

Local News

Notre Dame professor seeks stronger moves to end apartheid

By Lee Strong

Predicting that "if U.S. policy does not change in the next two years, South Africa will become a region of desolation," Peter Walshe, director of African Studies at the University of Notre Dame, urged the U.S. government to "cease its de facto support for the government of South Africa."

In an address at the University Club of Rochester on Wednesday, April 20, the South African-born professor also called for tougher Western trade sanctions against South Africa and for an United Nations Security Council trade embargo to force the "South African government to the negotiation table sooner rather than later."

Speaking as part of St. Mary's Downtown Community Forum series, Walshe began his talk by reviewing the history of apartheid in South Africa, saying that a sense of the system's history is necessary to put the current situation in South Africa in perspective.

The Union of South Africa, which evolved into present day Republic of South Africa, was formed by the ruling British government in 1910, following the Boer war of 1899 to 1902. The British government, wishing to draw the formerly rebellious Afrikaners into closer union with the rest of white South Africa, instituted color bars and created an all-white parliament. This parliament enacted a series of laws that systematically restricted the rights of black South Africans.

As the South African government continued to expand the scope of apartheid between 1910 and the 1950s, black leaders "begged, pleaded, politely asked time and time again that the country change its policies," Walshe said. The election of the National Party in 1948, however, led to increased economic, political, and social segregation of non-white South Africans, resulting in three major waves of protests by blacks.

The first wave took place in the 1950s, when blacks employed passive resistance techniques similar to those U.S. blacks were using during the same period. These protests resulted in a government crackdown, in which the African National Congress, the most important black political organization in South Africa, was banned, and increasingly restrictive laws were passed. In addition, the government began using violence to suppress protests, especially during the notorious massacre at Sharpeville in 1960, in which government forces shot and



Professor Peter Walshe

killed 69 people peacefully protesting the pass laws.

The second wave came following the repression of the 1960s, when a consciousness movement developed at the black universities. This movement, whose best known leader was Stephen Biko (who later died in 1977 while in police custody), called for blacks to discover their own dignity and history, and to claim power in their own country. This movement spread to the high schools, then to the grade schools, and led to a series of confrontations culminating in the Soweto riots of 1975, which resulted in more than 200 deaths.

The third wave — continuing to this day — was sparked by the new constitution of 1983. This constitution created a tricameral parliament, with three racially distinct houses: one for whites, one for Asians, and a third for those of mixed-racial backgrounds. The house for whites, however, holds the only real power, Walshe said. He contended that the government changed the constitution "to stabilize its power (and) to draw a part of the black population into supporting the apartheid structure."

According to Walshe, the South African government made this and similar attempts to stabilize its power because a variety of sources have placed increasing pressure on the government to bring about a change in the apartheid system.

Regionally, South Africa has lost its buffer zone of white-controlled or dominated countries such as Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia), Mozambique and Angola. Fearing that these nations — which are now ruled by blacks — will support anti-government forces, South Africa has attempted to destabilize the governments of these bordering nations, Walshe said. In the mid-1970s, South Africa invaded Angola, and the South African government continues to support rebel movements there and in Mozambique. In addition, South Africa has maintained control of Namibia (Southwest Africa), despite United Nations attempts to gain its independence.

Internally, growing rebel movements — among them the ANC — have increased their activities. In addition, black trade unions have organized, leading to increasing labor unrest; residents of some of the segregated black areas in both the homelands and in the white regions have organized rent boycotts; and many black children now regularly boycott school.

Government policies have also received strong criticism from South African churches, which Walshe called "the one great sign of hope in South Africa ... of creating a just society." In the 1960s, Beyers Naude of the Dutch Reform Church began speaking out against the repression of blacks and warning the government that apartheid would lead to the destruction of South Africa. Naude was eventually banned — restricted from access to the media and forbidden to meet with groups of people.

