

RESIST, DEFEND ADVANCE

As the racists prepare to celebrate their commercial holiday and again desecrate all that is holy, as the imperialists hypocritically bleat "Peace on earth, goodwill towards men" while preparing for genocide, as the white Santa Claus gloats "Ho, ho, ho" wearing a uniform dripping with the blood of the oppressed and the exploited the world over, the AZANIAN PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION, imbued with the spirit and the fortitude of the Black working class, brings you revolutionary greetings.

The system of racism and capitalism has launched a concerted attack on the liberation movement. The predictions made at the National Forum Summit on 22 April 1984 are graphically fulfilling themselves.

The 22 May 1984 saw a significant salvo being fired against the Black cause in Azania: in a countrywide raid performed with military precision, the homes and offices of cadres of AZAPO were searched and documents and equipment were seized. The aim of the operation was clear: to cripple the Movement and to thwart AZAPO's anti-election effort. Needless to say, the system reckoned without the gallantry of the dispossessed and our often repeated message that Black Consciousness is the property of the Black masses and can never be eradicated by bannings, pre-dawn raids, detentions without trial or out and out murder of cadres of the Movement.

UNREST

The apparent peace and uneasy calm of South Africa was shattered by Black worker-student solidarity in Atteridgeville, Mamelodi, Tembisa, Soshanguve, Kwazakhele, New Brighton, Uitenhage, Graaff-Reinet, Cradock, Katlehong, Daveyton, Lamontville, Tumahole, Thabonge, Queenstown, Warmbaths, Vosloorus, Nigel, Pietersburg, Paarl, Mdantsane and Soweto. Immediately prior to the outbreak of stayaways and other tensions in Soweto, Mrs Elise Botha remarked: "It's wonderful, everyone is so friendly and smiling. Soweto is really a happy place." (8 August 1984).

In the wake of the victory of the Black people in the overwhelming boycott of the elections for the "Tricameral Parliament", another mortal blow was delivered to collaboration and co-option strategies when the Vaal Triangle townships of Sebokeng, Sharpeville, Evaton, Zamdela, Bophelong and Boipa-

tong exploded. The announcement of a R5,90 rent increase by the Lekoa Town Council was the spark that ignited the flame (5 August 1984). The Lekoa Town Council further issued a written directive to ministers forbidding civic meetings in church halls. In a prophetic letter, the ministers urged the Lekoa Town Council "to repent and desist from this wanton order and system that breeds hatred, injustice and violence and to be saved."

The people of Sharpeville resolved to demonstrate against the increases by staying away from school and work on 3 September 1984. Community councillors were called upon to resign. A councillor, Caesar Motjeane, opened fire on a demonstrator and transformed a peaceful march into a violent confrontation and rampage. The houses, shops and property of community councillors (referred to as "the fruits of their collaboration with the system") were destroyed and the councillors themselves eliminated.

The anger of the people knew no bounds. The identification of the monolith of racism and capitalism as the enemy was engendered by the shadowy deals and acquisitions which were the stock-in-trade of the (late) community councillors as well as corruption associated with the the sale of houses. Hence the Mahlatsi brothers' (Paul, Essau and Moiti) three liquor outlets and a million rand bakery were obvious targets.

Reverend Tebego Moselane, the Chairperson of the Vaal Anti-Rent Committee and a founder member of AZAPO (being the 1979 Vice-Chairperson of the Soweto Branch of AZAPO), who is now detained under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act, had his home in Sharpeville fired on by "unknown" elements. Comrade David Makgagu, a member of the Tembisa Branch of AZAPO, went through the same experience.

PALMIET

The violence in the ghettos is ingrained as a way of life by the state through direct provocation or a total dereliction of responsibility. As in 1976, many Black people have gone missing without trace. Operation Palmiet saw the entire township of Sebokeng being cordoned off and every single house in the township being searched. The soldiers' badges with "Trust us" and the pamphlets which read "We are

here to promote normal social life, safe travel, a healthy community, continued education, delivery of food and stability" have produced an overwhelming sense of being cowed down by the rulers amongst the residents of Tembisa and Sebokeng.

The military operations in Tembisa and Sebokeng are unprecedented during "peace-time". The only parallels are with Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. In the 1980's, we have seen similar raids only in Israel and Northern Ireland, countries which are at civil war.

The fact that most of those arrested during Operation Palmiet were arrested under migration and influx control laws can hardly strike any oppressed person as surprising: our every step is dogged by such penury and persecution. The special courts which were set up to try the accused persons in sausage machine fashion underlines the barbarism of the settler regime. Strong-arm tactics are meant simply to buy time for a regime in crisis.

Attention must be brought to the position of Oupa Hlomuka, the Chairperson of the Sebokeng Branch of AZAPO. Comrade Hlomuka was detained under Section 28 of the Internal Security Act, released and again detained under Section 29 of the same Act. After the state withdrew charges of public violence against Comrade Hlomuka, he was charged with the murder of a community councillor and is presently awaiting trial.

