in South Africa that anything that projects Zulu nationalism is dangerous and leads to secession."

"There is talk of compromising with an abstract warrior as many people, even some Zulus, say that far from being a symbol of unity he was a bloody tyrant."

A committee from the city council and the port authority is considering the proposal. It is estimated it would take five years and about $4 million to build.

"Only a few years ago it would have been impossible to erect a Shaka statue as the ANC derided tradition because Inkatha used it as an integral part of its political message."

Now many Zulus hail the statue as a sign of their province's two-year-old peace accord which ended a decade of on-off civil war.

BY BLACKMAN NGORO

Large quantities of weapons are disappearing from South African military bases.

Top government sources suspect they are being used in cash-in-transit robberies or by other gangsters.

Colonel Puzo Tladi, a South African National Defence Force spokesman, said there were also suspicions that the weapons were being stolen for use by a "third force" to destabilise next year's elections.

Senior Superintendent Jeremy Veary, head of police intelligence in the Western Cape, has confirmed the disappearance of weapons from several bases in the province. Weapons have also been reported stolen from other bases around South Africa, including in the former Transkei.

Military-issue handgrenades have been recovered during joint police and military patrols on the Cape Flats.

Tony Yengeni, the chairman of the parliamentary joint defence committee, said weapons theft was a growing trend at South Africa's military bases.

Yengeni expressed anger that the old-guard military establishment ignored the theft of weapons from under their own noses while they expressed concern at the smuggling of firearms into South Africa from Mozambique.

"I'm going to bring this to the attention of the defence committee at our next meeting. Somebody must take responsibility - ultimately national defence force chief Georg Meiring is responsible."

However, Western Cape defence force spokesman Colonel Riaan Louw said the military did not know of missing weapons.

But Veary said he had personally investigated the case of a large quantity of weapons that the SANDF was supposed to have destroyed, including illegal AK-47 automatic rifles and TNT explosive.

He said an AK-47 that was supposed to have been destroyed was found at the scene of taxi violence.

Last year right-winger Willem Ratte tried to steal RPG-7 anti-tank rockets and 81mm mortars from Pomfret military base in the Northern Cape.

Right-wing sources in Pretoria have said there will be an attempt to take over the government before the 1999 general elections.
Evidence in Botha trial raises fresh racial polarisation fears

Dramatic evidence implicating former president PW Botha in the murder of anti-apartheid activists was heard this week in a South African court, after he had snubbed an offer to testify in a closed hearing before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

TRC sources say the negotiations to keep him out of the dock (which lasted more 10 hours) stemmed from concerns among some commissioners that the spectacle of having Botha publicly confronted with allegations that he had ordered the "elimination" of so-called "enemies of the state" during the '80s could become a fulcrum for right-wing reaction.

After initial evidence from the minutes of the now-defunct State Security Council was led the case was then postponed to June 1 to allow more documents to be retrieved from state archives, despite angry denunciations from Botha, who said that the allegations made in court against him would not be tested until then.

The contempt of court trial of the former state president finally got underway mid-week, after the TRC failed in its last-minute efforts to persuade him to testify about his role in the SSC during the '80s. Botha had ignored three TRC subpoenas summoning him to hearings. If convicted he faces a $4,000 fine (or a two-year prison sentence), but may then - if the political will is there - be open to criminal charges on the substantive issues revealed in court this week.

Both Botha and right-wingers in general have long spurned the TRC as a "vendetta" against whites. Botha has called the commission a "circus" and accused it of waging a "witchhunt" against Afrikaners.

But not all on the right-wing are keen that Botha should instead appear in court - there are concerns among some of his supporters that if the ailing 81-year-old makes a garrulous defence in court he will damage his and their positions.

The trial poses a major conundrum for the TRC and the government, which has been faced with resurgent racial tensions, with the reopening this week of a racially divided school in Vryburg in North West Province, and with President Nelson Mandela's personal intervention after a white farmer was alleged to have shot and killed a black infant on his land.

In Vryburg white parents beat up black high school "trouble makers", but the tensions there are replicated in a less extreme way in many rural towns throughout the country, still physically segregated and with whites organised in ratepayers' associations and blacks in townships represented by the mayor and majority in the town council.

Meanwhile, white farmers are again accusing the government of not doing enough to protect them against attacks by black assailants. They and many others in their communities reject a recent intelligence report that the attacks are not politically motivated and aimed at driving them off the land (SouthScan v12/44).

But while white right-wingers claim to detect in Botha's trial the impulse for revenge, most black South Africans are relishing the rare sight of a former apartheid strongman being made to answer for his actions from a court dock.

Initial evidence led against Botha seems damning. TRC executive secretary Paul van Zyl handed the court documents he said confirmed that killings of political opponents had been approved at the highest levels of the apartheid state. The documents included minutes of secret SSC meetings.

The minutes contain passages authorising the "elimination and neutralisation" of political opponents - phrases. Van Zyl told the court, which meant killing activists. Other documents retrieved by TRC investigators last year from the state archives detail further illegal, covert operations authorised by the former president, Van Zyl said. Asked whether Botha had been present at the minutes meetings, Van Zyl told the court "Yes, he was either present at all the meetings or he received the minutes". Botha had therefore had full knowledge of the orders, he claimed.

