

By Pippa Green

NEW YORK

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN SOUTH AFRICA, shrouded by South African government press censorship, are being brought into sharp focus again in the U.S. Late last month, Bill Cosby, popular TV star and comedian, launched a high-profile campaign to free South African detainees.

Cosby, who is said to be particularly moved by the detention of children in South Africa, and Joseph Garba, Nigerian ambassador to the U.N. and chairman of the Special Committee Against Apartheid, presided over the New York City ceremony. To kick off the "Unlock Apartheid's Jails" campaign, eight U.S. mayors handed over keys to their cities.

Although the campaign has started on a high note, its organizer, the American Committee on Africa, hopes it will mobilize ordinary Americans in a renewed anti-apartheid drive. Campaign co-ordinator Dumisani Kumalo, an exiled South African journalist, said churches, synagogues, trade unionists and activists will collect thousands of keys, which will be dumped on the doorstep of the South African consulate on October 13 to symbolize the demand to "Unlock Apartheid's Jails."

About 30,000 South Africans have been held at some stage since the state of emergency was declared in June 1986. Of these, anti-apartheid groups estimate, 10,000 have been children.

Detention without trial has been used by the government to break internal opposition to apartheid. But it has also become its international Achilles heel. The U.S. campaign was launched in the wake of a recent four-day international conference in Harare on "Children, Repression and the Law in Apartheid South Africa," which focused on widespread allegations of mistreatment of children in detention.

"This is one way in which we can break the wall of silence imposed by South Africa's censorship of the news. That is why it is so important that Cosby—an internationally known personality—is heading the campaign. While Pretoria tries to keep South Af-

South Africa has detained thousands of children since June 1986.

rica out of the papers from inside, we are making sure we keep it in the papers here," said Kumalo in an interview.

This is not all right: At the ceremony, Cosby, who is honorary chairman of the campaign, stressed its seriousness: "Think about your child in the U.S. and what may happen to it when it goes out. Many things may go wrong, but certainly it will not be picked up by government forces, who will carry it away and torture the child. Certainly parents here don't have to go to jails, saying, 'My child is lost,' only to be told that it is not there.

"What I'm talking about is a law in South Africa which says this is all right."

The mayors of New York City, Washington, D.C., Boston, Wilmington, Del., Trenton, N.J., Hartford, Conn., and Providence, R.I., attended the press conference, as well as Richard Berkley, mayor of Kansas City, Mo., and president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

Handing over the key to New York City, Mayor Ed Koch called on the media to continue to cover events in South Africa even though live footage of the civil unrest is ban-



Breaking "the wall of silence": Bill Cosby and Nigerian U.N. Ambassador Joseph Garba kick off the "Unlock Apartheid's Jails" campaign.

A U.S. campaign to stop Pretoria's war on children

ned by the South African government. "You should put people on the networks who can describe what's going on—people like Archbishop Desmond Tutu (South African Anglican Archbishop and Nobel Prize winner) or Allan Boesak (an anti-apartheid cleric).

Marion Barry, mayor of Washington, D.C., said it was "outrageous" to detain thousands of people who opposed apartheid. To loud applause, he said the city government of Washington, D.C., was considering a bill to rename Massachusetts Ave. Nelson and Winnie Mandela Plaza.

The Detainees' Parents Support Committee (DPSC), a South African civil rights group, estimates that 1,500 to 1,800 people are currently being detained under emergency regulations, of which about 300 are 18 years or younger. In the past children as young as nine have been detained.

The South African government has tried hard to prevent detention from becoming an issue. The media may not report detainees' names without police confirmation, nor may they cover any security force action. Earlier this year emergency regulations made it illegal even to campaign for the release of detainees. It was a measure clearly aimed at pressure groups like DPSC that have played a pivotal role in keeping international protest against detention alive.

DPSC, formed in 1981 when a group of distraught parents of detainees established a mutual-support network, has carefully monitored detentions and the treatment of detainees. The vast majority of detentions, says the DPSC, have been aimed at people involved in alternative power structures in the black townships. Thousands of rank-and-file members of community organizations

particularly street committees that were set up in opposition to the government-created black local authorities, have been detained.

Bearing the brunt: Other targets have been members of the country's largest anti-apartheid organizations, the United Democratic Front and trade unionists affiliated to the largest black trade union federation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions. The black youth bear the brunt of detention, according to DPSC. "The security forces operate on the basis that all youth (between 15 and 18) are a 'threat to public safety' and therefore a legitimate target for detention, assault or even shooting. Youth aged 18 and under have consistently been a third or more of detainees," says a DPSC document.

DPSC has collected hundreds of affidavits from detainees alleging ill-treatment. According to the organization, detained youths are frequently made scapegoats for violent incidents in the townships, and are assaulted in an attempt to make them confess. One 16-year-old Soweto youth said in a sworn statement that he was arrested in August of last year while visiting a hospitalized friend who had been shot by the police at a funeral.

