

Goldberg out of jail, on the road

OTTAWA (CUP) — Denis Goldberg understands the letter of the law.

The South African government may have barred him from using an AK-47 to fight for what he believes in, but that hasn't stopped the founding member of the armed wing of the African National Congress from advocating armed struggle as a means of dismantling apartheid.

For more than 20 years, the white South African was incarcerated in a Pretoria jail. Convicted of sabotage in 1963 and sentenced to life imprisonment with Nelson Mandela and other ANC activists in the Rivonia Trials, Goldberg was released last year after signing a document which stipulates he not "plan or instigate violence for political purposes" or make himself "liable for arrest."

"It doesn't say I can't advocate armed struggle," says Goldberg, who helped found Umkhonto We Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the ANC's armed wing, after joining the ANC 25 years ago. "I always have and I always will — it's the only way apartheid will be overthrown."

Since Sept. 29, Goldberg has been touring a host of Canadian cities, calling for "people's sanctions", and talking about the ANC, armed struggle, the future South Africa, and his experiences inside apartheid's jails.

Goldberg says the "struggle is going to intensify" unless the regime "breaks down quickly under international pressure." Comprehensive sanctions, he says, will weaken the white minority government's ability to administer apartheid. "Less money and equipment to keep the military machine going means a weaker military and police force and a shorter, less bloody struggle."

Sanctions should be for "anything and everything" connected to South Africa, he says. Canadians should boycott all South African products and corporations dealing with the regime, as well as athletes and entertainers with South African "connections," Goldberg says.

The majority of blacks in South Africa have been calling for sanctions since 1959, says Goldberg, "and only now are they beginning to be heard."

Goldberg says the support of Canadians in the struggle against apartheid "is greatly appreciated." But, he says, "the solidarity of Canadians is not a one way thing; apartheid should open up your eyes to the institutionalized racism against native people here."

"It's not good enough to be anti-apartheid. It's good to be against racism anywhere."

Goldberg is confident apartheid will be dismantled. "There's no doubt about that — the question is how." Goldberg says a combination of international pressure, massive political mobilization "above ground and underground", and armed struggle "will win the people their freedom."

He says a "one person, one vote" system, as specified in the ANC Freedom Charter — where the rights of all national groups including whites are protected — will replace apartheid. "Whites will be equal to everyone else and it will be a crime to be a racist."

There will be a redistribution of wealth and the "major multinational corporations will be broken up, although there will be room for some private enterprise," says Goldberg. "If the multinationals get out now, there may be a role for them in the new South Africa. If not, they shouldn't be dismayed if they are not welcome."

"Street committees" now administer the townships, completely autonomously of the local 'official'

government. "Young people have refused to go to school under the Bantu education system — a system that teaches them they are inferior to whites — but they are not bums. They are functioning as political-administrative groups in the bantustans and they are helping the people."

Goldberg says whites are becoming increasingly divided on apartheid. "Even though Botha's regime is far-right fascist, some whites have split off farther to the right. These Afrikaaner liberationists say they'll fight to the last drop of blood to keep apartheid, but they'll only make it more bitter, more bloody."

But the majority of whites, he says, have "simply withdrawn their support for the Botha regime. They're still benefitting from the privileges of apartheid, but they're not defending it."

Many whites are dodging the draft. In 1985, 7,500 out of 16,000 white soldiers failed to report for duty, even though the penalty for desertion is six years in prison, says Goldberg.

"Whites say they are fighting blacks. Blacks say they are not fighting whites; they are fighting the system," he says.