Originally set up by Botha in 1972 as an advisory body, the SSC was revamped under his presidency into SA's de facto governing body in the early '80s. Chaired by Botha, it gathered top political and military leaders and was tasked with co-ordinating the apartheid state's attempts to quell the so-called 'total onslaught' mounted by anti-apartheid forces. It became a powerful policy-making body and the pinnacle of an elaborate national, regional and local system of security committees known as the National Security Management System.

Worst scenario

Botha, unlike some 8,000 former members of the apartheid security forces and the liberation organisations, has not applied for amnesty. The evidence presented in this trial could therefore form the basis for further criminal proceedings if the attorney-general decides a prima facie case for such action has been established.

Observers say this could be the worst possible scenario for Botha, the government and the TRC, which was set up in 1995 by the African National Congress government both to side-step calls for Nuremberg-style trials and to defuse the threat of right-wing reaction (by exempting perpetrators of human rights abuses from prosecution via amnesties if they fully disclose their deeds). According to one TRC official, the commission has "long been extremely sensitive to right-wing sentiments and criticisms" - so much so that investigators have reportedly been asked to track down more victims...
of ANC bombings so as to counter charges that it has adopted an unbalanced approach to human rights abuses.

Should Botha go on trial for his role in what was the most brutal repressive phase of the apartheid era, many of the political and racial schemes the TRC was meant to bridge could yawn ominously wide again.

This week, TRC deputy chair Alex Boraine seemed concerned by this prospect. "I don't want to comment on what the court might do," he said. "But the charges are very serious and Botha will have to face up to the consequences once the verdict is known."

But the chances of Botha going on trial specifically for his involvement in human rights abuses are very slim, believes Steven Friedman, director of the Centre for Policy Studies. "Basically, that assumes a zealous attorney-general who wants to go out and derail the 1993 political settlement and that's highly improbable."

Meanwhile, the TRC's efforts to save Botha from the humiliation of a court case on the current, lesser charges, has re-opened divisions within its own ranks, say TRC sources.

"The value of what PW Botha has to say is absolutely zero - he'll never admit anything," one TRC investigator told SouthScan. "But the point is that he has to be publicly accountable like everyone else, just as Winnie (Madikizela-Mandela) had to be."

Many black South Africans recall Madikizela-Mandela's live, televised appearances before the TRC last November which topped South African TV ratings. She was subjected to nine grueling days of questioning on her alleged role in abuses carried out by her team of bodyguards, the self-styled Mandela United Football Club, during the '80s. The TRC later devoted another four days of hearings to the activities of the "club."

In contrast, only six days of hearings have been held on the SSC, which is believed to have co-ordinated one of the most brutal phases of repression in the country's history.

Critics inside the TRC say this week's negotiations with Botha (who drew in most of its top figures) distracted the commission from a formidable workload. It has to hand in its final report to Mandela by end-July, which effectively gives it two months to complete its work. Yet, almost 3,000 amnesty applications still have to be processed.

Among those awaiting resolution are applications by the killers of former SA Communist Party leader Chris Hani. A verdict is expected later this month. According to TRC sources, the likelihood is that Clive Derby-Lewis will receive amnesty, while the actual assassin, Polish immigrant Janusz Walus will be refused.

To date some 5,000 of the more than 8,000 applications have been rejected, most on administrative grounds.

By Mary Braid

**THE INDEPENDENT**

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Holding on: Rugby supremo Louis Luyt refuses to resign

the president of the Sports Council, said that the council's threat to invoke an international boycott still stood, after Luyt refused to quit.

A boycott would jeopardise millions of pounds of promised sponsorship in South Africa, Australia and New Zealand, and throw international competition into disarray.

Mr Luyt started the day with typical swaggering style, telling a breakfast meeting organised by a business publication that he would not resign and that the row between him and President Mandela's government was to do with race rather than sport.

With international isolation again looming for a sport which in the apartheid era earned a reputation for attracting racist and right-wing supporters, Luyt said little to take the racial sting out of the confrontation.

"Are we going to remain a lawless society? Because that's what we are, you know," he said to the loud applause of the audience of white, middle-aged men.

Luyt said that the bitter row with government was not about Sarfu but about Louis Luyt. "This was about someone being in the way, and, let me tell you, I intend to be in the way for a long time to come," he said.

He added that he would bow before no man - presumably not even President Mandela - until God

But last night at the end of the Sarfu executive meeting that usually bullish Luyt looked uncharacteristically shellshocked.

"It is unlikely that he expected that eight of the 14 affiliated provincial rugby unions would turn against him.

The fear now is that the row over rugby's apparent failure to reach out to the black majority will spill over into an even more fiercely racial conflict.

Mr George has warned that protesters will block any tours planned in South Africa by Ireland, England and Wales which begin later this month: though it is doubtful that they would attempt to ignore a boycott urged by President Mandela.

For big sponsors like Rupert Murdoch, who are funding the multi-million pound Tri-Nations competition between South Africa, New Zealand and Australia a fortune is at risk.

Silas Nkanunu, Sarfu senior vice-president and one of the four executive members to resign, said last night that the prospect for rugby was now "gloom" and that the blame rested squarely with Mr Luyt.