

# interview

One of the main planks of Sentinel policy is to be non-racist. This

month we feature the clearly racist system of Government in South Africa - apartheid.

In a sincere and frank interview, David Kitson, free after 20 years in a South African Jail tells the Sentinel about his life and explains why the apartheid regime must be dismantled.

Mandy Rhodes and Rab Elliot report.

David Kitson became involved in the politics of anti-apartheid at an early age.

"It all started 45 years ago while I was a student. At University I joined the National Association of South African Students - black and white - and became the local representative in Durban. Through this movement I became very politicised and joined the Community Party."

After his trial he was sent to jail for 20 years for his political activities against the regime. In prison he was put in the bottom classification - D Group - with other political prisoners.

"It was the punishment category but the political prisoners were there too." Eventually we made such a continuous uproar about conditions that we were all promoted to Category A prisoners on the same day - we were entitled to the maximum number of visits, the maximum number of letters and allowed to buy groceries and so on. Life became rather easier."

In common with the apartheid regime prisoners were treated differently.

"As a white political prisoner I was treated better in comparison to black political prisoners but worse than white non-political prisoners."

The sexes were segregated as well as the races. "Women got the worst treatment of all".

After his release, Kitson is still dedicated to the aims of the anti-apartheid movement. This means more sanctions by countries throughout the world.

"I think the South African regime should be completely isolated in the world and this would shorten the length of the liberation struggle."

One way of helping the campaign is to boycott South African products in our shops, particularly food. Many people are aware of the South African food brand names and won't buy these products. But wouldn't a total goods embargo actually hurt the blacks, the very people you were trying to help?

"That's the argument you always get but the fact is that Britain and these other Western countries have been investing in South Africa for 100 years or more and what difference has it made to the blacks? They were driven off the land into towns and left there to starve. Now they are sent back to little bits of land where they still starve now - so the blacks are hurting."

Kitson believes the South African Government is an extreme which "even Botha can't seem to control."

"The police seem to be above the law. People continually get killed while in the hands of the police. Families bring cases against the police or press for enquiries but the cases have always been whitewashed. The investigating judge in the most recent massacre found nobody at fault but he made a few criticisms. None of the police involved in the recent black murders was charged."

Mrs Thatcher's Britain is considered "authoritarian" by even some of her friendly critics. Apartheid is without any doubt authoritarian, so just how do the two countries compare? For Kitson, the differences are acute and severe but he detects growing similarities. He cites the new legislation regarding board and lodging regulations for jobless youth. In South Africa they have a system where you are 'endorsed out' - sent to a local Bantustan (a hut village) unless you have a job when you are 16. Youth in Britain can only now stay in a house for a few weeks before moving on. The police and the legal system also have similarities.

"In South Africa the police just shoot and get away with it. The police here, shoot and then there is a tremendous uproar. However, the Thatcher Government is trying to change this and the situation has sharpened considerably during the last year particularly during the miners strike. Miners were not allowed to move. Young black people in particular have felt the sharp end of police violence in Brixton, Toxteth and so on. And its getting worse."

"The Anti Apartheid Movement was banned from demonstrating outside South Africa House while Botha was here and after 16 people were arrested and came to court, the magistrate found in favour of the demonstrators



against the police. That's the difference between here and there. Magistrates over there accept what the police have to say unquestioningly and that tendency exists here too, doesn't it?"

But for Kitson, the South African regime is vile and must be brought down. He believes more people and more governments are beginning to realise what is going on in South Africa and acting accordingly.

More than 4,000 Americans have been arrested for demonstrating outside South African Institutions in America. Both houses of Congress in America have passed legislation in favour of sanctions and the same applies to many countries on the continent like Norway, Holland and Belgium.

"Last week the French Premier said that if South Africa hadn't done anything to dismantle Apartheid within a year France would also start sanctions and South Africa has a lot of support from France at the moment."

He believes Western money actually keeps the South African economy alive and the country's politicians are terrified of sanctions and boycotts.