Despite Naude's fate, other church leaders began to speak up, giving rise to a South African equivalent of liberation theology. Following the 1983 constitution, Naude and Desmond Tutu, the Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, formed the United African Front in an attempt "to create a vision of a new, non-racial South Africa," Walshe said.

The Catholic Church in South Africa likewise has consistently spoken out against apartheid since 1959, Walshe noted. The hierarchy condemned the 1983 constitution, and has endorsed economic sanctions by foreign nations and divestment by foreign corporations and in-

stitutions. The recent arrest of Archbishop Stephen Naidoo of Cape Town is one sign of how far the Catholic Church has come in speaking out against the government, Walshe observed. Archbishop Naidoo was arrested on February 29, 1988, for participating in a protest march outside the South African parliament.

The final source of pressure on South African is coming from other nations that are imposing sanctions, boycotts, divestment programs and withdrawal of foreign-owned businesses. These efforts have forced the South African government to make some concessions, Walshe noted, but have not been enough to defuse the situation. "Banning and detention without trial (are common), and torture is now endemic in South African prisons," he said.

"The whites in South Africa will have to experience a sharp increase in costs (from such economic sanctions) before they will negotiate," Walshe asserted. Western nations — including the United States — need to impose tougher sanctions to help force the South African government into negotiations leading not only to racial justice, Walshe said, but also to a more equitable distribution of wealth in South Africa.

Failure to put pressure on the South African government will result in increasing violence and make a just solution more difficult to achieve, Walshe said. Unless stopped, the current unrest will eventually develop into a long civil war that will affect not only South Africa, but the entire region of southern Africa, he predicted.

Walshe concluded his presentation by noting that U.S. actions in response to the situation in South Africa have "implications (for) U.S. policy around the globe."

"The United States must learn to cooperate with popular, indigenous liberation struggles," Walshe declared. "If we continue to look at things through the lens of the Cold War, we do a tremendous injustice to the people who have fought for justice."

GEM dinner featuring world council director

The Rev. Joan Campbell, director of the United States Office of the World Council of Churches, will be the featured speaker at Genesee Ecumenical Ministries' annual dinner, Thursday, April 28, at the First Baptist Church, 175 Allen's Creek Road, Brighton. The Rev. Campbell will speak on the theme, "One World: An Ecumenical Vision and Calling." The dinner will begin at 6 p.m., and the Rev. Campbell will speak at 7:30.

The Rev. Campbell will also speak at a breakfast session on Friday, April 29, beginning at 8 a.m. at the Colgate Rochester Divinity School. Her topic for this session will be "The World Council of Churches Today: Its Vision, Goals and Programs."

Tickets for the dinner are \$7.50 per person; the breakfast will cost \$2. Both talks are open to the public. For information or reservations, call GEM at (716)232-6530.

PBS journalist to speak at Nazareth graduation

Robert MacNeil, internationally known broadcast journalist, will deliver the main address at Nazareth College of Rochester's 61st annual commencement exercises on Sunday, May 15.

MacNeil, executive editor and co-anchor of "The MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour" and Kay R. Whitmore, president of Eastman Kodak Company, will receive honorary degrees at the ceremony, which will begin at noon on the east lawn of the campus.

A total of 703 graduates are expected to receive degrees; 420 candidates will receive baccalaureate degrees, and 283 will receive the master of science in education degree.

MacNeil, who will receive an honorary doctor of letters degree from Nazareth, is now in his 13th season of partnership with Jim Lehrer.

The MacNeil/Lehrer news programs, distributed nationally by the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), have won more than 30 awards for journalistic excellence, including a George Foster Peabody Award, a DuPont-Columbia Award and a Television Critics Circle Award.

Whitmore, who will receive an honorary doctor of humanities degree, has served as Kodak's president since 1983. A proponent of the Kodak Scholars Program, Whitmore is a leading advocate for school reform. In the January, 1988, issue of *U.S. News and World Report*, he applauded the City of Rochester efforts to effect school reform, and has stated that Kodak's future depends on its work force emphasizing the relationship between education and career preparation.

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