



# Azapo's Diplomatic Offensive

by **IMRANN MOOSA**

Jackson's campaign is that it has brought disparate groups working within the Afro-American community together.



*Minister Louis Farrakhan*

Jackson's campaign received the support of the Nation of Islam via its head, Minister Louis Farrakhan. The Zionist-controlled media and white America were outraged: it is fair to say that Farrakhan is the man that white America fears most and Black America respects most. The media demanded that Jackson "repudiate" Farrakhan — while Jackson did not do this, he condemned Farrakhan's statement that Israel is an illegitimate state. This certainly disappointed many Black Americans: wings of the NBUF correctly assessed that the pressures of being a Democratic Party candidate naturally meant a subordination to white interests. Jesse did not heed the call for him to stand as an independent to his own cost: the Democratic Party determined in the end that he would not run for presidency! The lessons of the Jackson campaign must be clearly digested by Black people everywhere.

## **Pan Africanism**

Groups such as the All African People's Revolutionary Party (AAPRP), the Revolutionary National Army (RNA) and the Worker's Tribune have addressed the National Question in the USA in different ways. The RNA, for example, strives for Afro-Americans to repossess the greater part of the Southern states of the USA on the grounds that these states have been built on slave labour.

The NBUF is a step in the right direction. A curious drawback about the American struggle is that it tends to be parochialized: Afro-Americans, Latin Americans, American Indians and other "minorities" tend to struggle in their own little nooks and

ding that the basic premise of BC is that victory lies in the hands of the oppressed and exploited in Azania and will be generated by **their** self-activity.

## **Media**

Having committed itself to this course, it came as no wonder that the BCM(A)'s circumstances parallel those of AZAPO: they are as poor as churchmice and the imperialist media deliberately suppresses information about their existence and their numerous successes.

Indeed, there is an orchestrated attempt to portray that there is only one liberation movement in Azania viz the ANC. Amongst community and support groups all over the USA, however, and despite the disinformation programme, nettlesome questions are being asked about certain strains in the broad Azanian liberation movement viz:

- ★ Why, despite the clear lessons of the Black American experience, are whites included in these strains?
- ★ Why do these strains never acknowledge that a primary goal of the Azanian liberation struggle is the repossession of occupied soil?



## **Jesse**

An umbrella grouping of Afro-American organizations has emerged in the USA called the National Black United Front (NBUF). The NBUF is a result of the Jesse Jackson campaign. Although Jackson's bid for the presidency of the USA has the negative effect of suggesting that there is hope in the "American dream", white Americans and the media have blasted Jackson in unmistakably racist fashion. White racism permeates American society despite the ebullient propaganda about "democracy" and "equality". Hence the positive effect of

The first thrust in AZAPO's international offensive was made by AZAPO President Lybon Tiyani Mabasa, in his tour of Europe and North America during 1983. That tour cleared the path to a host of organizations and individuals abroad. It must be emphasized, however, that disinformation about AZAPO and the Black Consciousness Movement is rife and is one of the pressing problems that the liberation movement needs to grapple with, both in Azania and abroad. It is against the backdrop of the first diplomatic offensive launched by AZAPO that my trip abroad should be viewed.

AZAPO was informed that the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid (UNSCAA) intended to host a conference to mobilize North American support against apartheid between 18 and 21 June 1984 and would require a speaker. Since the President's passport had been seized by the system and since other Central Committee members were never granted passports, I was the only member of the Central Committee to possess a valid passport.

## **BCM(A)**

I left South Africa on June 15 and reached Washington DC on June 16. The subsequent hectic schedule hardly provided for recovery from jetlag: almost immediately on arrival, I addressed a June 16 Commemoration service at Howard University organized by a medley of movements, spearheaded by the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania [BCM(A)].

