

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONFERENCE (SA)

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

ARUSHA, TANZANIA, 1 - 4 DECEMBER 1987

THEME: "PEOPLES OF THE WORLD AGAINST APARTHEID
FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOUTH AFRICA."

Statement was prepared for a report-back meeting of ANC members in Dar es Salaam on 12.12.1987.

Counsellor from Embassy of Madagascar who attended the Conference, came to ask me for papers to prepare a report for his government. He liked my speech and wanted to borrow it. Their Chancery is around the corner, so asked him to fetch it the following day so that I could edit it and add footnotes.

There were four delegates from East Africa. We agreed that we would each attend a different Commission of which there were four, fortunately, and each of us would report on the Commission attended. Mine was : MOBILISATION FOR PEOPLE'S BOYCOTT.

Mrs. Paulette Pierson-Mathy gave an overview before the Conference broke into Commissions. She is from Brussels, spoke in French for which there was instant translation on the earphones. She said that the struggle of the S.African people had led to a quantitative and qualitative change in the image of the ANC, and the Anti-Apartheid Movements. There were 500 delegates representing 80 countries and organisations. The entire world recognised the ANC as the vanguard. It's leaders are recognised universally. It is hoped that the release of Govan Mbeki is a prelude to an unprecedented phase. The S.A. regime tries to discredit the ANC and is carrying out a campaign of assassinating its leaders. We of the Anti-Apartheid movements must redouble our efforts in support of the ANC and SWAPO.

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We must denounce with vigour the arrogance of Botha's regimes and its attacks on Angola and Mocambique.

Ingeborg Wick of the Anti-Apartheid Movement of the Federal Republic of Germany said that since 1985 the US, UK and FRG have been forced to change their positions regarding sanctions. Though not what they should be, S.Africa is feeling the pinch. Ever more pressure must be brought to bear. Even the symbolic sanctions are being undermined and circumvented. People of Namibia and S.Africa are demanding comprehensive mandatory sanctions.

Mike Terry of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, said that way back in 1959 Chief Lutuli had made an appeal for people's sanctions by which people can express their solidarity and this is an effective way of educating the ~~people~~ public of different countries.

Richard Rooten of the Free Namibia and Free S.A. Campaign (FNSAC) of Australia, said that we must ensure that the ANC is recognised as the future government of S.A and that the Botha regime must be de-recognised. They have vast resources and will stoop to anything.

We had four days of addresses at Plenary Sessions and intense discussions at the four commissions and behind the scenes, at which, the BBC reported, important contacts were established which would lead to international isolation of Pretoria, of ultimate value.

The press reporters from Rapport and Beeld were having difficulty in composing their reports. They said if they told the bare, unimbellished truth, their readers may not believe them. (These are) Afrikaans newspapers that support the ruling Nationalist Party. They asked for permission to attend and the ANC cleared their entry with the Tanzanian Government.

We must pay tribute to our host country, the CCM Mwalimu Nyerere for his opening address and congenial cocktail party for all the delegates. "No attempt to make the people feel less oppressed under apartheid is a substitute for its total abolition. There can be no such thing as Apartheid with a human face," Mwalimu said. Salim Ahmed Salim, Minister of Defence and ~~Communications~~ Deputy Prime Minister, proved a delightful and most efficient Chairperson with a distinct bias towards the ANC and SWAPO. He emphasised that the ANC was the top liberation movement recognised by millions inside and outside South Africa.

The Daily News is also to be commended for its coverage of the Conference.

As usual our best friends, the Soviet Union and the GDR, gave us generous aid: 80 tickets from Aerovlot, Communication equipment; from the GDR the brief cases and ballpoint pens which our stall was selling at 400/- each.

I was in Commission B, Mobilisation for People's Sanctions, on which I will report, but also on other highlights of the Conference.

There were a number of delegates from ^{home} representing the Youth, Women, COSATU, the Religious Front, and a new organisation established in May: National Association of Democratic Lawyers. Our Commission was lucky in that the COSATU delegate and the Muslim Imam attended for a while and addressed us there, having already spoken at the plenary session.

The COSATU delegate is a factory worker. He said that our National struggle and our class struggle are intertwined. COSATU had grass roots, shop floor discussions and have the full support of the workers to call for comprehensive, mandatory sanctions.

He also said that they and SACTU are not in competition, that they come out to consult with SACTU. Their aim was to have one federation for the whole country. Some trade unionists consulted with the Americans and then decided not to affiliate. Some of the trade Unionists are Black Consciousness. He called that 'high school politics'. They want to affiliate to OATUU and ILO, but this must not affect SACTU.

