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INDEPENDENCE FOR NAMIBIA

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EDITORIAL

NAMIBIA AND OUR STRUGGLE

It is a year now since the battle of Cuito Cuanavale ended and since then much has happened. There was a ceasefire, there were negotiations in London, New York and Africa. As planeloads of Cuban troops left Luanda to return to Havana, the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (Unavem) was satisfied that Cuba and Angola intend to observe the terms of the accord.

President Dos Santos has gone on record as saying the Cuban contribution to Angola will never be forgotten and that Angola intends to build a monument in honour of those Cubans who died in the crucial battle of Cuito Cuanavale. The independence of Angola is now assured. The Cuban Commander in Angola, General Abelardo Colome Ibarra, said the Cubans and Angolans had shattered the myth of South African invincibility.

Now the ball is in the court of the apartheid regime. Under the agreement signed in New York, the apartheid regime committed itself to end its support for UNITA and to grant independence to Namibia. But as we know them, the racists are full of tricks to say the least. They are raising "technicalities." As if this is not bad enough, they are intensifying the conscription of thousands of young Namibians into the South West African Territorial Force (SWATF) because — according to them — SWAPO "has still not made any formal announcement regarding the halting of its terrorist activities." At a time when it is clear to everybody that SWAPO is going to sweep elections in Namibia, they still regard SWAPO as an enemy which is engaged in "terrorist activities." Are they going to change their attitudes if SWAPO takes over? Are they going to stop harbouring, training, financing and deploying UNITA bandits? Are they going to stop threatening and/or attacking Angola? Even if they do not, they will certainly not do that

from Namibian soil.

Cuito Cuanavale has certainly changed the course of history of Southern Africa. Their acts of "bantustanisation" in Namibia are coming to end. The people of Namibia demand **Peace Now!** — after all, their armed struggle was a struggle for peace. The pre-condition for peace is the implementation of the 1978 United Nations General Assembly Resolution 435.

What is the task facing us in this context? The task facing us and Africa as a whole is to fight to complete the anti-colonial revolution on the continent; a process which is basically anti-racist. This is definitely in the interests of the Namibian people. There is more to it. If South Africa is not liberated a Damocles sword will hang over their heads. They will continue to be exploited in the South African mines and economy — an economy they helped to develop.

By liberating Namibia, these people have brought the day of our liberation nearer, and we are duty bound to help them secure their independence by overthrowing the apartheid regime.

The ANC has pledged to do everything in its power to facilitate Namibian independence. The ANC in its wisdom decided, as President Tambo says in the January 8th Statement, in consultation with the fraternal Government of the People's Republic of Angola and other friendly African countries, to help in this process by agreeing to move its military personnel from Angola "so as not to allow the racists and their allies to use the presence of ANC military facilities in Angola as an excuse for blocking or otherwise delaying the process now in motion." This is political maturity, revolutionary solidarity and internationalism in action.

We know we are dealing with a wounded beast and as usual a wounded beast is the most dangerous animal in the jungle. Let us deal with this wounded beast!

JANUARY 8TH STATEMENT MASS ACTION FOR PEOPLE'S POWER



Statement of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress on the occasion of the 77th anniversary of the founding of the ANC. Presented by President O R Tambo, January 8th 1989.

Compatriots, brothers and sisters, today, January 8th, we observe the 77th Anniversary of the people's movement, the African National Congress. I have the pleasure to extend greetings of the New Year to you and our friends everywhere. We mark this anniversary at the end of yet another significant year of struggle. Whatever its capacity for repression and death, the apartheid regime continued to suffer reverses both within South Africa and in the region.

Today's anniversary ushers in the last twelve months of a decade which we, together, designated as the Decade of Liberation. In assessing the distance we have travelled on the road to liberation, we need to set ourselves tasks whose accomplishments will bring us nearer to this cherished goal. This last year of the 1980s must and shall see us maintain and quicken the forward movement so that we close the decade poised for victory.

We say this with confidence, having shown in the theatre of struggle that our people have the capacity and the will to make decisive advances on all fronts. The 1980s have seen us muster the most gigantic, organised and active political force for the liberation of our motherland. The townships and the workplace, the schools and universities, the churches, mosques and temples, and the villages and farms have become important sites of struggle for the eradication of racial tyranny. Umkhonto we Sizwe is developing into an effective army of the people — its combatants, together with the revolutionary masses, delivering more and more effective blows against the regime. The contingent of world forces engaged in the anti-apartheid struggle has grown both in number and effectiveness. Increasingly, the ANC is recognised as the alternative power.

Vicious Repression

This reflects the depth of the all-embracing crisis afflicting the apartheid ruling clique. Its ideology, policies and programmes have, one after another, crumbled in the face of the people's resolute march. For the racist regime, the 1980s will go down in history as a decade of ever-deepening crisis.

In an attempt to extricate themselves from this quagmire, the racist rulers have acted with a desperation that is as vicious as it is characteristic of a regime in its death throes. The regime's unprecedented wave of terror has left death, detention, restrictions and long terms of imprisonment in its wake. This criminal regime has reduced our country to a huge prison — its administration, courts and regulations tailored to maintain and intensify White domination by every conceivable means.

The most urgent challenge, at the close of this decade, is to defeat the regime's attempts to reverse our gains; for us to build on these gains, and create the conditions for the birth of a new South Africa — at last unshackled from centuries of colonial bondage. Our actions during the course of last year showed in no uncertain terms that we have it within our power to achieve this

objective.

We Salute Our Heroes and Heroines

At this point, we would like to pay tribute to all those patriots, inside and outside our country, who have perished or passed away during this past year, among them Dulcie September, Stanza Bopape, Sebolelo Mohajane, Johnny Makatini, Benedict Moshoke, John Motshabi, Irene Mkwai, Hector Nkula, Michael Lucas, Sicelo Dhlomo and John Gaetsewe. These are our heroes and heroines to whom we, as a people, are eternally indebted.

Some, such as Dulcie September, and others, including citizens of the Front Line States, have perished at the hands of the murder squads of the Pretoria regime, which has remained true to its nature as a terrorist state, bent on maintaining itself in power at all costs. Others, among them Albie Sachs, are maimed for life, victims of the same campaign of terror.

We pay special tribute to those gallant combatants of Umkhonto we Sizwe, who fell in the course of action: among others, Attwell 'Mpilo' Maqhekeza, Xolile 'Valdez' Sam, Patrick 'Naledi' Mvundla, Butiki 'Bizzah' Mosimane. They and other brilliant commanders of the people's army, such as Lungisa 'Don' Qokweni, Vuyisile Sefako and Odirile 'Mainstay' Maponya, have blazed an heroic path to ultimate victory, and their sacrifice will be forever honoured.

Rule by Force

We also lower our banners in memory to our people mowed down in the streets of Pretoria and elsewhere by the AWB psychopaths, who are inspired by the doctrines which have underpinned White minority rule.

Yet others of our people have, in their thousands, suffered under the state of emergency with its detentions, brutal torture and countless assassinations. Trials on trumped-up charges have led to convictions and execution of scores, with many more awaiting their turn on the gallows. Among those convicted recently are such

tried and tested leaders as Popo Molefe, Patrick Lekota, Moss Chikane and Tom Manthata.

They now join in the apartheid prisons such outstanding leaders of our people as Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrada, Raymond Mhlaba, Andrew Mlangeni, Elias Motsoaledi, Wilton Mkwayi, Oscar Mpetha and others.

These detentions, assassinations, executions and acts of aggression should alert us to one of the central features of our situation — that the Pretoria regime is as determined as ever to use maximum force, not only within our country but also in other parts of our region, to protect and defend the system of apartheid. None should therefore entertain any illusion that the regime is softening in any way.

We also live with the reality that many townships continue to be occupied by the soldiers and the police. The enemy is attempting to control these areas through the Joint Management Centres, which are instruments of repression established to implement a thorough-going counter-insurgency strategy. The centrepiece is, once more, the use of force against the democratic movement and the people as a whole.