The BCM(A) is a liberation movement launched in 1979. It began as a re-grouping of exiles who were members of the various BC groupings banned by Pretoria on October 19, 1977. Cadres of the BCM(A) could not find a political home in the historical liberation movements viz the African National Congress of South Africa and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania. They maintained that Black Consciousness had developed independently during the post-Sharpeville era when the historical movements had abrogated their revolutionary responsibilities and degenerated into specialized entities operating abroad. The BCM(A) has consistently eschewed the tendency of forming "governments in exile", conten-

crannies. The term "Black" is misconstrued as a person of African descent, which in practice comes to mean people with kinky hair and a surfeit of melanin in their skin. It is most unfortunate that many Black American groups over-emphasize a "Back to Africa" approach and reduce BC to "cultural nationalism". This approach tends to be chauvanistic and often deflects from studying the material conditions within the USA and from analyzing the class content of the American struggle. In fact, there are groups [such as the Workers's Tribune and the Marxist Humanists (or News and Letters)] which are working in this direction and this is heartening indeed. I hope that it is only a question of time before we hear of grassroots melding together of organizations such as the NBUF and the AIM (American Indian Movement).

The Pan-Africanist approach most certainly has a very positive side in that it contributes to Black pride and self-assertiveness and facilitates identification with the Azanian struggle. No Black group in the USA ever asks the silly question "Isn't AZAPO racist in excluding whites?": almost intuitively, the application of BC to Azania is appreciated. It takes little convincing to portray AZAPO as the only liberation movement with a proper ideology and direction in Azania: once the history and growth of the struggle in Azania is mapped out, this is seen as obvious.

The June 16 services at both Howard University and Watoto Community Centre (organized by the All African Trust Fund) evoked some of the foregoing responses. In-depth meetings with community organizations and support groups roundly



Jackson . . . hero or sellout?



UN Security Council in session.

supported these conclusions. Curiously enough, the Rainbow Coalition supporting Jackson (surely an unfortunate choice of name because black is excluded from the rainbow while white is made up of all the colours in the visible spectrum!) at the University of Toledo made up of Latin Americans, Afro-Americans and Arab Americans, is called the Progressive-Democratic Society — the term "progressive democrat" symbolizing amorphous liberalism in South Africa.

#### UN

The UN Conference was addressed by anti-apartheid luminaries from every point on the political spectrum: by Andrew Young, Jesse Jackson, Angela Davis, Denis Brutus, Edward Kennedy and official representatives of the South West African People's Organisation of Namibia (SWAPO), the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), the ANC and the PAC. Represented were delegations from many countries, liberation movements and a host of support groups from the USA and Canada.

Until the Conference was introduced to AZAPO, its tone was simply to tout the line of the "sole and authentic" custodians of the liberation struggle viz SWAPO and the ANC. Every speech was skewed in this direction and the caucusing and diplomatic intrigues on the sidelines strenuously sought to present this view.

The AZAPO presentation drew applause, especially when the point was made that "the primary task of the liberation movement in Azania is to recover every square kilometre of occupied soil." The applause that punctuated and terminated the AZAPO/BCM(A) presentation becomes significant in the light of the fact that in the dignified atmosphere of the UN, applauding is actually prohibited.

AZAPO took the point that in the post-Sharpeville political miasma, "white liberals", . . . misrepresented the cause of the oppressed as . . . one for civil rights" and that the BCM "injected a remarkable vitality into

Azanian politics". The growth and development of the BCM and the role and function of AZAPO and the National Forum Committee was outlined. The implications of the Nkomati Accord and the "new deal" offered by the Botha regime were analysed: "As the Accords emphasize, the need for a strong internal resistance to the system is paramount and in the final analysis victory will come from the Black masses inside Azania. This can only underline the pivotal role of AZAPO, an organization which at once conquers fear and unifies all the oppressed into one cohesive unit, laying the building blocks for an Azanian nation".

The response from support groups, liberation movements (including members of the ANC and PAC delegations) and representatives of states to the AZAPO presentation was tremendous. What made it unique was that it was the voice of an authentic liberation movement operating inside South Africa. The presentation also challenged holy cows and thus the caucusing in the aisles and in the UN bar proceeded apace.