He observed that Gatsha Buthelezi queues up for money at the same window as all the Bantustan leaders, also Savimbi and MNR. "We cannot expect comprehensive, mandatory sanctions overnight, so do not scorn selective sanctions. People's sanctions can result in forcing Governments to close their embassies and trade missions in S.Africa... We understand the problems of the landlocked countries, but the world community must help them." He said a Bill was to be introduced that will make strikes illegal. There are whites who have joined our unions and accepted black leaders and also President Oliver Tambo.

A dynamic young Muslim Imam started off with a little prayer, like saying grace. He spoke about Ashley Kriel's funeral. (In the October/November issue of the RESISTER there is a picture of him next to the coffin and the same picture appeared in the WEEKLY MAIL of July 24/30 1987.) The service was conducted by several creeds. He said "Our children are killed side by side. Christians, Jews and Muslims will stand and fight side by side". The creeds are having joint discussions on liberation theology. He was critical of the role Israel is playing. He thanked the outside world of supporters for all the aid being given, but added: "I do not want to sound arrogant, but please, we do not

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want to sound arrogant, but please, we do not want lines laid down for us as to how we should conduct our revolution... Our Jihad: We are prepared to die for a just cause."

A young Afrikaner lawyer from the Cape addressed the plenary session. He said the people have accepted the Freedom Charter as a basis for a new society and he quoted from Suttner & Cronin's book. (The authors were in prison together in Pretoria.) He said the new embryonic organs of rule are based on the will of the people. They will redraft legislation and canvass lawyers to join their organisation, to stand up and be counted. (That last phrase was reminiscent of the early 1950's when we formed the Congress of Democrats, a white organisation formed at the request of the ANC.)

He said that there is a scramble at the universities to acquire a new philosophy on Law. A conference in Bloemfontein felt that the credibility and legitimacy of the law must be restored. He told this joke:

Pik Botha visited a land-locked country and was introduced to the Naval Minister. He said: "But you are land-locked!" His counterpart, the Foreign Minister, retorted: "You have a Minister of Justice."

We were chatting in Afrikaans when an African comrade nearby turned round and asked: "Wie praat my moedertaal?" (Who is speaking my mother tongue?)

At our Commission the Chairperson said it was necessary to have some central body to coordinate information and activities of support groups. In Britain one December the Postal workers decided to hold back on mail for S. Africa. At the same time the Anti-Apartheid Movement was running a campaign sending cards to Botha to release political prisoners!

Lindiwe said that in Sweden they have many groups, in some cases they only have their opposition to apartheid in common, e.g. there are three communist parties. They have established an office called: ISOLATE SOUTH AFRICA that keeps an index of all the groups and supplies them with information. Then she went on to say that the H.Q. of ANC in Lusaka had departments: International, Women, Youth, Culture Information, Propaganda, Legal, etc.

One delegate said that it was necessary to look into the possibility of having a satellite to which queries could be addressed and replies received.

My contribution: "We in the ANC are deeply appreciative of all the work done and concern shown by our friends and the material, moral and diplomatic support we receive. I am sure we are all inspired by the speeches made here by the COSATU representative and the dynamic Imam. The people of South Africa have demonstrated that there is nothing to fear but fear. We are also inspired by Comrade Govan Mbeki, who, at the age of 77, released from 23 years on the hell-hole, Robben Island, said:

"The ideas for which I went to jail and which the ANC stands for, I still embrace. I am still an ANC member. I am still a member of the Communist Party."

"The BBC announced this morning that Border Guards are searching traffic from Botswana, because S.Africa says that the ANC is going to step up its campaign and that guerillas will enter through Botswana. Further that the UDF is launching a Xmas campaign starting on 10 December, for the State of Emergency to be lifted and for the release of all political prisoners. I suggest that we make this a world

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wide campaign and test our ability to co-ordinate an activity on a limited field.

Prepared by Violet Weinberg, Secretary, Dar es Salaam Zonal Political Committee of the ANC.
December/January 1988.

There is a front page article in the Daily News of 12.12.1987, headlined:

APARTHEID ABOUT TO COLLAPSE - TAMBO.

I do not have a copy of O.R.'s speech, but nowhere in the NEC 8th January message is there a suggestion that 'apartheid is dead'. We are called upon to: 'Transform armed action into People's War, ... escalate the offensive... Victory is certain...
FORWARD TO UNITED ACTION FOR PEOPLE'S POWER.'

One of the delegates told me that the Shell Company has engaged a high-powered Public Relations Company. Every week they have a full page advert in the WEEKLY MAIL, e.g. issue November 20 to 26, reads:

Shell supports
the right of all people
to live wherever they choose.

SHELL

Working to make a difference now.

They are also advertising:

APARTHEID IS DEAD

PLAN FOR THE POST APARTHEID PERIOD.

This is divisive and dangerous, if our friends and supporters believe it. The State of Emergency has cut S.A. out of media. Public no longer conscious of daily loss of life in the townships & by the hang-man.