

IS FREEDOM CHARTER TREASON?

To All Our Readers—
**PEACE AND
FREEDOM IN
THE NEW YEAR**

Crown Refuses To Answer Defence Query

JOHANNESBURG.

WHAT EXACTLY CONSTITUTES THE CHARGE OF TREASON AGAINST THE 154 ACCUSED WHO APPEARED AT THE PREPARATORY EXAMINATION AT THE DRILL HALL LAST WEEK?

THE CROWN IS NOT YET PREPARED TO ANSWER THIS QUESTION.

In reply to questions by defence counsel at the end of the proceedings last week, Mr. J. C. van Niekerk, for the Crown, said he was not in a position at this stage to say what allegations were going to be made at the end of the preparatory examination.

Mr. V. C. Berrange, for the defence, asked whether the Crown maintained that the Freedom Charter was treasonable or not.

Mr. van Niekerk: That is a question that could be decided after all the evidence has been led.

Mr. Berrange: My only object in raising this matter is that the Freedom Charter has been circulated in tens of thousands all over the country since 1954, and if it was treasonable one would have expected action to be taken before now.

The outline of the Crown case was given by Mr. van Niekerk, who read slowly and haltingly from a document of 53 typed pages. Reporters who asked for copies of the address were told it was badly typed and he had not read everything in it.

The gist of the Crown case, said Mr. van Niekerk, was that at meetings held all over the Union and in documents the accused advocated, propagated and preached a Marxist-Leninist account of society and the State, a Marxist-Leninist interpretation of history and contemporary politics, and called for the establishment of a people's democratic state based on the principles of the system in the Soviet Union, the people's democracies of Eastern Europe and China.

They preached that imperialism and colonialism should be destroyed and advocated the drawing up of a Freedom Charter as the basis of a people's democracy in South Africa. The Crown would allege that the accused relied on the aid of outside

countries to establish this people's democracy.

LIBERATION MOVEMENT

Mr. van Niekerk said that all the organisations named in the indictment constituted a national liberation movement, and it would be alleged that the steps set out in the Freedom Charter were steps in the direction of a Communist state and, if necessary, a prelude to revolution.

The evidence would be that the liberation movement relied on extra-parliamentary action to achieve its object because it did not see any alternative under the existing constitution.

The Communist Party manifesto was quoted in support of the Crown allegation that Communists stood for violent revolution and the destruction of capitalist oppressors. Mr. van Niekerk then quoted from speeches and documents to show:

(a) That some of the accused taught that the South African state

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"AFRIKA!"—A section of the crowd waves farewell to the Black Maria after the first day's "treason" hearing. Notice the raised thumb through the bars of the van.



"WE STAND BY OUR LEADERS"—A section of the vast throng outside the Johannesburg Drill Hall.

Brutal Police Attacks At Drill Hall

JOHANNESBURG.

BOTH the second and third days of the "treason" hearings at the Drill Hall were marked by ugly scenes of police violence against the thousands of South Africans of all races who had come to stand by their leaders.

The crowd ringed the hall in queues seven deep and then spilled over the pavements, completely blocking Twist and Quartz Streets, while heavily armed police stood by.

Forewarned by leaders of the People's Defence Committee against provocation (a leaflet distributed outside the Court on the first day urged people to give the police no excuse for violence) the crowd was orderly and disciplined.

But that did not deter the police from ruthless action against them.

SHOOTING

Proceedings during the second day of the mass treason trial in the Drill Hall were dramatically interrupted when the sound of shooting was heard outside. Those in the hall immediately realised that police had opened fire on the vast crowd outside, which had throughout the first day resisted all attempts at provocation, and cries of anger and indignation echoed through the Court, so that the Magistrate, Mr. Wessels had to adjourn.

The trouble began when the police under Col. Grobler began trying to push the thousands of people who were unable to gain admission to the hall, away from the entrance on the ground that they were mak-

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