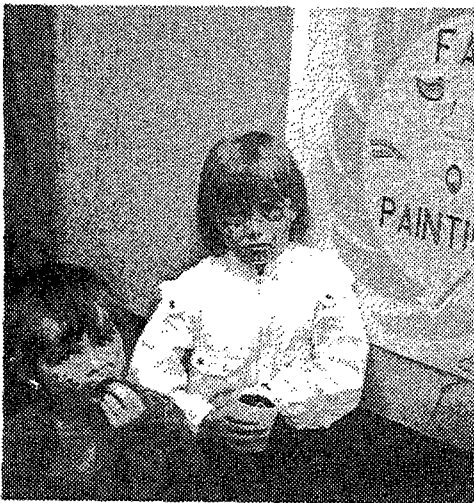
"When the West invests in South Africa they get a return of 23% as opposed to 9% in the West and this is achieved by crushing the blacks and controlling them."

In Dublin, shop assistants have been striking for well over a year, refusing to handle South African goods. In joining the shop assistants on their picket said: "These ladies are making a courageous and necessary stand and should be an example to us all."

"The regime is in difficulties; the bottom has dropped out of the gold market and they have to get foreign exchange to pay for their war machine. They say they can manage themselves but they have to get bits and pieces from the West."

But where will boycotts and sanctions lead? Kitson is quite clear. "We hope for an economic collapse, the liberation movement would take over and then of course there would be a completely different situation and a completely different set of values."

# Gala Day



Clouds broke into sunshine and tears into smiles as the Wester Hailes Gala Day offered its fun to the massive gathering.

From Blairgowrie and Rattray pipe band through to pakora it was all there and all enjoyed. Well? "The gala's fantastic but this band, 'Paris in Springtime' are crap", commented a critical Donna Curry, 1 2 Murrayburn Gardens.

It was a day when children had full tummies and parents had empty purses as the temptation for a hamburger or a chance to win a goldfish became too great.

Sisters Michelle and Lisa from Burdiehouse had tired poor granny out and they were left to canter round the playing fields on one of the patient ponies offering rides: "We have just come to visit our Gran but this is great, we've never been on a horse..."

Over at the face painting there seemed to be a bit of bover! "I'm not a cat I'm a squirrel", wailed one little 'squirrel' while a sad wee clown moaned, "I want to be a squirrel". Mum added: "He's always a little clown anyway." Ah well, the face painter wasn't even aware that he could paint squirrels!

So the fun went on and on and the only serious complaint of the day was from one over indulgent little boy: "Oh, Mum I want another cake I've only had 5."

All in all it was a great day with a huge turnout. Now, we have to look out for next year's events.

## stars

**LEO**  
July 24 to August 23  
If you plan to travel then be careful and concise and nothing will go wrong.

**VIRGO**  
August 24 to September 23  
Keep in circulation or your face will be forgotten. Your career prospects are brighter.

**LIBRA**  
September 24 to October 23  
Your presence is in great demand now, so go out and enjoy every minute of it.

**SCORPIO**  
October 24 to November 23  
Family discussions could cause some unpleasant scenes, but your diplomacy shines through.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
November 23 to December 21  
Someone is trying to spring a surprise on you. Tread warily, it may be an unpleasant one.

**CAPRICORN**  
December 22 to January 20  
Any financial worries you have had of late will soon take an up turn. Be thankful.

**AQUARIUS**  
January 21 to February 19  
Some minor health problems slow you down, but good nursing is at hand and all is well.

**PISCES**  
February 20 to March 20  
Seek out younger company, it will do you good. For the artistic, your creativeness oozes from you.

**ARIES**  
March 21 to April 20  
Slow down or you'll burn yourself out. Don't take on any extra work you know its senseless.

**TAURUS**  
April 21 to to May 21  
You don't seem to be in the best of humour. Don't be a wet blanket for those close to you.

**GEMINI**  
May 22 to June 21  
This is an excellent time for starting a new career or hobby. Don't be a miser with your cash.

**CANCER**  
June 22 to July 23  
Don't underestimate yourself. You can do more than people give you credit for.

## stars

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