Judges and Courts: Accomplices in Murder

Recent developments have clearly demonstrated the role of the apartheid courts as an integral part of the machinery of repression. In essence, the Delmas judgment means that it is a crime punishable by death to engage in a mass, non-violent struggle for the democratic transformation of our country. The judges, magistrates and prosecutors employed to administer the injustice of apartheid have stood out clearly as accomplices of murder, abduction and torture. People who, by any civilised standard should never have been charged — like the Sharpeville Six and others — were sentenced to death by invoking the doctrine of 'common purpose' and stretching it so as to quench the judicial thirst for the blood of the Blacks.

The use of the courts in an attempt to suppress the democratic struggle is in keeping with the plan of action implemented by the Pretoria regime last year, when it virtually banned the UDF, some of its affiliates and other organisations, and imposed severe restrictions on COSATU. Many of the state of emergency and other detainees who have been released have also been placed under very restrictive banning orders. The newspapers, *New Nation*, *South* and the *Weekly Mail*, have been banned for varying periods.

The South African Crisis Cannot Be 'Managed'

Clearly, the oppressors seek to immobilise the people, paralyse their organisations, silence our leaders and thus leave the political stage clear for their futile attempts to prop up the doomed system of apartheid.

The regime has been forced to embark on a programme of crisis management, which includes the state of emergency and the National Security Management System as a whole, precisely because it has no way out. And yet the more the racists try to control and manage this crisis, the worse it gets. To respond to this situation the regime will, of course, resort to an even more brutal campaign of repression than we have so far experienced.

At the core and in the leadership of the regime is a clique of bitter-enders who have the instruments of state power in their hands. These are prepared to murder and maim, to destroy and turn our country into a wasteland, solely to protect their illegitimate rule.

Crushing Defeat for Pretoria

Compatriots, in an effort to strengthen its unjust rule, last October the Botha regime sought an election show-piece for its racially compartmentalised local government system. The racist ruling clique did all in its power to make these elections a success, in order to regain control. It hoped

to get some Blacks to parade as credible representatives of the oppressed. Using these stooges, it planned to reconstitute local government structures which would serve as one of the components of its constitutional schemes and hide the reality of army and police control of our townships and the country as a whole.

In the name of so-called democracy, the genuine democratic forces were subjected to the jackboot; millions of rands were lavishly spent to buy collaborators and lure the people to the voting booths. The aged and the infirm, in particular, were intimidated and coerced to vote.

In the event, the regime suffered a crushing defeat: only a few notorious puppets availed themselves, and the turnout was as miserable as the stooge candidates the regime could find. Our people's victory, a product of the joint efforts of all the democratic and anti-apartheid forces, is of strategic importance.

Courage of our People

We salute leaders and activists of the mass democratic movement who braved all odds to spread the boycott message far and wide. Also at the forefront of this campaign were religious leaders who defied the enemy's restrictions, risked arrest and prosecution, as well as other possible acts of terror, to mobilise our people not to take part. They acted despite the cowardly bombing by the regime's agents of the Head Offices of the South African Council of Churches and the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference and other acts against the rest of the religious community. By their brave actions, they advanced the cause of justice and peace in our country. They also laid the basis for decisive actions in the months to come.

Indeed, the restrictions imposed on mass democratic organisations have brought out into even bolder relief the central role of the underground vanguard and the armed struggle. We salute cadres in the underground, including combatants of the people's army, whose tireless efforts helped to crush the regime's attempts to shore up apartheid.

Yet the fundamental question is, where do we go from here? Despite the massive boycott, the Pretoria regime will certainly proceed with its plans to reconstitute the system of local government in the Black areas, which we swept away in the struggle. It will also aim to establish its regional service councils, its provincial executive committees and its so-called national council.

Apartheid Disguised

All these structures are of central and decisive importance to the regime because they represent the heart of its political programme. They are an attempt to dress up apartheid in the hope of keeping it in place. The regime sees its constitutional project, represented by these councils and committees, as fundamental to its very survival. We must therefore expect that the racist regime will fight with everything it can lay its hands on to ensure the success of its constitutional schemes.

All constitutions address the question of political power. The constitutional manoeuvres of the regime are its assertion that power shall continue to be in the hands of the White minority; that this minority is happy to attach powerless subordinates to itself and that the whole apartheid pyramid will be presided over by a ruthless clique who call themselves a State Security Council.

The People Shall Govern

Whatever new words the Pretoria regime might seek to invent to describe its aims, it will not succeed in camouflaging the reality of continued White minority rule. Notions such as power-sharing without domination, group rights, minority rights, self-determination for the various groups, a nation of minorities, the extension of democracy and so on all mean one thing and one thing only — apartheid by another name.

To all this, the overwhelming majority of the people of South Africa have their response. It is that the people shall govern!

It is that a system of one-person, one-vote in a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa is the only one that can bring about justice and peace to all our people and to the region.

The boycott of the October elections was a decisive affirmation of the illegitimacy of the apartheid regime and all its structures. Therefore, we have an obligation to ensure that these structures are not imposed on us. United around the day-to-day issues that confront us — such as high rent and service charges, housing, taxation, high transport fares and lack of basic facilities — and indeed on the basis of our perspective of people's power — we must act to destroy these structures. We must launch the biggest offensive at all levels to smash the local authorities, regional service councils and the so-called national council.

Destroy Apartheid Structures!

The successful accomplishment of this task is of vital importance for our future. Its fulfilment will compel the Pretoria regime to seek genuine and lasting political solutions in keeping with the perspective of a non-racial democracy.

The Botha regime is actively considering calling elections this year to renew the apartheid tricameral parliament. Almost five years after its establishment, this institution has, as we predicted from the start, proved to be nothing more than yet another structure for the perpetuation of apartheid.

The very existence of a separate White parliament has always been a deep insult to the dignity of the Black people. Those of our White compatriots who count themselves as part of the anti-apartheid forces and participate in this racist parliament, which has no mandate from the majority of the people, must address, together with the mass democratic movement, the question of the most effective means of replacing this institution with a people's parliament.

Fight the Common Enemy

The unprecedented events in the

Bophuthatswana and Venda bantustans last year have once more demonstrated the utter bankruptcy of Pretoria's bantustan scheme. Yet these uprisings, involving soldiers and the rural masses, have also brought to the fore our organisational weaknesses in the countryside. The lessons deriving from these events should be put to good use as we intensify the struggle for people's power in all parts of our country. It is crucial that we raise these struggles to higher levels and continue to put before the rural masses the perspective of the seizure of the land.

Once again, to those from among the oppressed who still choose to serve the enemy, we say: you cannot hope to be accepted by the people. If you have so much as a shred of conscience left, act together with the people now against the common enemy to bring about the collapse of such institutions as the local government structures, the bantustans and the tricameral sham.

In keeping with the intensified efforts to address the question of power, the ANC has tabled for consideration by all the people of our country a set of Constitutional Guidelines. We urge everybody to discuss these and make proposals so that finally a position emerges which reflects the broadest national consensus. In building that consensus, the possibility will be created for all of us to advance more purposefully together for the birth of the new South Africa which we, together, will have helped to define.

Unconditional Release of All Political Prisoners

Compatriots, we have to make our advance towards this goal side by side with the rest of the leaders of our people who, to this day, remain prisoners of the apartheid regime. Whatever the change in the location of his imprisonment and the conditions of his incarceration, Nelson Mandela remains a prisoner. So do most of the leaders with whom he was sentenced.

We salute all the anti-apartheid forces for

their decisive action on this issue and, in particular, for the history-making observance last year of Nelson Mandela's 70th birthday. Now is the time to escalate the campaign for the immediate and unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners. Their release will not come about as a result of any change of heart on the part of their gaolers; it will take place because the pressure exerted both within South Africa and abroad will be such that the racist regime has no choice.

As our leaders emerge from the prison cells, it will be necessary that we welcome them back with all the honour and accolade due to them. They are among the titans of our struggle who, as leaders of all our people, should be sharing the task imposed on us by the continued existence of the apartheid system; statesmen who should never have been in prison, but who should have been free to participate in governing our country and helping to build it into a land of freedom.