THEME

The rightful anger of the Azanian masses and the rich lessons to be gleaned from each encounter with the system inform the AZAPO theme for 1985: "Resist, Defend, Advance".

Our history is one of continuous resistance. It is the height of folly to believe that the mass action of Black people is due to the work of agitators and intimidators. Grandiose and much-flaunted "reform" and "change for the better" has only exacerbated the social degradation, economic exploitation and dispossession amongst the masses of Azanian workers. No one knows about unemployment, poor housing, atrocious transport facilities, gutter education, abominable health facilities and intolerable working conditions better than the Black working class. This explosive-

ly criminal situation needs no fuse; it fuses itself.

Of necessity, the Black working class is in a perpetual battle to *defend* itself. It is a crime for anyone who is being brutalized to continue to accept that brutality. And we have been brutalized ever since the white settler landed on these shores, waving the Bible in one hand and the flintlock in the other. The settlers continue to rape, dehumanize and exploit the Black people. For Black people, the struggle is painfully real and all-pervading.

It is in the knowledge that every Black life is treated cheaply by the ruling class and the living and working conditions of Black people are designed to serve the genocidal intentions of the rulers that we pay tribute to Comrades Fezile Tshume (former Secretary of the Port Elizabeth Branch of AZAPO, who died in mysterious circumstances), Peter Naidoo (elected Chairperson of the University of Durban-Westville Branch of the AZANIAN STUDENT MOVEMENT two days before his death), Andries Zondo, Sammy Malatzdi (members of the Soweto Branch of AZAPO), Gugulehu Mfana (shot by police during unrest in Grahamstown), Thembisile Mapolisa (member of the Queenstown Branch of AZAPO), and Reuben Masenele (member of the Dobsonville Branch of AZAPO).

We also salute Comrades Muntu Myeza (AZAPO's Publicity Secretary) and Haroun Patel (Chairperson of the Lenasia Branch of AZAPO), who are detained under Section 28 of the Internal Security Act and the eleven AZASM comrades detained under Section 29, amongst them Comrade Thami Mcerwa (Secondary Schools

Vice-President of AZASM and head of the Transvaal Inter High School Co-ordinating Committee during the anti-election campaign).

The advancing of the liberation struggle is the most important aspect of our theme. For far too long, all manner of political opportunists and adventurers have been allowed to creep out of the woodwork and pose as true "leaders". This treacherous "leadership" works hand in glove with the oppressors and is hell-bent on securing positions in the liberation movement in order to stifle the development of authentic Black worker leadership. The Black workers must be extremely vigilant against such reformist and revisionist buccaneers. They reveal themselves in two fashions: those who have no knowledge at all of revolutionary ideology but thrust themselves forward and those who are capable of spouting passages of revolutionary or scientific works by heart but who participate in no revolutionary activity whatsoever.

It must be emphasized that if somebody studies a lot but does not go amongst the masses, his knowledge remains sterile, he remains a raconteur who will not write a single new line, a single new page throughout his life. We must learn from the masses and teach them what we have learnt. We must apply our knowledge to productive work, correct our mistakes and make our cognition more profound.

It must likewise be emphasized that activism alone is not enough. Without a revolutionary ideology, practice remains blind and is easily misdirected. In fact, such practice is a primitive force which is easily transformed into thuggery.

BOYCOTTS

Our experience of the strategy of boycotts and stayaways shows that it is a weapon which many adventurers call on the Black workers and students to use at the drop of a hat. We are of the opinion that boycotts and stayaways should not be used without the closest possible examination of the material conditions including the resources of the people, the timing of the action, a thorough assessment of short- and long-term goals and, most importantly, after consultation with the community. The aim of the action must at each time be clearly articulated — is it a life-and-death demand, a demand made to improve conditions or simply a symbolic demand.

The system's tactic has been and still is to engage the organisations of the Black people in the sterile politics of reaction. The system acts and we react. While it is true that every issue that we take up, whether it is high rents, community council elections, exorbitant bus fares, resettlement, influx control or detention without trial adds to our experience in mass action, it is also true that if each of these battles is not directly linked to the overall struggle for national self-determination, each one is doomed to be deflected into channels of disaster.

In order to repossess every square kilometre of plundered soil, it is axiomatic that we must initiate our own battles and we must dictate terms and the pace of events. This will mark the finest possible advance in the struggle.

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human culture was white. Black people in Africa who showed any trace of progress were labelled as white. A system first conscious and then unconscious of lying about Blacks became so widespread that the authentic history of Africa ceased to be taught. With the winking of an eye, printing, gunpowder, smelting of iron, the beginnings of social organisation, not to mention political life and democracy, were attributed exclusively to whites.

MYTH

Azania is both a historical and a political myth. But myths are not lies. They are an outline of reality. And a liberation movement can certainly use myths in order to unite the oppressed, to serve as a rallying point.

We may draw a valuable lesson from the current anti-colonial struggle being waged by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) near the Philippines, which was once a Spanish colony. The current anti-colonial struggle is being waged against both the Philippines and the United States of America.

