

# Archbishop Desmond Tutu

*Do his views represent those of the majority of Anglicans?*

**T**here are volumes of newspaper files on Archbishop Desmond Tutu — he is probably one of the most quoted men in the world at the present time.

For a while it was unclear as to whether he supported disinvestment and sanctions now or in the near future. While abroad he was often reported as calling for immediate action. At home in South Africa he appeared to be more cautious with remarks such as "... if things don't change, I will call for sanctions in two years..." He did, in fact, tell this to the Dutch Foreign Minister, Mr Hans van den Broek, in The Hague, just over a year ago. Archbishop Tutu has now stated that he fully supports punitive economic sanctions with immediate effect. In a recent interview he admitted that he did not speak for the Anglican Church. "When I speak, I speak as Desmond Tutu," he told a Press conference in Johannesburg. What, then, is his stand on violence?

In January this year, speaking to editors and reporters of the Washington Post, he predicted militant black attacks in SA on "soft targets" such as school buses and also conjured up the image of black servants poisoning their employers. (The Star, January 10, 1986.) He suggested his own patience was "wearing thin" in the search for non-violent ways to overthrow apartheid. It appears as if Archbishop Tutu is of the opinion that violence is inevitable. Does this

mean that the Nobel Peace Prize laureate has given up working for peaceful change? Is it perhaps naïve to believe that he is unaware that a great many people believe his pronouncements "give the go-ahead" to violence. Chief M G Buthelezi, Chief Minister of KwaZulu and President of Inkatha said recently that "... given the circumstances which actually prevail in South Africa, Bishop Tutu's pronouncements on violence lend respectability to revolutionary violence." It is not only in his pronouncements that Archbishop Tutu separates himself from positions which the Anglican Church in SA has, in fact, adopted.

In his address during his enthronement ceremony when he became the Bishop of Johannesburg he said: "We will not have peace until we have justice and how can we have that without the participation of the premier black liberation group, the ANC..." In action he again and again identifies with the pro-violence External Mission of the ANC and in South Africa he has taken a party political position by accepting nomination as a patron of the pro-ANC United Democratic Front.

Is Archbishop Tutu not now qualifying what he says about violence in exactly the same way he qualified what he first said about sanctions? At North Carolina Central University in May this year he said: "Peaceful protest has become virtually impossible in our land. We don't want to use

violence but what can we do? There can come a time when it will be justified to use force to overthrow an unjust organisation..." (Sowetan, May 12, 1986.)

This theme has become a constant one. There are numerous examples.

In Vienna, Austria he said time was running out before blacks took up arms.

"I am opposed to all forms of violence... but there may come a time when it is justified to overthrow a system violently." (Business Day, May 13, 1986.)

In Kingston, Jamaica, in August this year he said he believed that efforts by opponents of apartheid who advocate non-violence had not worked. (Sapa-Reuter reports, August 19, 1986.)

Does this mean that the time will soon come when Archbishop Tutu will openly support violence too?

It appears he believes the Anglican church will, eventually, support violence. He told an anti-apartheid rally of about 10 000 people in Toronto, Canada, in June that "... the church would justify violence as a last resort to overthrow the South African Government..." (Sowetan, June 2, 1986.)

His warm relationships both in South Africa and abroad with supporters of the ANC (and its officials) are well known. Meetings with the President of the External Mission of the ANC, Mr Oliver Tambo, are public knowledge. Archbishop Tutu has openly

called for support for the External Mission of the ANC which receives arms and ammunition from the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc for the express purpose of killing people for political gain.

The ANC is now engaged in planting bombs in suburban shopping malls, outside popular bars frequented by young people, in dustbins at bus stops, on farm roads and elsewhere.

The ANC has refused to condemn the barbaric practice used by its supporters in SA of placing a "necklace" of petrol-filled car tyres around the necks of its opponents and burning them to death. Others are kicked and stoned in gruesome orgies of violence (even at funerals) and filmed by international television crews.

Last year, at California State University, ANC exiles Alois Mloi and Tim Ngubane had this to tell their audience:

"Among us we have people who have openly collaborated with the enemy . . . they have to be eliminated. We want to make the death of a collaborator so grotesque that people will never think of collaborating . . ."

There is evidence that elements within the External Mission of the ANC want to assassinate the President of Inkatha, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

This, then, is the organisation which Archbishop Tutu sees as the liberators of South Africa. It is the organisation to which he has given his apparently unqualified support and he has asked the West to do the same. Archbishop Tutu has, concurrent with his support for the External Mission of the ANC, shown his opposition of the mass 1,3 million-member anti-violence movement, Inkatha, and he has openly sided with political opponents of Inkatha. His mediating role has been a dubious one.

Archbishop Tutu defends the involvement of the church in politics saying such a role is not incompatible with the Bible.

"After reading the Bible, how can people say religion and



politics can't mix?" he told the World Methodist Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, in July. (Sapa report, *The Citizen*, July 29, 1986.)

Influential international political journalist and Newsweek correspondent, Peter Youngusband, writing in the *London Daily Mail* (April 17, 1986) had this to say about Archbishop Tutu — then Bishop of Johannesburg:

" . . . Parishioners in the Anglican diocese of Johannesburg, who see a lot of their Bishop on television and in the newspapers, have complained that they don't see enough of him in church . . ."

"Parishioners are resigning in disgust by the score — or just drifting away to other churches, or even into godlessness due to disillusionment

over their Bishop.

"It is not just that he makes political speeches. In his many public statements, Bishop Tutu almost seems to advocate violence as a resolution for South Africa's problems.

"He is an expert in the art of semantics . . .

"Such has been the fall-off in Church membership and subscriptions in his parish — among conservative blacks as well as whites — that the diocese of Johannesburg has slid more than R200 000 into the red . . . to his credit . . . he has raised money in the US . . .

"What is certain at present is that as Bishop Tutu amasses peace prizes and medallions and burnishes his undoubtedly political image, God's work, it is claimed by many, is being left unattended."