End Apartheid Executions!

The campaign for the release of political prisoners and detainees should also address the issue of our compatriots illegally sentenced to death. Let the demand to save their lives resound everywhere, especially on this, the tenth anniversary of the judicial murder of that outstanding hero of our struggle, Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu. Many other patriots have been illegally executed, and many more are on Death Row, awaiting execution by judicial order.

We are very pleased to welcome to our midst that great stalwart of our revolution, Harry Gwala, just emerged from a second term in Pretoria's gaols, and whose contribution to our cause has been of great significance. It is a great pleasure for me to announce the decision of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress to invest Harry Gwala with the highest award of the struggling people of our country, Isithwalandwe-Seaparankoe.

We welcome him into the ranks of that honoured group of men and women who carry this high title, fully confident that he will continue along the path of struggle to

which he has dedicated his life. We also welcome that other stalwart, Zephania Mothopeng, President of the PAC, who has suffered at the hands of the regime in the service of the people. We wish both Harry and Zeph good health and strength to see freedom day dawn as it surely will.

Victory in the North-West

Compatriots, as the past year drew to its close, agreements of historic importance were arrived at concerning the security of the People's Republic of Angola and the independence of Namibia. These agreements represent a most decisive advance in the struggle for the total liberation of our continent and the establishment of peace in the region. We welcome them and look forward to their implementation without any delay.

These developments are a direct result, in particular, of the crushing defeat suffered by the apartheid war machine at Cuito Cuanavale in southern Angola. Humiliated, and its military doctrine and strategies in a shambles, the racist army was forced to retreat from Angola in shame. The African National Congress pays tribute to the valour and fighting skills of the armed forces of the People's Republic of Angola, the Cuban internationalist forces and the fighters of SWAPO, who have, in combat, buried racist Pretoria's aggressive dreams of conquering Angola.

What has been achieved is also a direct consequence of the struggles waged within South Africa and Namibia. These struggles, including the growing resistance to service in the racist army by many young South Africans and Namibians, contributed to the weakening of Pretoria's war machine. So did the international campaign to isolate apartheid South Africa in the economic, military and other fields.

Namibia on Threshold of Freedom

This is a vital lesson which we, who are still engaged in struggle for our emancipation, understand in its full meaning: the apart-

heid regime has not suddenly become part of the liberation and peace forces of our region and continent. Peace and independence in this part of our continent will come about as a result of the struggles and sacrifices made by the masses of the people. In the same vein, we should maintain maximum vigilance to ensure that the Pretoria regime does not default on the agreements, as it has so often done in the past.

We take this opportunity to reiterate our fraternal greetings to our brothers and sisters, our comrades-in-arms in Namibia who, after so many years of arduous struggle and sacrifice under the leadership of SWAPO, have brought their country on to the threshold of freedom and independence. On our part, we pledge to do everything in our power to facilitate this process, recognising the fact that the agreements signed in New York on December 22nd 1988, constitute an advance of great strategic significance for our region and for our own struggle.

It is against this background that the African National Congress, in consultation with the fraternal Government of the People's Republic of Angola and other friendly African countries, has readily agreed to move our military personnel from Angola, so as not to allow the racists and their allies to use the presence of ANC military facilities in Angola as an excuse for blocking or otherwise delaying the process now in motion. The armed struggle, however, will continue and will be intensified.

In the months ahead especially, SWAPO will need the support and assistance of all its friends, and we call on the international community to provide this assistance on a scale commensurate with the critical stage the Namibian struggle has reached.

Militant Mass Defiance

Compatriots, 1989 is also the 40th Anniversary of that outstanding document of our struggle for liberation, the Programme of Action. Its adoption and implementation, which effectively commenced with the trail-blazing Defiance Campaign of the early 1950s, opened the way for the mass

political offensive which, together with other forms of struggle, has today led us to the situation where we can confidently say that victory is in sight.

Drawing on and continuing that experience, and developing on the heroic actions of church leaders and other patriots last year, our approach must be one of militant mass defiance. We must ourselves decide what needs to be done and do it. The actions of defiance we embark upon should be targeted against the many restrictions of the state of emergency; the attempts to intensify racial segregation, group areas, anti-squatting measures and forced removals; rent, service charge collection and taxation. The spirit of defiance should permeate all the other campaigns we undertake.

Resistance to Conscription

An important element in the actions of defiance is the bold stand taken by growing numbers of White youths who — despite the banning of the End Conscription Campaign — have come to realise that they have no business fighting in defence of apartheid. It is of the greatest importance that more young Whites should adopt the positions of the courageous 143 conscripts, and others before them, and defy the order of the regime to enlist them into the apartheid murder squads. We hail these young White patriots, among them Charles Bester, David Bruce and Ivan Toms, and urge them to always stand firm, for the sake of all our people. Further, we call on all soldiers and police — Black and White — to defy the orders of their superiors to kill, maim and torture innocent people — men, women, children. Instead, they must turn their weapons against the real enemy of the people, the apartheid regime.

Isolate the Racist Regime

What the tradition of defiance and struggle now demands is that we must defend and consolidate the gains that we have already made, continue to draw the greatest numbers of our people into action, cement

the unity of these masses and tighten the bonds of common action that unite our struggling organisations. We must draw new forces into the struggle and work for the greatest possible isolation of, and an intensified offensive against, the murderous racist regime.

In organisational terms, the actions of the regime against democratic structures and activists mean that the enemy is forcing more patriots to operate in a clandestine manner. The experience accumulated should be popularised. At the same time, all possible avenues of struggle must be explored.

Underground Struggle

Once more, this situation emphasises the decisive importance of the underground structures of the ANC. As in previous years, it remains one of our major tasks further to strengthen the ANC underground and ensure that it plays its role as a people's movement charged with the responsibility to head our liberation effort.

The unity of and within all arms of the mass democratic movement has never been of greater importance than it is today. Nothing should be allowed to stand in the way of this essential unity. This movement has an historic mission to mobilise our people into action. To carry out this task, all its components have to be strong and organised, linked to one another and operating as comrades-in-arms and natural allies. The readiness of the masses to engage the enemy through militant action was amply demonstrated last year, above all, during the unprecedented three-day general strike in June and when they boycotted the apartheid October elections. None can doubt that the fighting spirit of our people is very high.

Let every community, whether in the towns or the countryside, be drawn into struggle around the day-to-day issues which directly affect the people. These struggles make up a very important component of our general offensive against the apartheid system.

One of the most important of these issues, which can be taken up at the local level,

is the plight of the millions of our people who live in appalling conditions in shanty towns in many areas of our country. These millions can and must be organised and mobilised into struggle around such burning issues as comfortable and affordable housing, proper health, education and sanitation facilities.

Unity of the Oppressed

Of importance also is the need to confront the cunning machinations of the JMCs, which are trying both to buy over sections of our people and to foment conflict among them. As part of this programme, vigilante death squads have been formed in many townships, wreaking havoc in the service of the regime. These bands hope to impose themselves on the people. We call on those men and women, our fellow oppressed and exploited, who have been drawn into these activities, not to allow themselves to be used by the regime. Whatever the difficulties, we have to work to ensure that our communities remain united in their understanding of the nature of the apartheid regime and in their resolve to act together in unity for the destruction of the apartheid system.

As a matter of urgency, we must leave no stone unturned in our efforts to resolve conflicts that may erupt among the people. We can and must develop a powerful movement for peace among the oppressed, drawing in as many sectors of the public as possible. Through this movement and other means, we can create the national climate which would make it possible to end any conflict among the people, denying the enemy the opportunity to drive wedges among the oppressed.

In particular, the continuing ugly situation in Natal has to be addressed by all of us now and not later, and a lasting solution found. We reiterate the position of our movement that this fratricidal carnage must end. The African National Congress supports all genuine efforts aimed at resolving this conflict. We call on those members of Inkatha who still form part of the vigilante squads not to play into the hands of the Pretoria regime, the real enemy of our peo-

ple. They must refuse to do the bidding of the warlords and their masters, and do everything possible to unite with their brothers and sisters. Peace among the oppressed in Natal must be restored, and all enemy attempts to provoke conflict must be rebuffed so that our people can concentrate on the struggle to defend apartheid.