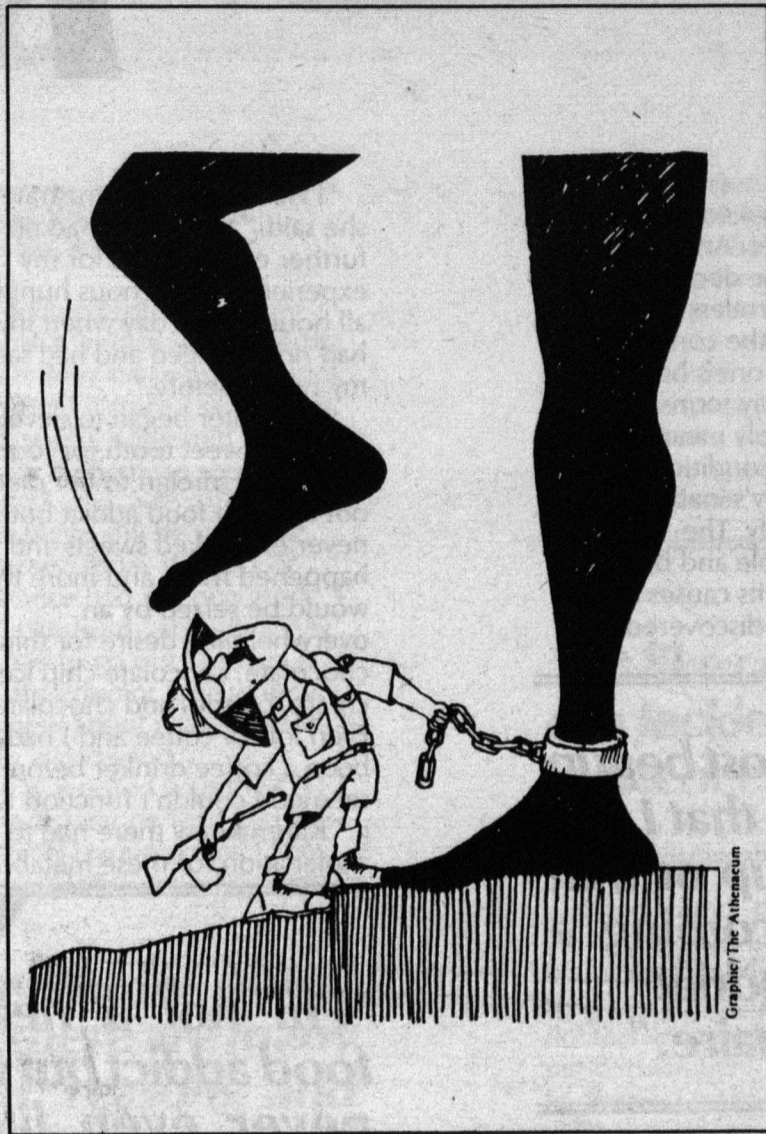
"Some whites, like myself, are involved in the national liberation struggle. But there's not enough."

Goldberg says the regime distorts the nature of violence between blacks because they "want everyone to believe blacks naturally fight each other all the time, and that whites are needed to keep 'order'".

"The French collaborated with the Nazis, and the French resistance killed French people who collaborated. But no one ever said they fought each other because they were white or French," says Goldberg.

Goldberg says the Botha regime is now hiring black police officers for high pay to patrol the bantustans. "The idea is to divide the opposition," he says, "but it won't work."

Meanwhile, he says, the regime, western powers and multinational corporations are "looking for someone to rule on their behalf" because they know apartheid is about to collapse. Both Ronald Reagan and



Margaret Thatcher, says Goldberg, back Kwazulu Chief Gatsha Buthelezi as the 'moderate' alternative to the ANC.

But Buthelezi has said publicly he doesn't insist on universal suffrage, says Goldberg, "and has not hesitated to use violence against blacks opposed to him."

At Kwazulu University, Buthelezi followers publicly murdered five students opposed to Buthelezi's party, Inkatha. But police reported no suspects, says Goldberg, because Buthelezi is the minister of police in his township and "investigates all the crimes."

Goldberg says the bantustan system was set up "to create groups of highly-paid administrators who have a vested interest in maintaining the system." He says Buthelezi, who is often quoted or mentioned

could respect him because he was fighting for his people. But whites like me are hated — we're seen as betraying all whites."

Goldberg found "considerable anti-semitism" among the prison guards. "Each morning, the guards would walk by each one of us and say, 'Good morning Jew, good morning Jew', even if they weren't Jewish, as an insult," he said.

Goldberg says he was released partially because of the efforts of his daughter in Israel and her kibbutz, a collective working community. "The kibbutz is a collective and one person's problem becomes the group's. My daughter's problem was getting me out of jail," says Goldberg.

Goldberg visited Israel immediately after his release, but was kicked out within two weeks because he was considered "dangerous to the state" by the Knesset, the Israeli parliament.

As soon as he arrived in Israel, Goldberg was asked of his opinions on the Israeli government's extensive economic and military links with South Africa, which is under military embargo in accordance with international law. He told Israelis to "break their state's links with racist South Africa," which infuriated the Israeli right wing, says Goldberg.

Goldberg says only one member of the Knesset publicly defended him "by saying freedom was a world-wide problem, not just ones for Jews in Israel."

Goldberg, invited to Canada by the International Defence and Aid Fund For Southern Africa and the ANC, says international pressure is "hurting the regime. They are going to have to hurt harder and then you'll see the ideology of racism doing a somersault."

"The whites will then say, like they did in Mozambique and Angola, 'yes, we can live with the blacks.'"

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