

ices of the National Education and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU) and the General and Allied Workers' Union (GAWU). The adjacent offices of the Transvaal Students' Congress (TRASCO) are ransacked.

- A powerful explosion damages the home of Godfrey Mathebe, a prominent opponent of KwaNdebele independence.

May - Winnie Mandela's Brandfort house and adjoining clinic are gutted by fire.

June - Arsonists destroy the cars of two Cosatu officials outside their Johannesburg homes.

- The Johannesburg offices of CCAWUSA are broken into. Computers and important information are stolen.

- The home of Rhodes University politics lecturer Marion Lacey is vandalised after she lectures on the Dakar talks.

July - Three minibusses belonging to delegates attending the Nusas annual festival at Wits University, are stolen. Cars of delegates are broken into and possessions stolen.

October - The home of Cosatu's former Northern Transvaal regional chair, Jerry Thibedi, is severely damaged by a powerful explosion.

- The Johannesburg offices of Ravan Press are broken into by four men claiming to be Security Policemen. Petrol bombs are found on the premises.

November - Flares are fired into the Cape Town flat of Surplus People's Project organiser Josette Cole.

December - The Grahamstown offices of [unclear] are destroyed by fire.

1988

January - The Johannesburg office of the Post Office and Telecommunications Workers' Union (POTWA) is broken into and equipment stolen.

- Burglars break into the Johannesburg offices of New Nation newspaper.

March - The Johannesburg office of Cric is vandalised. The intruders attempt to set fire to equipment and records.

- The Alexandra home of Delmas Treason Trialist Popo Molefe is petrol bombed. This is the third attack on his home since 1985.

- Shots are fired at the Johannesburg home of Cassim Saloojee, Chairperson of Actstop.

April - The PE offices of the National Medical and Dental Association (NAMDA)

are burgled, two days after their national conference. Along with telephones, office equipment, files and documents, the alarm system is stolen.

- A bomb explodes at Community House, Cape Town, while a memorial service is being held to commemorate the death of striking railway workers.

- The Johannesburg offices of Cric are gutted by fire. This is the third attack against Cric in less than two years.

May - The offices of PEN are again burgled. The alarm system is deactivated and stolen after keys are used to enter the security gates of the building. The gates are found locked the following morning. Files, darkroom and office equipment are stolen. This is PEN's third burglary in two years.

June - The car of Lucienne Hunter, mother of Wits University SRC president Rosemary Hunter and Defence Act prisoner Roland Hunter, is firebombed.

July - An abortive petrol bomb attack occurs at the Dawson's Hotel in Johannesburg, where the End Conscription Campaign were due to hold the launch of their booklet, "Know Your Rights".

- The Johannesburg office of the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) is destroyed by fire.

August - Khotso House in Johannesburg, home of the SACC and various anti-apartheid organisations, is bombed. Extensive structural damage is caused.

September - The Durban printing unit of Cosatu is firebombed, the evening after the national anti-apartheid conference is banned.

- An arson attack occurs at the home of Jono Gunthorp, external vice-president of the University of Natal's SRC and one of the 143 men who publically rejected army conscription.

- Two separate attacks occur within five minutes of one another, at the Soweto homes of Thami Mcerwa, legal official of Nactu, and Thenjiwe Leeuw, former secretary to the Azanian Students' Movement (AZASM). Some days later the Soweto Divisional Commissioner of Police gives an assurance in the Rand Supreme Court that no member of the South African Police will act unlawfully against Mcerwa.

- The multi-racial disco, the "Why Not" in Hillbrow, is bombed. 19 people are injured. The "Wit Wolwe" terrorist group claims responsibility, as well as for the Khotso House bomb.

Information from Monitor, the journal of the Human Rights Trust.

Sentencing the death penalty

The death penalty has recently been once again highlighted by the Black Sash report on the process of executions in South Africa.

One newly-formed organisation campaigning against the death penalty is FOPOD (Families Of People On Death Row). This organisation was formed by relatives and friends of those people who have been sentenced to death and who are currently sitting in the condemned cells of Pretoria's Maximum Security Prison.

The organisation intends having both an active and a supportive role in the campaign against the death penalty in SA.

A statement put out by the organisation says: "As people directly affected by this penalty, we feel we must do something about it instead of waiting for other people to do it for us.

"Our work will supplement the work already being done in the field by SADPSA (Society for the Abolition of the Death Penalty in SA), Lawyers For Human Rights, NADEL, Save The Patriots and the Black Sash."

FOPOD's first initiative has been to

launch a petition calling for an immediate moratorium on all hangings while a Commission of Inquiry is set up to investigate capital punishment. This petition is being circulated nationwide.

"We do not believe that petitions automatically ensure that laws are changed; if that was the case we would live in a perfect world. However we do believe that a petition signed by thousands of South Africans might demonstrate that most people in this country are both civilised and hopeful about their future.

"We have experienced the effects of the death penalty, and can see that it is an act which dehumanises and brutalises the society we live in. We hope for better things."

The organisation says the fact that SA executes more people than almost any other country in the world, is a frightening one. There are now approximately 280 people under sentence of death in SA, excluding those in the 'homelands'.

The plight of those sentenced to die was made more poignant over the festive season. With the season of goodwill over, the New Year executions soon

began again.

As a punishment, the death penalty is irreversible. Under any legal system there cannot be a guarantee that those who judge are without bias. They are human beings and they have human failings.

Such bias, however small, can mean the difference between life and death.

Circumstances considered to be extenuating by one judge may mean something quite different to another. Recent judgements by Justice Strydom, Justice Latagan and Justice Shearer are examples of this.

Five policemen tried for murdering a suspect by placing a black bag over his head, suffocating him to death, are given a suspended sentence and fined. Extenuating factors are that this practise is usual in this police unit.

Justice Shearer, who delivered this judgement, has sentenced a number of other people to death.

FOPOD says: "We are launching this petition in hope. We are launching this organisation because we cannot, and will not, stand aside and allow this barbaric practise to continue."

For the attention of the State President, Minister of Justice and Members of Parliament.

We, the undersigned, are South Africans who oppose the use of the death penalty. In doing so we note the following:

1. Modern society is moving away from the use of capital punishment, towards more reformatory penal systems.
2. There has been no investigation into the system of capital punishment in South Africa for more than 50 years.
3. There exists the very real possibility of error in the imposition of the death penalty - an error which cannot be rectified.
4. The use of the death penalty is arbitrary and would appear to be determined by criteria which are necessarily subjective.
4. Executions add to the negative perception of the judiciary amongst many of the people of South Africa.
6. Judicial killings teach society the lesson that death and violence are acceptable solutions to the problems facing us. Such killings create the impression that retribution is justifiable.

Bearing these factors in mind we request you to consider the following:

1. To institute an immediate moratorium on all executions.
2. To set up a judicial Commission of Inquiry into the use of the death penalty in South Africa.
3. To investigate more appropriate methods of punishment, which seek to cure rather than destroy.

NAME	ADDRESS	SIGNATURE

Cut out or copy, and send to: FOPOD, PO Box 621, Melville 2109

Collection Number: AK2117

Collection Name: Delmas Treason Trial, 1985-1989

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand

Location: Johannesburg

©2016

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

This document forms part of a collection, held at the Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.