#### Commissions

When the Conference broke into Commissions, the BCM(A) proposed in the commission on cultural and sporting isolation that the *bona fides* of South African applicants for foreign citizenship such as Sydney Maree and Zola Budd be determined by checking with people's organizations inside Azania. An ANC delegate insisted that the UN and the OAU recognized only two liberation movements and to recognize AZAPO was to encourage a "proliferation of liberation movements". The BCM(A) countered by specifying that **any** liberation movement operating abroad can only be legitimate if it maintains a symbiotic relationship with the people it purports to represent and that AZAPO, as the internal liberation movement, had every right to **dictate** to the ANC, the PAC and the BCM(A).

In another commission, the ANC pushed for a campaign to "Release Nelson and Winnie Mandela" while the PAC pushed for a campaign to release the PAC 6 (the longest serving political prisoners on Robben Island). The BCM(A) rejected both campaigns as sectarian and insisted on a campaign to "Release all political prisoners". The Commission accepted this viewpoint.

It became acutely obvious that the BCM and AZAPO had scored a major diplomatic victory and that to flog the line of "sole copyright" to



Gatsha Buthelezi, head of Inkatha



encourage the proliferation of 'liberation movements' . . . (which) unconsciously facilitates the enemy's strategy of *divide and rule*".

The last paragraph of the letter reads: ". . . I am ready to accept collective responsibility for the time being if it turns out that the aforementioned decision was taken with the full knowledge and consent albeit silent of an African National Congress representative. In that case, I would humbly request that the case be re-opened for discussion by the Committee in the near future in order hopefully, to ensure that AZAPO's participation does not serve as a precedent for them *and other groups such as Inkatha, etc.*"

#### Support

I also addressed an African Street Carnival organized by NBUF in New York on 4 July 1984. The Pan Africanist spirit displayed at the Carnival was exhilarating with a crowd responding to the rhythms and strains of Mother Afrika, and enthusiastically chanting "Amandla Ngawethu" and "Izwe Lethu I-Afrika".

I was interviewed by numerous radio and television stations as well as newspapers and magazines in Washington, New York, Chicago, Detroit, Toronto and London.

1984 has been declared "Anti-Racist Year" in London, England and the response of support groups was once again overwhelming. Solidarity groups from Trinidad and Tobago, from Australia and New Zealand and from Holland were also contacted.

The pace has been set for a sustained and vigorous diplomatic offensive by AZAPO. In the conditions in which the BCM operates both in Azania and abroad, a shake-up of AZAPO's propaganda arm is a historical imperative.

The Court also examined the question whether there was any substance in De Wet's belief that Section 13(1)(a)(v) of the Internal Security Act had been contravened. This section was modelled on Section 11 of the Suppression of Communism Act, Act No 44 of 1950 and Section 2 of the Unlawful Organisations Act, Act No 34 of 1960. Both these Acts were repealed and replaced by the Internal Security Act in 1982.

Section 11 proclaimed that it was an offence "to further the achievement of any of the objects of communism" or to "advocate, advise, defend or encourage the achievement of any such object or any act or omission which is calculated to further the achievement of any such object." Section 2 extended the range of the Suppression of Communism Act to hit any unlawful organization.

In *R v Adams* 1959(1) SA 646 the words "advocates, advises, defends or encourages" were held to connote communication to some audience or readership. Thus the publication of printed or written matter could never amount on its own to an offence. The product had first to be distributed, its contents to be disseminated. Hence the mere publication of **Frank Talk** could never violate Section 13(1)(a)(v).

Please insert the following paragraph after the second paragraph in the middle column of page 5 (ie after the paragraph beginning "Using the 'Didcott test' . . ." and before the paragraph beginning "**The Judge made the telling point . . .**":

*Ndabeni trenchantly submitted the following: ". . . (A) comparison between the aims and objects of AZAPO set forth in page 2 of **Frank Talk** (Volume 1 Number 1) and the SASO policy manifesto indicates the divergence between the aims of AZAPO (which is not an unlawful organization) and SASO." In argument, counsel for Ndabeni submitted that SASO contained only the **germ** of what AZAPO has crystallized.*

Note that the case of **Thabo Ndabeni v the Minister of Law and Order and Another** is reported in the third volume of the 1984 *South African Law reports* at page 500 i.e. 1984(3)SA500(D).