Building a Broad Front

During this past year, the forces genuinely opposed to the apartheid system made important advances with regard to the building of the broadest possible coalition for a democratic and non-racial South Africa. Despite the banning of the conference that was scheduled to meet in Cape Town last September, it is important that we continue to work on the issue of building this front, for the specific purpose of achieving the greatest possible cohesion among all who are opposed to repression and are committed to struggle for justice and peace.

The crisis of the apartheid system also results in more sections of the White community looking for a way out of this crisis by entering the struggle in various ways. We have a responsibility to reach out to these new forces of struggle, to encourage and support them and help to activise them to confront the Pretoria regime in unity with all other anti-apartheid forces.

Such events inside South Africa as the efforts within the South African Rugby Board to work for non-racial sport, the involvement of prominent establishment Afrikaners in the campaign for the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, and the meeting between representatives of the democratic movement and the White business community, all point to the significance of the move among many sections of our people to break with the apartheid regime. As the crisis of the apartheid system deepens, so will this process accelerate.

Economic Crisis

The response of the regime to the worsen-

ing economy and the general situation has been, among other things, a wage and salary freeze, deregulation, and various schemes for privatisation. These measures are beginning to erode the sheltered employment previously enjoyed by White workers. It is becoming clearer to sections of White workers, faced with growing impoverishment, that they have to stand up in the face of economic policies aimed at appeasing big business and strengthening the apartheid regime.

This has opened up some possibilities for these workers to be drawn into struggle, and, in action, to realise more clearly that their true interests lie with their Black fellow workers and the democratic trade union movement. This will necessarily require careful and painstaking work.

Working Class Movement

Compatriots, one of the greatest challenges facing us in this period is the threat facing the working class in general and the trade union movement in particular. Having put COSATU under severe restrictions, bombed its offices and detained and charged many trade unionists, the regime has enacted the Labour Relations Amendment Act, despite popular opposition. Acting in collusion with the White employers, the ruling clique is bent on destroying the democratic trade union movement and denying the workers all possibilities to act in defence of their interests.

It is imperative that the combined strength of workers is deployed to defeat this vile scheme. As in the past, let us ourselves create the conditions which will force the regime and the employers to recognise our right to organise and to act in defence of our interests. Of fundamental importance in this regard is the need for trade union unity, and organisation of the unemployed. Yet it is clear that the danger posed by the new law is one that faces all the oppressed and democratic forces. The entire democratic movement and all other anti-apartheid forces — within South Africa and internationally — should rally to the call to unite and act to defeat this reprehensible law. The employers themselves should

know that whatever they might think today, this Act will rebound against them as the battle intensifies within both the workplace and the community at large.

United Action in All Sectors

In struggle, students in the schools and universities have secured some gains in the form of the partial removal of army and police units from such institutions as the University of the North, and the release of some student leaders and activists. The perspective the democratic movement advanced a few years ago, to turn the institutions of learning into battle trenches for people's education, still stands. In consultation and joint action with the rest of the community, it is important to defeat the enemy's attempts to immobilise student structures through bannings and detentions. The effort to advance on the course we have set ourselves will be greatly strengthened by the process under way to unite teachers' organisations into a single non-racial body.

The objective of anti-apartheid united action faces all sectors of our people. In particular, democratic and anti-apartheid women's organisations have for some time now striven to set up a single national body. The urgency of this task — at both national and regional levels — cannot be over-emphasised, on this the 35th anniversary year of the founding of the Federation of South African Women.

During 1988, democratic structures of the youth suffered a serious setback with the detention of a good part of their national leadership. It is a tribute to their tenacity as Young Lions of our revolution, that the youth have continued to organise and mobilise despite the regime's vicious campaign to efface SAYCO from the political arena. While intensifying organisation and mobilisation, the youth and other sectors of the population should make it one of their primary tasks to fight for the release of the leadership and activists of SAYCO.

Intensify the Armed Struggle

Compatriots, the armed struggle is more

vital than ever before; and everything the regime has done this past year emphasises this. It is only the use of force which enables the regime to remain in power. In pursuit of this same goal, it has banned virtually all non-violent mass political activity for democratic change. All this emphasises the need for us, while defiantly continuing with the mass political struggle, to participate in and intensify the armed struggle as well. The mere need to defend the people from armed repression imposes an obligation on us to fight on, arms in hand.

We take this opportunity to salute the commanders and cadres of the people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, who have, during this past year, raised our armed offensive to higher levels of intensity. We call on the whole of our army further to step up its activities, directing its fire against the enemy which our movement has clearly defined.

We extend our greetings to all our combatants and other cadres who have been captured by the enemy, some of whom are awaiting trial, while others, like the great MK commander, Ashley Forbes, have been sentenced to imprisonment. Once more, we reiterate our demand that our armed cadres must be treated as prisoners of war.

No Middle Ground

Compatriots, every day our country gets more and more polarised into two camps. On one side are the forces that struggle for freedom and democracy in a non-racial South Africa. On the other are those that fight to maintain apartheid and racial domination. The former continues to grow in size and strength, and has established itself as the alternative power in our country. The latter continues to shrink and weaken, despite its access to enormous resources of all kinds. The process to expand and strengthen our forces while reducing and weakening those of the enemy must be encouraged.

There is no middle ground between these two South Africas. All have to choose sides. On the side of our democratic future are the millions of workers and rural people, the women and the youth, the intellec-

tuals and the students, (patriotic) traditional chiefs and business people, the religious community, cultural workers, sports people, professionals and politicians — Black and White. These together constitute the tidal wave that will surely sweep away the apartheid system and take their rightful place as the democratic power in our country.

Culture of Revolution

In this regard, the overwhelming majority of our cultural workers have increasingly begun to play a more active role in the struggle for freedom. In the process of this struggle, our people have evolved a democratic culture of liberation, a distinctly South African culture, which expresses our deepest aspirations and hopes. The current efforts to create broad non-racial governing bodies in every major sports discipline has become an important new arena of struggle.

We must strengthen and develop these democratic trends in all fields of activity as part of the general struggle to eradicate apartheid. On the other hand, we must consistently and continuously strengthen the cultural, sports and academic boycott of apartheid South Africa. The ANC urges the mass democratic movement and all other anti-apartheid forces to create viable structures and co-ordinate efforts across the board to facilitate this process.

Compatriots, in the past year, great strides were made to strengthen the base for a heightened international offensive against the apartheid system. Proceeding from this achievement, and acting together with the world solidarity movement, this year we must score new successes in the campaign to impose sanctions against racist South Africa.

World Action Sanctions Now!

It is of the greatest importance that the biggest possible campaigns should be launched in the major western countries to oblige their governments to impose further

and more meaningful economic sanctions, tighten the arms embargo and adopt other measures for the greater isolation of apartheid South Africa, as well as increase their support for the democratic forces of our country.

A more favourable climate has been created by the victories that the progressive movement has scored with the signing of the agreements concerning Angola and Namibia. The very contrast between the perspectives contained in these agreements on the one hand and the worsening situation in South Africa and the continuing aggression against the independent states of our region on the other, illustrates the urgent need for the world community to act to end the apartheid system now.

Namibia United, Non-Racial, Democratic

The plan for the independence of Namibia contains no provisions for the continued definition of its people according to racial and ethnic categories. Apartheid structures such as the bantustans have no place in the perspective that the people of Namibia have fought for, under the leadership of SWAPO. What will emerge at the end of the day is a united, democratic and non-racial country.

These developments pose a great challenge both to ourselves and the international community to achieve precisely the same result within South Africa itself, where the Pretoria regime pursues a policy that is a direct opposite to what it has agreed with regard to Namibia. The OAU, the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations, as true representatives of the peoples of the world, have a continuing responsibility to act together with us to keep up the momentum of the struggle for the final liquidation of White minority rule on our continent.

