

THE PIETERMARITZBURG TWELVE

From a Radio Freedom Broadcast by the
National Commissar, Comrade Dilinga.

The African National Congress and its allies have always said that the contention that the South African racist judiciary is unbiased is a myth. The Pietermaritzburg trial has put paid to any misconceptions about this contention.

Twelve revolutionaries were, on the 15th November 1979, sentenced in a most callous manner, in a trial which was a mockery of law and justice. They were charged for high treason and 43 counts under the so-called Terrorism Act. As a result of these serious charges their lives were at stake.

They asked the racist court that the trial be open to the public because of the gravity of the accusations, because they needed the moral support of the people and their relatives, and because the things they were alleged to have done were in the interest of the nation. The people were required to be there to know if in fact these men were traitors and if those giving evidence against them were patriots. The people were to be there to testify to the impartiality of the racist courts. This request was not granted and when they insisted they were sentenced for contempt of the racist court. The racist judge declared that they would be tried in their absence. For this they earned themselves sentences of 12 months and 18 months.

Since when has the right to struggle for one's freedom been treason? Is it treason to defend your people from economic exploitation, human degradation and political repression? Is it treason to fight a system which has been declared by the international community as a crime against humanity?

The world community could not have so soon forgotten that the South African fascist police killed thousands of people during the uprisings of 1976 simply because junior high school children had dared to ask for better education.

What does the world expect from our people when a peaceful demonstration by children is met with the imprisonment of thousands of our people, a spate of deaths in prison cells and the massacre of so many people?

Does the world community expect the oppressed masses to sing praises to the fascists for such brutalities? Is it treason to join a liberation movement to fight against these brutalities?

If it is treason to do so then the world community was committing treason when it joined forces and lost many lives in

fighting the Nazis and fascists in the Second World War.

We all know that the present South African regime is a regime of men and women who believe that it was treason to fight Hitler. We know it because they opposed South Africa's participation on the side of the Allies and were prepared to die or go to prison for this.

So less than a year after the racist law courts had caused a young patriot, Solomon Mahlangu, to march to the fascist gallows in spite of the fact that the court knew that he had not killed the two whites and in spite of world-wide protest, another young patriot has been sentenced to death by the racist court.

James Mange, aged 24 years, an Umkhonto militant, has been sentenced to death and eleven of his comrades have been condemned to sentences between 16 years and 18 years imprisonment.

Even the EBC could not help but comment that it was the first time since the Second World War that someone has been sentenced to death for a case which does not involve the loss of life. Let us therefore find out why James was sentenced to death.

In the words of Judge Hefer, he was sentenced to death for having a repulsive character. Can you beat that? Does having a repulsive character justify the death sentence? That Comrade James had a repulsive character is an opinion of our racist judge. I have known James and my opinion of his character differs from my learned friend. How many people has this bloodthirsty monster killed for such flimsy reasons under the pretext of administering justice, and how many is he still going to murder for the same type of reasons? That is a good taste of the impartiality of the racist and fascist judiciary.

It is clear that this act was also a personal vendetta on the part of Mr Hefer. Young James must have hurt his white supremacist and racist pride during the course of the trial. Knowing himself to be a feared killer he could not countenance this young black man not being scared of him. He just could not stick the guts of these eleven revolutionaries who were not intimidated by the host of fascist police and cowardly racist judge. He could not stomach the fact that black people in danger of their lives should behave like dignified human beings.

This act was also a political decision to try to restore some authority to the degraded fascist legal system by intimidating our people and our militants into being afraid of

fighting for the restoration of their motherland, their legal rights and liberation.

Let us make it abundantly clear to this Nazi, criminal and murderer that we in the African National Congress, allied organisations and Unkhonto we Sizwe will never be intimidated. Nor will they intimidate our people, who have gone through so many Sharpevilles and Sowetos.

We want to remind him of a tradition of the men who belong to the ANC and Unkhonto. If he should ask those who have had the misfortune of meeting our comrades in battle, they will tell him of the tradition of no surrender, part of which he saw with his own eyes in that court. Maybe he will remember that men like Vuyisile Mini and his colleagues who went to the fascist gallows singing revolutionary songs were members of Unkhonto we Sizwe.

I do not think his memory is that bad that he should forget the demeanor and words of young Solomon Mahlangu who said, 'My blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of freedom'.

We call on all who believe in freedom and self determination for our people to stop the fascist regime from getting away with murder. It is time the international community came out concretely in punishing this system which they have declared to be a crime against humanity.

Pressurise the South African regime to stop legal murder. Let James and his colleagues and other political prisoners be freed. We call on all progressive workers' movements to use their labour power to pressurise their governments to stop supporting the South African fascist regime.

Let South Africa know that it can not defy world opinion the second time without feeling it. The Organisation of African Unity, United Nations Organisation and other non-governmental bodies should organise to save the life of James Mange. Those who believe in human rights should show it by acting. What human right is there more than life itself?

To our people, your tested organisation the African National Congress and its Allies, say: Defend yourself against mad judges like Hefer who hang people because they do not like their faces. Hefer himself is a murderer who is still going to kill more of our people if we do not stop him. This type of justice is what P.W. Botha and his clique say is improvement. Let us organise demonstrations for the release of political prisoners and save our son from the gallows by organising a campaign to save his life. Let us use our collective

labour power to strike in protest. Let us destroy these so-called courts which give murderers scope to murder without fearing repercussions. Tomorrow you may hang for not possessing a pass, for refusing to go to the Bantustans, for refusing to be a foreigner in your own country and just for being black.

The Nationalists are behaving like a wounded buffalo. We need to unite in action to bring this animal to ground.

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"THE LENGTH OF THE TERM OF SLAVERY DEPENDS
LARGELY ON THE OPPRESSED THEMSELVES AND NOT
ON THE OPPRESSOR... WE HAVE THE KEY TO FREE-
DOM - NOT THE OPPRESSOR. IT ALL DEPENDS ON
HOW MUCH WE SACRIFICE OURSELVES FOR FREEDOM...
WE DETERMINE THE PACE NOT THE OPPRESSOR".

- CHIEF ALBERT LUTULI -

"WE HAVE NOT EMBARKED UPON THE COURSE OF
VIOLENCE OUT OF CHOICE. ONLY GANGSTERS DO
THAT. WE HAVE ADOPTED THIS COURSE BECAUSE
ALMOST EVERY AVENUE OF LEGAL AND CONSTITU-
TIONAL STRUGGLE HAS BEEN CLOSED BY THE STATE.
THE FACT THAT WE HAVE EMBARKED ON THIS COURSE
DOES NOT ALTER OUR BELIEF THAT THE MASS POLI-
TICAL MOVEMENT IS THE CORNERSTONE OF THE
STRUGGLE AGAINST WHITE SUPREMACY".

- UMKHONTO WE SIZWE, MESSAGE TO CELEBRATE
ITS FIRST ANNIVERSARY IN DECEMBER 1962 -