In the 16th Century the Spanish conquerors of the islands of Mindanao, Basilan, Sulu and Palawan referred to the natives as *Moros* because they practised Islam much as the Moors of North Africa, who once ruled the Spaniards, had practised Islam. The term *Moro* was used to denote a savage and treacherous people.

Abdurasad Asani of the MNLF explains:

"But despite its colonial origins the MNLF has cleansed the term of its unpleasant connotation by propagating the more correct view that the tenacity with which the natives conducted their war of resistance against foreign intrusion was a classic example in heroism.

"The term is not only common to all the indigenous tribes of the region but included Muslims, Christians and those still adhering to traditional religious values — in a word, all those who share a common aspiration and political destiny. Hence, the MNLF adopted *Bangsa* (nation) *Moro* as a national identity and implants it in the consciousness of the masses. Today, it is rooted in the heart of every man and woman and the defence of its integrity has become a national duty."

SOURCES

The term "Azania" carries with it an essentially anti-imperialist content. It was adopted (initially by the PAC) because it helped to situate the struggle for the liberation of the people of South Africa in the context of Africa's history.

We should remember that the names of countries have mainly two kinds of sources:

★ **The tribal past:** names develop organically through a struggle for

national liberation and the country bears the name of the main tribe or of a confederacy of tribes.

★ **Outstanding geographical or historical features of the country:** Zimbabwe is an example where an outstanding historical feature (the Zimbabwe culture, not simply the Zimbabwe ruins of the tourists!) has lent its name to the liberated country. Namibia (from *Namib*), a KhoiKhoi word meaning desert is a clear example of a geographical name.

In South Africa, there is neither an overriding geographical feature because of the variety of nature nor is there a single common historical event or personage that can serve to unite symbolically all the oppressed people. Hence, names such as *Ulundi* or *Maluti* are as artificial and as arbitrary as *Azania* might sound to some.

In the final analysis, it is the historical action of masses of people that decides questions such as the name of a country. The activities of the Black Consciousness Movement during the '70's and especially during the 1976 Soweto Uprising have put the final seal on this question in our country. *Azania*, like *Namibia*, has come to stand for a political programme that is accepted by all the oppressed people of this land. It embraces no less than the aspirations of the people for an undivided, anti-racist, socialist country. To accept the name *Azania* simply means that one identifies with the aspirations of the oppressed people for liberation. We cannot play silly games with new "names" for our country. *Azania* has been baptised on the bloodstained streets and banners of Soweto, Gugulethu, Chatsworth, New Brighton and even in the remotest corners of the land.

AZAPO calls upon all Azanians to resume their position as pace-setters in the world. The *Muezzin* calls the faithful to prayer with the *Azaan*: to a Muslim, the *Azaan* is an observation of the value of the doctrine, it is cherishing all that is of value, appreciating all that is good and revering the beauty and the majesty of creation. AZAPO calls upon the Black people to restore Azania to its formidable position in the world. We are all beneficiaries of that magnificent, superb and inimitable Azanian civilization. Let us all then rise up, one in deed, united in action, steadfast in our goal and fight for our inalienable rights as ONE PEOPLE in ONE AZANIA, ONE NATION.



Mokgethi Motlhabi in *Black Resistance to Apartheid* (Skotaville Publishers, 1984) incisively points out: "It seems probable that change in South Africa will ultimately depend on the *maturity of Black Power*, if this is understood as a direct, lasting challenge to the system by Blacks after summoning their strength and uniting in unrelenting action against it for better or for worse." (emphasis ours).

In order to advance the liberation struggle, a clearly defined Programme of Action is a necessity. If we have vague, nebulous objects then we will still be chattering about conscientization and support in a general sense twenty years from now. There simply has to be a yardstick whereby we can ascertain if we are actually achieving our objectives or not and this is the vital task of this Congress.

NATION-BUILDING

The idea of nation-building towards a socialist Azania is an idea whose time has come. AZAPO has to consolidate itself in every facet of the Black experience — in labour, health, law, culture, religion, sports, education, social welfare and community development. As the revolutionary vanguard of the Azanian people, AZAPO must become as close to the masses of Black people as bones are to the flesh. It has a duty to reveal to the masses the essence of the situation in Azania, and explain the scope and depth of this situation, arouse the consciousness of the Black workers and their revolutionary determination and direct the struggle towards its goal.

A great revolutionary once said: "History is thorough and goes through many phases when taking an old form to the grave. And the last phase of historical development is comedy; so that the people may part with their past cheerfully."

The Azanian people and their vanguard, the AZANIAN PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION, are sure to obtain their liberation. However complacency is an enemy of the people in struggle. The Black people must shun alliances with reformist groups as exemplified by bantustans and liberal petit bourgeois organisations lest they share also in their defeats. For to falter here is to blunder at a crucial point because of which the Azanian working class will never be able either to rediscover revolutionary greatness in itself or to win new energy from the connections newly entered into, until *all classes* with which is contended in 1652, 1832, 1960, 1976 and 1984 themselves *lie prostrate beside it*.

 ONE PEOPLE ONE AZANIA