In this regard we wish to reiterate our call to Africa and the rest of the world not to allow the criminal apartheid regime to break out of its isolation. The fact of the treaty concerning Namibia and Angola does not change the reality that a crime against

humanity continues to be perpetrated within the borders of our country and in the countries of our region.

Freedom Fighters of the World

The Front Line States of Southern Africa have, at a very high cost, heroically resisted the wanton acts of aggression and destabilisation perpetrated by the apartheid regime. On behalf of our people, we salute them for their invaluable support. Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, together with the rest of the states of Southern Africa, require the support of the international community, for the war will not be won and peace in our region will not reign until South Africa is transformed into a democratic country.

The African National Congress takes this opportunity to salute the people of Palestine under the leadership of the PLO, whose struggles and enormous sacrifices have opened up vast opportunities for the victory of their cause. The decision of the Palestinian National Council to proclaim the independent state of Palestine constitutes an important contribution to the establishment of a just and durable peace in the Middle East. On behalf of the struggling masses of our country, the ANC hereby reaffirms its recognition of the independent state of Palestine. We express our full support for the initiative to convene an international conference, with the full participation of the PLO, to find a just solution to the conflict in that region.

On the very first day of this year the people of Cuba celebrated the 30th anniversary of their revolution — one of the most decisive events of this century. The ANC once more warmly congratulates the Communist Party, the government and the people of Cuba on this historic occasion. The bonds of solidarity and friendship between the peoples of this great internationalist island and our region are cemented in blood, and no force on earth can reverse this reality. We hail the Cuban people and wish them ever greater victories in their efforts to strengthen and advance their socialist society.

We also express our solidarity with the peoples of the Saharaoui Arab Democratic

Republic, under the leadership of the Polisario Front, and urge the speediest resolution of the conflict in the area, in accordance with the initiatives of the OAU and the UN. The struggles for peace and the betterment of life waged elsewhere on our globe are our struggles and we shall ourselves contribute what we can to ensure happiness and prosperity for all humanity.

The extraordinary catastrophe that has befallen the Soviet people as a result of the earthquake in Armenia is a matter that continues to cause great pain to ourselves and all those throughout the world who value life. We reiterate our condolences to the fraternal people of the Soviet Union, as well as the families of the deceased and the injured, and are confident that this great country will soon recover from the ravages brought about by this enormous calamity.

The Challenge Ahead

Compatriots, the period ahead poses many great challenges to all of us — singly and collectively — precisely because it contains within it the seeds for major advances. This issue of a new political order has been placed on the agenda. This reality constitutes a tribute to the historic struggles we have waged throughout the Decade of Liberation. It indicates the extent to which we have succeeded in shifting the balance of forces in our favour.

We must take advantage of this situation and intensify our offensive for people's power. As we observe the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the epoch-making 1949 Programme of Action, let the spirit of defiance characterise our mass actions for the transfer of power to the people.

Accordingly, the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress declares 1989 the **Year of Mass Action for People's Power**. Let this last year of the decade be marked by unprecedented mass action for an end to the apartheid system, for the creation of a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

Forward to mass action for people's power!

Victory is certain!

Amandla! Matla!

ANC STATEMENT

HEROES' DAY 1988



Once again, December 16th, South African Heroes' Day, is upon us. We take this occasion to salute our heroic combatants of Umkhonto We Sizwe who this year more than ever before have shown their willingness to engage the racist enemy armed forces wherever they are to be found.

Many have paid the supreme sacrifice, giving their lives to defend our just people's cause. Others are today standing trial, or have been sentenced to death or long terms of imprisonment by judges and a judicial system which upholds the illegitimate and criminal system of White minority rule. To those who have fallen we dip our banner, and assure them that their blood has not been spilt in vain. To those on trial,

on death row or in prison we say, "Be strong and steadfast. The people stand by you. You are our symbols of hope."

1988 has been a momentous year for our struggle. On every front we have inflicted such serious blows upon the racist minority regime that it is reeling under the impact of a steadfast and ever more united people. Every initiative it has taken has been turned into a battleground where the people have engaged it in mortal battle, and, together with the Angolan people's army, FAPLA, the heroic Cuban internationalist fighting forces and the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), have transformed Pretoria's aggressive adventure of Angola into a quagmire of defeat at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale.

During these battles, units of MK were charged with defending the north from an American-backed UNITA offensive. Defending Angola with their lives, the combined fighting popular forces of liberation, democracy and peace in Southern Africa scored a major victory — the retreat of racist South African Defence Forces from Angola, and the negotiated independence of Namibia.

For the first time since their hard-won independence in 1975, the people of Angola can begin to tackle the urgent challenges of development in peace. For the first time this century, the Namibian people under the leadership of SWAPO face a real prospect of shedding the shackles of colonialism and acquiring the liberating mantle of independence which they have fought untiringly for.

Our people, still choked by the chains of a special form of colonialism, have brooked no quarter from the enemy. The municipal elections of October 26th, where the regime unleashed an eight-month, multi-pronged offensive against the people's organisation, became a proving ground of the resilience and fortitude of the national liberation movement. The regime adopted a military-political operation of unprecedented dimensions to ensure Black co-option into apartheid state structures, and failed.

These elections took place in conditions of more than three years of an almost unbroken state of emergency; the detention, arrest, banning and forcing into exile or underground of anti-apartheid activists in every township across the country; the banning of national, regional and local people's organisations and the bombing and murder of mass democratic organisations and anti-apartheid activists. However, neither threats nor promises could assure the minority regime of enough candidates to fill the 1 850 posts in African-designated local authorities. Force, bribery and corruption could not bring millions of Black urban residents to register to vote, and after an unprecedented 13 polling days, during which the largest security operation in re-

cent times was mounted by the state, fewer than 10% of the adult African population bothered to vote. Responding to the call by the national liberation movement not to vote, the people stood firm, undaunted in their demand for universal adult suffrage in a unitary, non-racial South Africa.

The pitch of this battle was significantly raised by the actions of combatants of Umkhonto We Sizwe. As the election period approached, so the number of armed encounters with the enemy increased. In September alone, the regime acknowledged that it was engaged by our fighting units on at least 46 occasions. In total, this past year has seen more armed action by our people's army than ever before.

The significance of the regime's defeat at the municipal elections is in many respects as great as the defeat that has been inflicted upon it in Angola. In trying to destroy the national liberation movement and the people's desire for real freedom, real democracy and real peace, it has succeeded in proving the strength and capacity of the people's organisations. It is in serious difficulties, as its solutions to our country's problems are resoundingly rejected by the majority of South Africans — the democratic majority.

Even within the White laager, there is growing uncertainty and disunity. It has no road forward for Whites or Blacks. It can only resort to more repression and more force against the people. At the same time, the national liberation movement is gaining ground every day.

We have a solution to South Africa's problems, a solution which accommodates all democratic and peace-loving South Africans. That does not mean there is room for complacency, that we can rest for a minute. The challenge is before us, we must step up our organisational capacity to shift the balance of forces fundamentally in our favour. We must intensify the struggle on every front, leaving no stone unturned, to transform our people into a revolutionary army which will be able to defend and guarantee people's power in a liberated South Africa.

**Long Live Umkhonto We Sizwe! Victory or Death — We Shall Win!
Mayihlome!**

ANC National Executive Committee, December 16th 1988

THE THRESHOLD OF FREEDOM

1988, the year of the 25th anniversary of the Organisation for African Unity, was a year of dramatic changes in Southern Africa. The racists had to withdraw from Angola, having been defeated by the people of Angola, the Cuban internationalist forces, and by PLAN, the military wing of SWAPO. Now they are forced to grant Namibia its independence, and, after more than a hundred years of foreign occupation, the Namibian people will once again breathe the air of freedom.

A leopard cannot change its spots. On the threshold of Namibian independence, we must still be vigilant. We must intensify the struggle so as to liberate South Africa, the last colony on the African continent. We call on the peoples of the world to apply sanctions, to assist the ANC and to support the endeavours of SWAPO in its new tasks of consolidating independence, bringing about economic recovery and building a new nation in Namibia.