On August 2, says the DPSC, "he was taken to Protea Police Station [in Soweto] where he was chained to a pole in the yard. There was a chain around his neck, he was handcuffed and his feet were crossed and chained together.... While he was chained he was beaten with a thin iron pole, slightly thicker than a golf club. He...told them [of a shoulder operation he had] and was hit in the region of that operation. He was told he would be killed because he was a 'freedom fighter.'"

A man from the Kagiso township outside Pretoria testified that he had visited his 18-

year-old son who was detained at Diepkloof Prison earlier this year. "He told me...that he was taken from his cell and put into a small room where he was beaten every day by white policemen using *sjamboks* [whips].... Before being put into the room, while in a cell with other detainees, they were teargassed almost every day.... When I saw him he was in pain from being beaten. He was crying and said that his shoulders and whole body were sore...."

Physical evidence: According to the National Medical and Dental Association, an association of anti-apartheid South African doctors that treats released detainees, 72 percent of their patients said they have been physically assaulted. Doctors found that 97 percent of those bore marks consistent with their allegations, including bruises, whip marks, ear-drum perforation, signs of electric shocks and even gunshot wounds.

It is the publication of statistics like these that has disconcerted the South African government. Stung by its image as child-jailer, it released several hundred detainees in June, hoping perhaps to quell the clamor. But news of detentions—particularly the detention of children—continues to filter through the curtain drawn over the civil conflict in South Africa.

Months before the U.S. campaign was launched, senators and congressmen, including Ted Kennedy (D-MA), Nancy Kassebaum (R-KS) and presidential candidate Paul Simon (D-IL), wrote strong letters to South African President P.W. Botha objecting to continuing detentions and demanding the release of detainees.

The campaign against detentions may not only give the anti-apartheid movement here new life, but may also force the South African government to be more circumspect in its crackdown. And it will certainly make the task of the South African government and its U.S. allies more arduous than before. □

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François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl (center) pose for their "historic handshake."

Franco-German war games and games politicians play

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

NO SOONER HAD IMMINENT SUCCESS IN THE Soviet-U.S. Euromissile negotiations been announced than German and French soldiers were out in the potato fields playing a game meant to show that even if the Americans went home, the gallant French were ready to spring to the aid of the Germans in repulsing the Soviet hordes.

The first joint Franco-German maneuvers were called *Kecker Spatz* after a legendary "saucy sparrow" that lent a helping beak to building the spire of Ulm Cathedral. The script was written mainly by the French, who cast themselves in the starring bird role.

The scenario went like this: The "Reds," treacherously violating the neutrality of a "Green" country (Austria), crossed the Danube and were advancing into southern Germany ("Blue"). Overwhelmed, the German command called Paris. The French responded by sending 25,000 troops of the elite Rapid Action Forces (FAR), who luckily were not tied down intervening in Chad, Djibouti or French Polynesia. Put under German command, the FAR helicopters rushed to the scene and routed the enemy. The Reds were pushed back across the river.

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Meeting September 24 on a pontoon bridge on the Danube, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and French President François Mitterrand climaxed the display of victorious military partnership with a "historic handshake," (which provided the event's major "photo opportunity").

On the German side and in Austria in particular, not everybody was thrilled with the scenario. It was clearly more political than military. Its implicit criticism of Austria's in-

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ability to defend its neutrality amounted to an interference in Austrian politics. The French don't want to miss a chance to warn the Germans away from neutrality on the Austrian model.

It could have been worse: According to the German daily *Die Tageszeitung*, the French had originally wanted to write a "pacifist uprising" into the scenario. Beleaguered by pacifists, the Bundeswehr (West Germany's armed forces) would have called in desperation for French helicopters.

Although pacifist attacks were omitted from the scenario, the French were afraid of meeting them in reality. French troops were equipped with a leaflet of instructions on how to confront those strange German pacifists. "If you are attacked, you have the right of legitimate defense, you also have the right to aid your comrades under attack." The code word for reporting a pacifist attack was *Rotlicht* (red light).

Some Germans planned a small counter-demonstration called "Saucy Dove" in the town of Kelheim, chosen for the "historic handshake." The Greens protested "against the militarization of Franco-German relations." But they were not allowed to hang their banner reading "Friendship without weapons" from Kelheim's main building, the historic *Befreiungshalle* (liberation hall), built by King Ludwig I of Bavaria to celebrate liberation from military occupation by the Napoleonic armies in 1813.

The plot of Saucy Sparrow was strained by the French need to show that they were ready to come to the aid of the Federal Republic, but only in an emergency, and not

as part of NATO. French forces regularly stationed in Germany remain behind a Rotterdam-Dortmund-Munich line set by then-President Charles de Gaulle when he took France out of the integrated NATO military command 20 years ago. Bonn would like to integrate those French forces into NATO defense plans. Paris still says no.

