

GAFFES *by Jay Zueve*

It was not immediately clear whether the bad grammar was due to a slip of the tongue, or if it was in fact proof that Bantu Education is inferior and therefore undesirable.

But for a moment everyone was left guessing as to what the real reason for the mishap was. Fortunately the cramped hall of St Peter's Seminary in Hammanskraal did not come down with reverberations of laughter from the hundreds of delegates who had put everything else aside to be present at the inaugural conference of the National Forum.

There was good ole George, rather well-known even though his surname should remain anonymous for reasons that will equally remain anonymous. What had annoyed him is still a mystery, but he thundered: "I am six and tyres of this nonsense. It must stop all at once."

Poor ole George. In a moment he realised that what he had intended conveying to the assembled delegates was that he was sick and tired of something. But again, whether it was because the tongue had notoriously slipped was hard to say. If it was not a slip — and many delegates said it was not — then it demonstrated once and for all that Bantu Education has to be uprooted if George's successors are to fare any better at future congresses.

But then such gaffes have become part and parcel of congress and meetings, in an out of conference halls.

There was a time when a congress chairman asked the delegates to "rise on your feet and song this sing". Needless to say, the audience stared at him in bewilderment, and he repeated his request that they should all "rise on your feet and song this sing."

Bantoe Onderwys alweer, ou kerell!

Earlier this year hundreds of delegates arrived in Maritzburg for a mini-summit to amend the Azanian People's Manifesto. Everything went just fine for the delegates, until it was time to go to bed on the first day.

The Easter winds had a sharpness that told of an imminent winter, and as things were space was one thing not in abundance. All delegates had to do the best they could to share as many rooms — and

blankets — among themselves as possible. Some had to sleep on the floor, demonstrating practically why the place was known as the ecumenical "lay" centre.

It was a bit cumbersome for a lot of delegates, but not so for a few. Muntu, Strini, PC, Nefh and Zith did not have problems getting quickly

Some people, though, take longer to wake up than others. And it doesn't help if you are a thin person who has to share a bed with heavyweights whose legs alone remind you of something you saw at the abattoirs the other day. Also, it is the biggest chaps who have the loudest snores. And no point in shaking them up, because that only



used to overcrowded little rooms. One of them explained that in the cells it was a surprise to find a small enclosure *not* overcrowded . . . and they should know. After all, they spent most of the 1970s in the coolers.

Overcrowded places are uncomfortable enough, but places overcrowded with delegates who had beans for supper can be quite trying at sleeping time. The winds of change literally begin blowing once the lights go out and everybody tries to settle himself as comfortably as he possibly can. In a short time the sounds of silence are broken by a staccato ripping sound which ranges from tenor to soprano, depending on the amount of beans eaten by the delegates who at night become virtuoso performers in a symphony orchestra of sorts. Highly entertaining, except that the acrid and pungent atmosphere makes real teargas pale into insignificance.

The morning after, well, you might as well have been sleeping through a tornado or a concert of weird sounds. But one thing is dead certain, and it is that the first whiff of outside air that you can get to fill your lungs the better.

seems to make them snore even louder.

Time was when one big fellow, way back in 1980, told a meeting exactly how grateful he was to the organisers for having arranged a splendid meeting at the Welgespruit Fellowship Centre in Roodepoort.

The intrepid speech-maker got carried away and openly declared that his gratitude was intense . . . "and I say this, Mr Chairman, from the heart of my bottom." He didn't bat an eyelid as he said that.

But of course it is only at congresses that people discover their anatomies have such outlandish features as bottoms with hearts. And it is at congresses that life-long friendships are made, which is what the spirit of a future Azania is all about.

Azapo has never claimed to have millions of members. It simply does not believe in the numbers game such as claiming millions of members, who embarrassingly vanish into thin air each time a mere million signature must be collected for some campaign or other.

But Kehla was a bit taken aback the other day when a somewhat groggy newsman approached him and asked: "Tell me, Kehla, egshatly how many members do you have in Ashapo?"

He asked the wobbly fellow: "How many black people are there in this country?"

Replied groggy: "I'm not sho sure, could be 29 million you shee."

Said Kehla: "Subtract all the sellouts from that number, and you will have your answer."

Queried wobbly: "So you shay you have about 28 million? Ish that a fact?"

The little encounter took place after a meeting in Soweto, called by the regional executive to evolve strategies of protest at the high rents. Had wobbly not been so groggy, he would have noticed that almost the whole of Diepkloof township had turned up for the meeting.