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SWAPO STATEMENT

THE BRAZZAVILLE AGREEMENT

SWAPO welcomes the signing of the peace agreement signed yesterday by Angola, Cuba and South Africa in Brazzaville. The agreement sets April 1st 1989 as the D-day for the implementation of Resolution 435, November 1st as election day, and the signing of a comprehensive agreement in New York on December 22nd 1988.

We are happy that, after a protracted and bloody struggle during which thousands of Namibians died, our people will at long last be able to exercise their long-denied right to self-determination and independence in the coming year.

SWAPO commends Angola and Cuba for their decisive military actions to create favourable conditions for the negotiations, their steadfastness as to principles, and flexibility regarding tactics throughout the long-drawn-out negotiations. These created the appropriate conditions for the agreement to be reached.

SWAPO is ready to proceed with the implementation of Resolution 435 on April 1st 1989, and to play its leading role in Namibia's transition to independence in the new year.

SWAPO does not, however, underestimate the difficulties that Pretoria is like-

ly to try to create between now and April 1st 1989, as well as during the transitional period leading up to the elections on November 1st 1989. Already, South Africa is using its troops and local auxiliary units in a massive electoral campaign against SWAPO and in favour of Pretoria's Namibian collaborators. The South African army is being supplied with millions of rands to organise scores of barbecue parties, where free food and drinks are provided in the same proportion to anti-SWAPO propaganda. The occupation army and its auxiliary units are, that is to say, now busy playing a different function. While these election campaign activities go on, South Africa is still arresting and detaining SWAPO political activists. In so doing, Pretoria obviously is violating the principle of impartiality which South Africa has been insisting that the United Nations — the co-administrator with South Africa of the implementation of 435 — must observe vis-à-vis SWAPO.

SWAPO is confident that, notwithstanding the many obstacles that Pretoria will certainly try to create, the movement will win the November 1st 1989 elections, and lead the country to independence.

SWAPO Department of Information and Publicity, Luanda, Angola
December 14th 1988

ANC INTERNATIONAL

Netherlands Conference

The anti-apartheid action and protest for peace that takes place in the Netherlands should be seen in the context of history, for the country was occupied by the Nazis during World War II, and the Dutch people put up a heroic resistance. It is a small country with a population of 14 million, yet today there are many anti-apartheid demonstrations, from anger against aggression in the Front Line States to anti-Shell campaigns.

On December 11th 1988, a hearing on abductions from the Front Line States took place in Amsterdam before a panel of eminent lawyers and jurists. The focus was mainly on Comrade Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim, long-standing cadre of the ANC and leader of Umkhonto We Sizwe, who had previously spent 15 years on Robben Island when he was kidnapped from Swaziland in December 1986, held in detention, and brought before a court in the Transvaal. In 1988, together with Simon Dladla and Acton Mandla Maseko, he was convicted of 'treason' and 'terrorism' and was sentenced to 20 years in January 1989.

The kidnappings of Corinnne Bishoff, Grace Cele, Shadrack Maphumulo, Joe Pillay and Daniel Schneider were also considered at the hearing; all these were illegally and forcibly taken over the border into South Africa by agents of the Pretoria regime.

The panel said it appreciated the historical importance of the hearing, and referred to "the criminal and illegitimate character of the South African regime, the essential subversion of basic human rights and humanitarian principles in its criminal law and procedure and indeed in the

essence of its judicial system." The panel made a statement saying:

- That individual victims of these acts of kidnapping should not be subject to the South African courts; that they are entitled to reparations; that victims such as Ebrahim should be returned to the state of asylum.
- That the international community should condemn these kidnappings, by imposing comprehensive and mandatory sanctions and ratifying the Geneva Protocols which extend prisoner of war status to liberation movements, such as the ANC, and their combatants.
- That there be established an international penal tribunal for the suppression and punishment of the crime of apartheid.
- That a convention on international kidnapping be adopted as soon as possible.

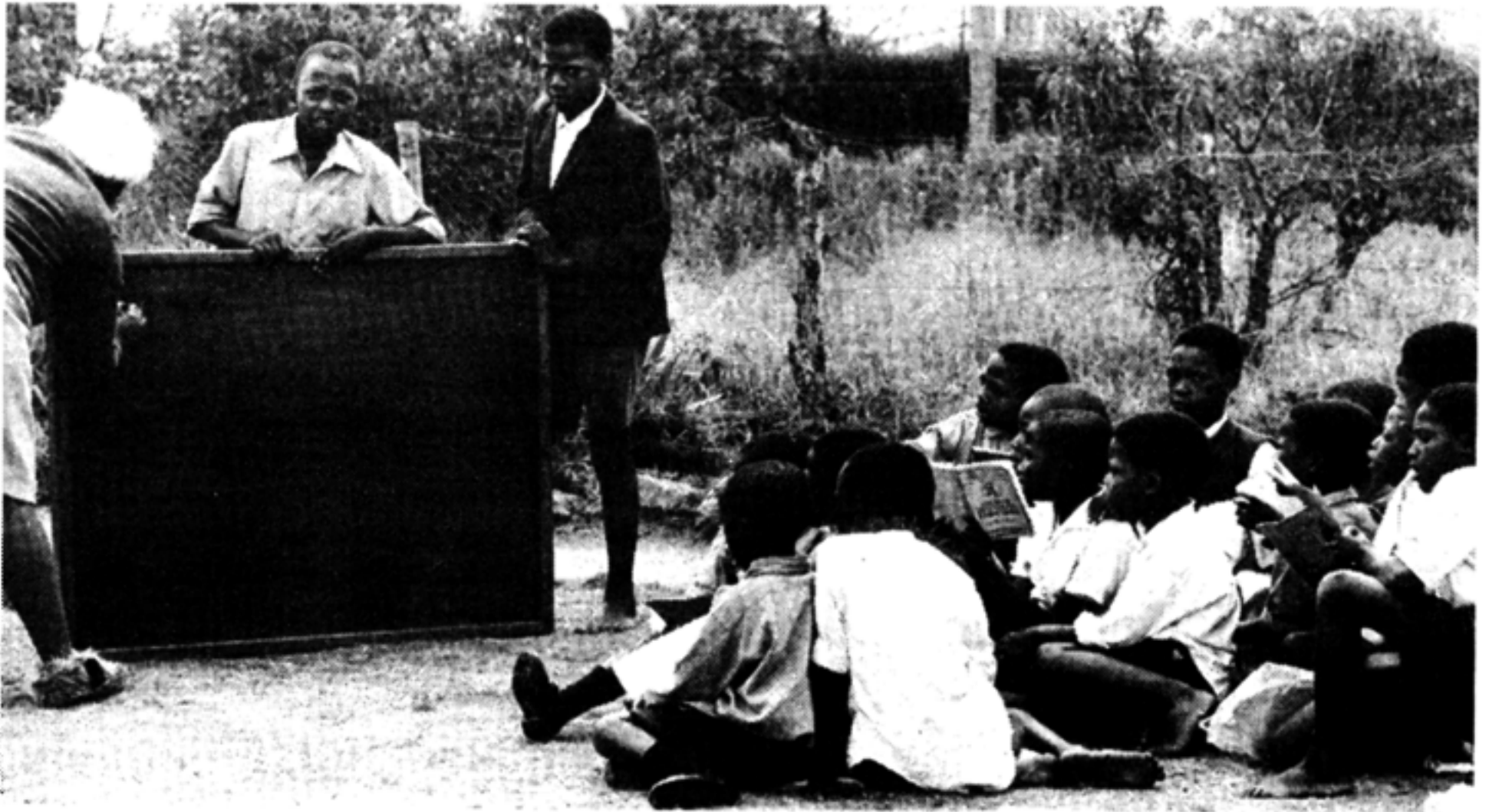
The hearing was organised by the Anti-Apartheid Movement of the Netherlands. It was chaired by Gaye McDougall, director of the Southern Africa section of the Washington-based Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights under Law. Other members were: Reg Austin, professor of international law at the University of Harare, Professor Kader Asmal of the University of Dublin and the Dutch historian, Dr Karel Roskam.

