

WE ARE NOT ALONE

- Pat Mafuna

We heaved a sigh of relief when we heard that the death penalty on our Comrade James Mncedisi Mange had been dropped. We knew that he was going to be reunited with his wife, Pauline Dipuo Mange and their son. But when Justice Rampf said that Comrade Mange was going to serve 20 years - the whole atmosphere changed.

The imperialists and their lackeys interpreted this as a change of heart on the part of the racists. We, however, know clearly that this is not the case - especially with the regime which has, and is still continuing to shoot down unarmed and harmless demonstrators.

We noted as early as the day when the twelve comrades were charged, that the classification of the charges as 'treason' meant the racists were aiming at imposing one or more death sentences on the accused. But now, why has the death penalty been commuted to 20 years?

LESSON

The Botha-Malan regime had learnt a lesson from the execution of Comrade Solomon Mahlangu of how our people react to the cold-blooded murder of their heroes. So the fascists, seeing the current uncontrollable upsurge, realised that if what happened in Mamelodi after April 6 happens again in Soweto, the situation will soon run out of control.

On the other hand, one cannot fail to praise the consistent role played by international opinion, especially the United Nations, in this campaign.

Immediately after the passing of the judgement, the international community, as usual, took up the protest call of the African National Congress. Protest demonstrations and picketing were frequently held outside the South African embassies in the Western countries. Imperialist governments were pressurised by progressive movements and the people of their countries to intervene and save Comrade Mange from the gallows. Some governments in the West had already sent messages to Pretoria 'persuading' and 'pressurising' Pretoria to reverse her decision. The UN also sent a message warning the Botha fascist government not to repeat the Mahlangu tragedy. Posters of "SAVE THE LIFE OF JAMES MANGE" could be seen at every



AAM supporters in Bristol sign the petition for the release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners.

conspicuous position in the Western countries.

This, however, was not the first time that the international pressure had saved the lives of our comrades from the hands of the Hitlerites. In 1961 the international support, organised by the then newly formed International Defence and Aid Fund, prevented the Boers from plotting any framed-up charge against the Treason Trialists when it was clear that the State case was failing. Again, in 1963-64 the international pressure played a big role in saving the Rivonia Trialists from the gallows. Even in recent political trials, the world public opinion still continues to help our arrested comrades. It was not the mercy on the part of the judge that Comrade Joe Cozbi and 5 others had to be acquitted in the notorious Pretoria Twelve trial. Who on earth could expect that Comrades Martin Ramokgadi and Mosima Segwale who were convicted of being the head of the ANC underground network in Johannesburg and of attempted murder of a policeman respectively, could receive jail terms, considering also that Comrade Ramokgadi was a former Robben Island prisoner? All this happens, thanks to international support.

When it comes to the campaign for the release of all political prisoners, the world community, have long ago started this campaign. The campaign for the "RELEASE MANDELA, OUR LEADERS AND OTHER POLITICAL PRISONERS" is an old saying in many countries, especially Britain and Netherlands.

We have also witnessed the kidnapping of comrades from other countries into South Africa by the Botha lawless regime, like the recent case of Comrade Victor Matlou. Who can deny that the UN and the rest of the world public opinion played a major role in the release of such comrades?

The peace-loving international community has thrown all its weight behind our movement. These are the people who give us food, clothing, weapons, shelter, etc. These are also the people who have isolated Pretoria politically, militarily, economically and otherwise.

Now, Comrade James Mange is going to serve a 20 year hard jail term. We must remember that what we are demanding is not a lighter sentence but the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners.

Even when they are in jail, our friends never forget the fate of our leaders and patriots. While they continuously put pressure on the Pretoria racists, they consistently rally around our patriots, giving them the honour they deserve. On January 9, 1978 an ANC delegation led by our Secretary-General, Comrade Alfred Nzo, attended a ceremony at Amsterdam University organised by the Dutch Anti-Apartheid Movement, supported by the University Council, the Dutch Communist Party and other progressive organisations at which our leaders on Robben Island, Comrade Govan Mbeki, was awarded an honorary doctorate for his firm dedication to the cause of freedom.

Recently Comrade President O.R. Tambo led a delegation to New Delhi to receive, on behalf of Comrade Nelson Mandela, who has been refused permission by the boers, the highest order in India, the Jawaharlal Nehru Award granted by the Indian government to Comrade Mandela for his outstanding contribution to the struggle for the liberation of our people and against all forms of discrimination.

We must never commit a mistake of overstressing the punch of the world opinion on the racists because we know that the Boers can defy international opinion or advice. Here they are today, in Namibia despite a pile of resolutions by the UN calling and ordering Pretoria to pull out of that territory. Again we saw for ourselves last year how the fascists defied the whole world in the case of Comrade Solomon Mahlangu. But, on the other hand, we must note that the Boers, no matter how defiant they are, cannot stand the total isolation of the whole world. Even the treachery of the imperialists who support them despite world condemnation will not save them forever. Backed by the freedom-loving people of the world, our fighting people will destroy apartheid.