In 1983 Defense Minister Charles Hernu set up FAR on the model of U.S. rapid deployment forces. It looks like a typical overseas intervention unit, but Hernu stressed that it was set up to come to the aid of West German allies on the Eastern front. Saucy Sparrow was meant to convince the skeptical Germans that FAR really could do the job.

Technically, it could have been worse. At least three French soldiers were killed and five gravely wounded in helicopter and other accidents. The "red" enemy had to wait around so long to be found by the gallant defenders that some of the red vehicles' batteries ran down. Still, our side won.

Cross purposes: Politically, however, the French and German military were at very fundamental cross purposes all along.

Defense Minister Manfred Wörner and the rest of the German defense establishment endorse Franco-German cooperation as a way to strengthen NATO and the Atlantic Alliance. The French tend to present it as a necessary alternative to NATO and the Atlantic Alliance, which they portray as being abandoned by the U.S. Whatever the truth of the matter, taking on the role of Germany's nuclear partner to replace the Americans is an interpretation assumed to appeal to French public opinion. Few Germans, on the other hand, would be willing to trade the Americans for the French.

In strategic terms, the Bundeswehr's constant goal is to draw the French into the "forward defense," close to the East-West border. German military planners want to push the French forward so that French neutron bombs would be fired onto non-German territory. The German officers have an understandable distrust of the French strategy of sitting back to watch and perhaps fire nuclear warning shots if things go badly on the German battlefield. The Bundeswehr saw the joint maneuvers as a way of getting the French command to think more about conventional rather than nuclear warfare.

The main French motive is to attach the West Germans to the French before they drift into a demilitarized, neutralized Central Europe. The French are searching for a formula that would preserve a role for their nuclear weapons, their best defense against the risk of being reduced to junior partners of the Germans.

The German magazine *Der Spiegel* reported that in organizing Saucy Sparrow, "German perfectionism and French ideas of prestige rubbed each other too often the wrong way." The German commanding Gen. Werner Lange complained that the French neglected the preparation of everything except public relations.

The French daily *Le Monde* said: "Up until the last minute, this grandiose and in strictly military terms passably useless project came close to collapsing... The differences between the two armies showed up in all their crudity."

The Germans thought the French were silly to ban NATO commanders John Galvin and Wolfgang Altenburg from observing the exercise to stress that this was a Franco-Ger-

man and not a NATO event. There were also differences in attitude toward the observers from the Warsaw Pact countries, present as part of the new confidence-building measures agreed on in Stockholm. The East Germans and Czechs complained that the French officers were uncooperative in providing explanations, in contrast to the West Germans.

The only major departure from the script was Mitterrand's speech at Kelheim announcing that talks were underway to set up a joint Franco-German "Defense Council." Both Bonn officials and French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac were surprised and annoyed by premature announcement of a project still under discussion. Observers assumed that Mitterrand had jumped the gun to grab the headlines and show that he, not Chirac, was the key figure in the crucial matter of Franco-German cooperation.

Nobody could yet explain how the tasks of the "Defense Council" would differ from those of the Franco-German Commission on Security and Defense set up five years ago to coordinate strategic policy, military cooperation and arms cooperation.

What's at stake: So far Franco-German military cooperation has primarily been a matter of arms cooperation. A success story is the Exocet missile, half-German and half-French, but sold under the French label the better to satisfy both French pride and German law prohibiting arms exports to tension areas. In the hands of the Argentinians and the Iraqis, the Exocet has gone to glory by striking British and American warships.

The current big project is a horrendously expensive anti-tank helicopter. The French arms industry is suddenly losing its protected Third World markets and desperately needs such joint ventures to stave off total ruin.

Joint arms deals are old, but military cooperation, as exemplified by Saucy Sparrow, is something new. The pending Intermediate Nuclear Forces accord limits Soviet and U.S. weapons, not those of the allies. Franco-German military partnership can be a way to pursue the arms buildup (or "modernization") rather than negotiating big mutual arms reductions in Europe.

At stake is what is meant by "Europe." Influential peace researcher and Green member of parliament Alfred Mechtersheimer sums it up this way: Disarmament initiatives unify Europe, East and West, while Franco-German initiatives mean arms buildups and the strengthening of bloc divisions.

Moreover, adds Mechtersheimer, "Every step in Franco-German military cooperation is a step toward nuclear cooperation." But the basic problem as he sees it is "the structural incapacity to defend" Germany. In the nuclear age, he notes, each country tries to "export its defense to another country because with modern weapons a country cannot be defended on its own territory." Thus the Soviet Union, the U.S. and France have all tended, in their own interest, to plan to wage nuclear war on German soil.

Some German leaders, disillusioned by American leadership, are indeed turning toward the French. But Mechtersheimer, who knows such milieus, observes a tendency of conservative southern Germans to say, "Don't leave us with the French, they would exploit us worse than the Americans."

Franco-German reconciliation is certainly too important to leave to the military. □