Soviet Statement

A statement on South African political prisoners issued late in 1988 by the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee in the USSR also condemned the kidnapping of Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim, and what it called the "continuing lawlessness" of the South African regime.

CONTRADICTIONS IN BANTU EDUCATION

By Elaine Unterhalter



The intense education struggle over the past 12 years has been a striking component of the mass struggle for liberation in South Africa.

The existence of the education struggle within the mass resistance to apartheid raises a number of questions, two of which I would like to look at in some detail.

First: apartheid education is an education system designed to instil divisions among the people, and inferiority among the mass of Black South Africans, by whatever index we use — exam pass rates, financing, availability of books and facilities, qualifications of teachers. Why has it failed to create the conditions of political compliance and perpetual servitude? In other words, why has bantu education failed the regime as an instrument of oppression?

The second question concerns the current situation. Is education at present continuing to be an area of mass resistance,

and will it continue so in the future?

To try to answer the first question, some qualifications need to be made. The failures of bantu education, as far as the regime is concerned, must be placed in the context of its successes.

It provided gutter education to the mass of the people, and made it extremely difficult, well-nigh impossible, to get out of the gutter of mass illiteracy and low-paid employment. It provided the regime with a huge pool of unskilled and semi-skilled Black labour, and a very small Black professional and managerial class, thus enabling the costs of production to be kept extremely low. Bantu education was primarily situated in the bantustans, providing an important infrastructure necessary to estab-

lish the bantustans as structures of political control for the regime. Because of the presence of a considerable number of educational institutions in the bantustans, it was easier for the regime to accomplish the segregation and division of the population into bantustan citizens.

Apartheid tells lies about the history of South Africa. The racism of apartheid, and its authoritarian ideas about education, became deeply embedded, ideologically and institutionally.

Another success of apartheid education was that many teachers became apologists for the regime and the system. This was generally because, as relatively better-paid workers who received state help in financing their housing, they were economically detached from the hardships of the masses. Moreover, as they were state employees with rigid contracts and tight supervision of their career structure, it was particularly difficult for them to engage in political opposition.

Successes Become Problems

But these successes themselves were contradictory. The largely unskilled or semi-skilled work force became a problem for the regime when the nature of the ruling bloc changed. Significant sectors of the National Party began to support the view of monopoly capitalism, that economic growth, and mechanisation predicated on that growth, were the appropriate strategy for preserving what they called 'political stability,' that is, the perpetuation of White domination. In order to bring about economic growth and mechanisation, there was a need for a more skilled, literate and better educated work force, and a larger Black consumer market made up of better-paid Black workers.

When the regime came to change its view on the mobility of labour, and when it wanted a skilled labour force accessible to all the industrial areas of the country, it faced a second problem: the way it had used education as an instrument to force the population into the bantustans.

A third problem for the regime occurred as economic growth failed to materialise at the rate required. With economic dif-

ficulties manifest, the regime came to see its survival, and the maintenance of what it termed political stability, as dependent on the creation of a Black middle class 'with a stake in the system.' The problem was that apartheid education meant that there was still only a small, underpaid, Black middle class that lacked political rights and to which the regime was prepared to concede only limited economic rights, and no political rights.

'Reforms' in Education

The failures of bantu education as an instrument of political control stem partly from these contradictions and partly from the steps the regime took to remedy some of what were, in its view, the shortcomings of bantu education. The moves towards reform created further difficulties for the regime.

One aspect of the change in policy was that educational provision expanded. The regime increased secondary and tertiary enrolments in the period from 1970-1985. Secondary enrolments in bantu education schools increased from 318 500 in 1975 to 1 192 900 in 1985. In the period 1970-74, 13.6% of African pupils in Standard Six reached Standard Ten, compared with 43.18% in 1982-86. In 1975, there were 9 181 African university students; in 1985 there were 49 164. (For more detailed statistics, see *Bantu Education as a Reformist Strategy of the South African State*, RESA Paper No 2.)

This increase in enrolments was fraught with political difficulties for the regime, as the education of working class children under conditions of national oppression did not co-opt those children into supporting the regime, but instead created conditions for the development of intensified opposition to it. Moreover, the organisations of student opposition that developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s linked up with the revived Black trade union movement and the rebirth of community organisations in the same period. A growing ideology of opposition and a matrix of organisations began to develop, which directed student political organisations to

concentrate primarily on the question of national oppression.

The attempt to modernise the syllabus, and to make it more efficient in contributing to economic growth, led to the technocratic concern of reformers (like those whose views were expressed in the De Lange Commission of 1980) with an education that fitted in neatly with the demands of international capital. This view of the content of education was quite at odds with the development of oppositional ideas within the trade unions, the community organisations, the student movement and the units of the ANC underground. The mismatch between the new ideas about curriculum and the aspirations of the mass democratic movement contributed to the development of demands for a wholly new kind of education, people's education in the service of national liberation, an education for people's power. These demands were crystallised in the resolutions on people's education at the NECC conferences of 1985-86.

Reminders of Oppression

While many of the failures of bantu education as an instrument of oppression were inherent in its early successes, the seeds of failure lay within the very notion of a segregated education system. Residential areas in South Africa were segregated; segregated schools and universities replicated, in the poverty or wealth of their facilities, the degrees of oppression of the population. This meant there was no way Black children at school or students at university could fail to be reminded of the conditions of national oppression, the poverty and struggle of their parents and community. These facts were made sharply and painfully apparent to them every day. With this awareness, it was no accident that the student movement easily and naturally made contact, and worked, with the other organisations of the mass democratic movement.

Secondly, the regime itself, from the 1950s on, propounded the doctrine of separate development, of which the growing Department of Bantu Education was one manifestation. To protect and advance

separate development, it was necessary to allow some space for the Black population to develop separately, with institutions having a limited degree of what was termed community control. Within this space, the education system became a relatively protected sphere, where, given the severe repression of the 1960s, ideas and organisations of opposition could continue to flourish.

It appears to me that it was the failure of bantu education as an instrument of repression that led to the very severe attack by the regime on the educational organisations of opposition. In the period from 1984 to the present, students, schools, universities and educational organisations have been attacked by detentions, bannings of organisations, murder of leaders, outlawing of activities, the presence of the military in schools and on campuses. Many of the terms of the emergency regulations apply specifically to control on schools.

This leads to the second question I posed. Do the problems for the regime in using bantu education as an instrument of coercion still exist? Put another way, will the education struggle continue to progress despite the present repression?

Black Education Expands

What are the conditions of the regime at present? To mention a few — the downturn of the economy is long-term and structural. South Africa is heavily indebted to foreign banks, sanctions are causing a drastic reduction in foreign investment, and high interest rates in many countries mean falling gold prices. The regime and its supporters now accept that economic growth cannot occur, and cannot be the engine of 'political stability,' but they continue to hope that the creation of a Black middle class with an economic stake in the continuation of the present system will form a brake on demands for political change. This means that there is a continued commitment to the expansion of Black education, believed to be the most important instrument for the creation of that class.

However, the regime faces a considerable fiscal crisis, because of the heavy cost

of the war, both beyond the borders of the country and within them, against the South African people, and because of the falling rate of wages, which means a smaller revenue base. These shortfalls have to be reconciled with the growth of the largely state-financed service sector, the sector that has to expand if a Black middle class is to be kept in employment. Because of its fiscal crisis, the regime is trying to shift to the private sector the costs of many social services, of which education is one.

A third problem for the regime is that, despite the unprecedented level of repression in the country, it has been unable to extinguish the opposition forces of the mass democratic movement, the trade unions and the ANC underground. Partly this is because of the desire of the regime to retain some degree of international credibility in a period when there is concern among all the major powers to see some form of end to apartheid. Partly it is because the organisations of opposition have become deeply embedded in local communities, both ideologically and organisationally, and even the detention of leaders and the banning of certain organisations is unable to dislodge this mobilisation.