Talking about wobblies and groggies, one remembers the other meeting the other day at another venue, when three delegates were rather thirsty after a long hard day of intense debate.

Alas, the cooling holes were closed and the nearest spot where one could relax with a cold pint of biters was more than four kilometres away. Otherwise the three delegates would have to settle for the cartons of "mai-mai" that were for sale at the nearby store.

After some argument and a lot of rationalising, the three blokes decided to drink the cartons of "mai-mai".

Their reason for so deciding was best summed up by one of them: "It is not dangerous, and it is food because it is made from sorghum and maize. It is also a proper grass-roots drink."

Grapes can be sour, but ever heard of sour sorghum?

The current Congress promises to be the best ever. AZAPO is bent on *resisting, defending and advancing* — at the Retreat Civic Centre.

● I must seriously take issue with the findings of the National Forum Summit as encapsulated in the position statement (*Frank Talk* Volume 1 Number 2 & 3 at page 11) and in the *National Forum* (July 1984). The joint operation against Renamo by the South African Defence Force (SADF) and FRELIMO as well as Pretoria's intimate economic liaison with Maputo demand a review of the positions taken at the Summit.

I am amazed that the Forum joins social imperialism in talking the language of "political realism". This tired old argument of "realism" is always dragged out to rationalize gutter crawling. For almost a decade now, "realism" has been used to explain the "lack of transformation" in both Mozambique and Angola. "Realism" dictated that these countries "temporarily shelve" the transformation of society in order to throw everything into opposing South Africa.

But what the NF's argument that the nonaggression pact will allow Mozambique sorely needed breathing space to solve her internal problems leaves out is that South Africa is NOT the only cause of Mozambique's problems. Mozambique is a neo-colonial society under imperialist domination — *a la* Soviet social-imperialism. And the Nkomati Accord is pursuant to Soviet strategy, not contrary to it.

The Soviet strategy is to position itself in the best possible way for a future all-out challenge to Yankee imperialism. Mozambique and Angola provide the Soviets with a foothold in the midst of an area of prime strategic importance to American imperialists (this latter point is very well put in the paper *Let's fight against the Organ Grinder*).

The Soviet strategy is not based on seizing power in Namibia or Azania, hence the Soviets have found themselves quite willing to put the reins somewhat on SWAPO and the ANC. The ANC and SWAPO are maintained as loyal rearguard elements behind the lines of white South Africa. And the ANC and SWAPO have also been "realistic" about Nkomati — because their own political fortunes rise and fall on the eventual ability of the Soviets to successfully challenge and defeat the US imperialists on a world scale.

The jockeying for position between the Western surrogates (UNITA, the MNR and South Africa) and Soviet surrogates (MPLA, FRELIMO, SWAPO and the ANC) is intense and cannot be glossed over. The NF must be consistent in its stated goal of anti-imperialism, as enshrined in the

Manifesto.

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● The centrist slogan, "Let us fight against the organ grinder" does not take issue with the political responsibility of the Mozambican leadership for the Nkomati Accord.

According to the centrists Nkomati is simply the product of imperialist coercion carried out through South Africa's destabilisation policy. They regard Nkomati not as a "betrayal of the liberation struggle" but only as a "temporary setback for the liberation struggle". This implies that the tactics of struggle simply have to be reviewed and a new emphasis given to the internal mobilisation of the masses.

Our centrists, in keeping with their vacillating character, have not come out in open condemnation of Machel's capitulation. Mozambique has often been quoted by the centrists as *the* "Socialist" model and is often spoken of in a tone of reverence. It is therefore difficult for them to decry the actions of Machel. Although they challenge the populist call for a national convention, they proclaim in the very same breath, "We are not yet in a position where we can talk as equals or from a position of superior strength to the present regime." They therefore propose, "Our organisations must prepare the soil, we must force this government or its successors to ask to speak to us when they can no longer continue." Does not this proclamation echo the foreboding solution that the populists are calling for?

The solution of building one nation towards a "Free Azania" will subsume the interests of the working class under those of petit bourgeois nationalists. South Africa would then follow the same path that the Frontline states have taken; where populist leaders, having come to power, have turned with venom against the working class. Zimbabwe is a classic example of this; only months after independence Mugabe introduced a series of repressive laws against workers' organisations. Mugabe and Machel, both proclaimed "protagonists of socialism" no longer talk about the working class but speak of the "people". Machel, in his address at Frelimo's 4th Congress in April 1983 declared "we must mobilise for socialism" through "people's power". The working class is the only consistently progressive class that can bring about fundamental social change. All other oppressed classes, the petit bourgeoisie and peasantry, must