



SOLOMON (MANGALISO) NONGWATI, 48, is a mineworker who spent time on death row. He is speaking at the launch of an anti-death penalty campaign in October. He and Paulos Tsehlana were later acquitted after appealing. With them was fellow mineworker and shaft steward, Tyelovuyo Mgedezi, who will be hanged next year unless an appeal for clemency succeeds.

NUM petition launched to save Comrade Mgedezi on death row

NEARLY three hundred people wait on death row to be hanged.

About 62 of these people have been convicted of being involved in anti-apartheid or political activities.

Three of the NUM's members were on death row. One remains.

He is Tyelovuyo Mgedezi. The other two, Solomon Nongwati and Paulos Tsehlana were released on 30 September as a result of their appeal to the Appellate Division.

Comrade Mgedezi is due

to be hanged early next year.

The NUM is planning to send a petition to the State President, PW Botha, appealing for mercy.

The petition says that the actions which resulted in Mgedezi's conviction were as a result of severe tensions on the mine.

A number of NUM regions have taken up the "Save the Patriots" campaign with other trade unions, youth groups and churches opposed to the death penalty.

were allowed to start voting ten days before the elections.

The government had banned the UDF and 17 other organisations in the hopes of getting a high poll. COSATU was restricted from criticising town councils. It was against the law to call for a boycott.

At least two hundred activists were detained. Police and army roamed the township streets to "protect" voters.

But the people were not fooled. In Soweto only 2.8 percent of adults voted - many of those frightened pensioners, the blind and the unemployed.

In the whole of the Vaal Triangle only 5 417 people voted. A spokesperson for the democratic movement called it a "gunpoint election that failed to coerce our people to give political support to apartheid structures".

Once more this is a vote of no confidence in Botha's constitutional initiatives", he said.

Court sentences on Delmas three are another blow to legal protest

SOUTH Africa's longest and most expensive political trial, "the Delmas treason trial" has ended, leaving a gap in legal democratic politics.

The UDF's national publicity secretary Patrick "Terror" Lekota, national secretary Popo Simon Molefe and Transvaal secretary, Moss Chikane, together with South African Council worker Tom Manthata were found guilty of treason.

Terror was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment, Moss Chikane and Popo Molefe to 10 years each, while Tom Manthata was sentenced to six years.

Attack on UDF

The NUM said it was "shocked and angered by the sentences imposed on the Delmas trialists". "The men are regarded by the majority as outstanding and responsible leaders".

"They have been found guilty of expressing the the will and hopes for the future of black South Africans".

"We salute the Delmas trialists", said the NUM.

Observers said the sentences came in a long line of restrictive measures by the government against the UDF and its affiliates.

It has been prevented from speaking and operating freely.

The Delmas judgement meant four of its most capable organisers are to be removed from the political arena.

Forms of mass action previously considered peaceful and legitimate could now fall outside the law.

Major forms of resistance in the early 1980's have come under consideration and have been declared illegal.

The judgement in the case--acknowledged the role of the UDF, its leadership and then called it illegal because of a "conspiracy" with the African National Congress.

Some of South Africa's best known leaders gave evidence in mitigation.

Almost all called for the unbanning of the ANC, saying that there would not be any meaningful change without the participation of some of the leadership of the people within the UDF and the ANC.

In the eyes of the majority of the people, the trialists are seen as "respected leaders" for their efforts in promoting a legal and non-violent political struggle.

The verdict on the UDF leaders and other leaders points to the growing use of the prosecution to neutralise opposition leaders.

Trialists send message

In a message released to all South Africans after the sentence was passed, the three UDF leaders said they "viewed the present trial as an interim affair".

"Somewhere in the future lies a date when black and white South Africans will take a second look at these moments of our history", they said.

"They will evaluate afresh the events now in contention and our role in them. And since the privilege will belong to them, they will pass final judgement."

"We are convinced that theirs will be contrary to the present

one. They will vindicate us" the three said.

Of the 18 Vaal trialists, only one got a prison sentence.

Gcina Malindi was sentenced to five years imprisonment while six other Vaal trialists got five-year suspended sentences with severe restriction-amounting to the equivalent of banning orders.

This has never happened before, and will effectively remove the six from political life for five years without sending them to prison.

Apartheid the cause

The KaNgwane Chief Minister, Enos Mabuza, Dr Van Zyl Slabbert of the Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa (Idasa), Dr Sam Motsuenyane of the National Federation of the Chamber of Commerce told the court that the ANC was a long-established political organisation in South Africa and that they supported its aims and objectives-- although they were opposed to its armed struggle.

They told the judge that apartheid was the cause of conflict and violence in South Africa.

Dr Max Coleman of the newly formed Human Rights Commission said the judgement would narrow the parameters of legal resistance.

The verdict in the marathon "Delmas treason trial" will go down in the history of resistance as yet another turning point in South Africa's history.

An application for leave to appeal is currently being heard in Pretoria.

Townships do not vote in gunpoint elections

ON October 26 township residents rejected apartheid's powerless town councils again.

Hundreds of thousands of students across the country did not go to school on October 26, and thousands of workers stayed at home.

The majority were not fooled by the claims of the Botha regime that the municipal elections were "equal, fair and free".

The government spent millions to either persuade or frighten people into voting.

Councillors promised fancy houses, the lowering of rent and some drove around the streets distributing alcohol. People

Conference banned, but participating organisations move towards unity

THE Anti-Apartheid Conference which was planned for the 23 to 25 September was banned hours before it was to take place.

Once again the regime exposed itself, and what it means by its political "reform": the silencing and repression of any democratic opinion.

COSATU officials were put under restriction orders. Eleven other progressive leaders in Cape Town were detained.

Harassment of a number of unionists throughout the country was also reported.

Expected to attend the conference were delegates from more than 70 organisations including included student, youth, women, religious, civic, business, institutions, political, sport and cultural organisations.

Amongst these were many organisations previously not aligned to the progressive movement like the Black Management Forum, SABTA, NAFSOC National Soccer League, National Professional Soccer League, South African Soccer Federation, Seoposengwe Party, Inyandza and many other organisations which have taken a stand against apartheid.

The two main themes of the conference were "unity and organisation against repression" and "one person one vote in a democratic South Africa."

The decision to hold an Anti-Apartheid Conference was taken at the COSATU Special Conference in May this year called to look at the repressive strategies used by the state against the mass democratic movement.

Worker delegates said it was important to develop a broad anti-apartheid alliance to withstand the repression strategies used by the government. They said there are many organisations which are not part of the democratic movement but are against apartheid. This group is seen by the government as moderates and they together with the imperialist forces are working hard to win them over to their side.

"The government must not succeed in creating junior partners amongst our people", said a prominent leader in the democratic movement.

The Anti-Apartheid Conference would have offered the democratic movement a chance to give these groups direction and win them over to our side of the struggle.