Strategy of the Regime

Given these conditions of the regime, what is its strategy in education? It appears to be attempting to divide and co-opt teachers even more extensively than before. Teachers known for their commitment to the mass democratic movement have been suspended or detained; other teachers have generous pensions to look forward to, assistance with buying the leases on their houses, and equal pay with White teachers according to qualification.

The regime is trying to divide schools. Some schools in Soweto and Tembisa, known for their radical student population, have been closed down in recent weeks.

The regime is also trying to shift the costs of education to big business, encouraging the growth of private schools, many overtly non-racial but clearly elitist, in luxurious buildings and attractive surroundings.

Lastly, the regime is trying to co-opt the

concept of people's education, trying to use elements of Black history and popular culture in its school syllabuses in an attempt to rob the concept of its radical trajectory, and uncouple it from the concept of people's power. In many of the new non-racial private schools, there is a similar concern with using more popularly acceptable curricula.

Liberation of Education

All these policies have inherent dangers for the regime, and may backfire, but their success or failure depends crucially on the condition of the forces in opposition. On an assessment of the limited material available from the press, it appears there are some problems within the education organisations of the opposition. While demonstrations and school boycotts continue, and underground organisations are clearly managing to survive, these struggles appear more fragmented than before, less able to survive on a national basis.

While there are important initiatives in building up people's education in institutions like UWC, the mass-based structures of the NECC had hardly any time to establish themselves before the organisation was banned, and they still exist on a very precarious basis. It appears there is a lack of national strategy in the education struggle, partly because the leadership continues in detention, and the organisations now banned are still struggling to re-establish themselves. Moreover, while important initiatives have been taken by the trade union movement in developing worker education, this seems to be running at a tangent to the work of the educational organisations, and important collaborative work does not seem to be taking place on a large scale.

Thus, while conditions within the ruling bloc mean that fruitful ground for struggle continues to exist, there is a great need for the ANC and the mass democratic movement to formulate a creative strategy that can exploit the weaknesses and contradictions in the position of the regime, and advance the struggle for people's education for people's power.

TODAY'S GENERATION THE UDF TREASON TRIALISTS

By N Mosikare

The Pretoria regime tells the world that it is reforming. It has released Harry Gwala and Zeph Mothopeng; it 'released' Govan Mbeki, only to place him under restrictions, and has transferred Nelson Mandela from prison to the isolation of a prison house. At the same time, it has gaoled four of the leaders of today — those whom its courts found guilty in the UDF treason trial. This fact further exposes the worthlessness of the claims at 'reform.'

"We are the generation spawned by Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo. No price that we are called upon to pay can be above the value of our freedom."

Patrick 'Terror' Lekota, formerly national publicity secretary of the United Democratic Front, spoke these words in court, as the prosecution began to summarise its argument.

The apartheid regime argued that Lekota, his comrades of the UDF, and 15 of their 16 co-accused were responsible for bringing South Africa to a state of insurrection, under the auspices of the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party.

The court found four of the accused guilty of treason — Lekota, aged 40; Popo Molefe, 36, formerly general secretary of the UDF; Moss Chikane, 40, formerly Transvaal secretary; and Soweto church worker, Tom Manthata, 48. It found that seven co-accused had committed acts of 'terrorism.' Long before this verdict, though, the Delmas trialists had been prepared for their dynamic role in the struggle, one that might lead them even unto death.

Lekota, Molefe and Chikane had been in prison for three and a half years by the time they were convicted and sentenced to 12 more years away from their families and

their organisations. Even when the death penalty still seemed appealing to the Broederbond judge, Van Dijkhorst, and his Broederbond assessor, Krugel, the defendants showed only strength, dignity, compassion and wit.

Lekota seemed to regard appearances in the dock as simply a different way of doing his job. He continued to reassure everyone outside, spread the word about the irresistible nature of the struggle, and worried about where momentum was lacking. His message to the world was:

"We carry no regrets nor bitterness for those who choose to be the obstacles on our path to liberty."

Of course, if truth or justice or greatness of spirit retained any currency under apartheid, the Delmas trialists, the 911 others named as co-conspirators, and the Rivonia trialists, who sat in the same courtroom in the Palace of Justice in Pretoria in 1964, would have had no occasion to oppose the regime. However, the extreme prejudice of the judge, who saw the UDF Three and all who associated with them as personal enemies, was an extra burden.

Biased Bench

"This is a very terrible judge; the man real-

ly hates us," Jerry Thlopane, a Sebokeng activist the state could find no evidence against, said during the trial. Thlopane's expected acquittal could scarcely raise his spirits, while he watched a bungling prosecution suggest that the efforts of the UDF and the Vaal Civic Association and other bodies to mobilise township residents against unfair rent increases and poverty was part of a Communist-inspired plot to reduce South Africa to chaos. The state held that the campaign 'People's Education for People's Power' was not a programme to enable Black people to acquire educational skills to equip them to contribute in a free South Africa, but was rather a recipe for violent revolution.

No violence could be proved on the part of the accused, and the judge in the Moses Mayekiso trial had just ruled violence a precondition of a conviction for high treason. That didn't deter Van Dijkhorst, even after the prosecution had finished summing up. He frequently interrupted defence counsel summing up for the defence, to make points or ask questions the prosecution had forgotten or ignored.

All those on trial sustained the tribulations they faced in or out of court with courage and goodwill. The 16 on bail had been forced to live away from home, travel to Pretoria every day the court was in session, report to the police twice a day on other occasions and restrict their activities to those approved by Van Dijkhorst.

For most, this meant separation from their families, no chance of a job, and financial reliance on Dependents' Conference and well-wishers — a hard transition for those used to leading and supporting others. But the trial has opened up other possibilities — several trialists are studying law with the University of South Africa as a direct result of the need to unravel the legal complexities of the case. In terms of documentation, this was the longest trial in South African history — 25 000 pages of documents and 14 000 exhibits were presented. Defence counsel had to work twice as hard as would have been necessary if there had been a jury and an honest prosecution. However, counsel like George Bizos are used to this — his background is the treason trial of the 1950s, and the Rivonia trial, among others.

"He is an important part of our history," says Lekota.

Ban the Regime

The defence gave the judge a few headaches and the defendants some cause to smile. For instance, on the question of furthering the aims of the ANC, Arthur Chaskalson pointed out that sharing the attitudes of another body was not the same as sharing its objects; if it was, then similarities between the Conservative Party and the "hypothetical" ultra-right-wing paramilitary group that likes to dress up in neo-Nazi uniform and bomb non-racial restaurants would mean that the banning of one should dictate the banning of the other. Van Dijkhorst buried his face in his hands as Chaskalson said that, if the judge wanted to apply the logic of similar attitudes, the desire for racial segregation put the Nationalist government in the same camp as the neo-Nazis, and it must also be banned.

The judge had presided over a trial that had lasted more than three and a half years, and yet he set a deadline on oral defence argument. Prejudice and injustice aside, this was what most distressed the accused. When Terror Lekota heard the judge rule that the defence of 19 people must be summarised in 15½ days, he said, "We are not at all happy about this ... we shall lose the persuasion element which is such an integral part of the debate."

Political Verdict

The accused devoted much time to analysing the external political factors which would influence the outcome of the trial. They noted drily that the judge had "lost no opportunity to remind us of his eagerness to take his seven months' leave," but objectively assessed all other reasons for a hurried end to the trial — the impact of the municipal elections, the need to give signs to the South African and international communities that the regime was in control but was reforming.

Lekota managed to keep sight of the extreme possibilities of the conviction and ex-

ecution of the UDF leaders, or their release to win 'goodwill.' Whatever the outcome, the Delmas 19 had prepared themselves for it, and the UDF Three typified the group's concern for all but themselves.

"It would be good for our families and our organisations if we could be released. But that is no longer our immediate concern. Our determination is to see our people take part in the government of our country. It is irrelevant whether we are in or out, we shall just keep relentlessly pushing for victory. There can now be no interest, task or obligation which can or will be allowed to supersede this one goal."

While Lekota, Molefe and Chikane showed themselves ready to sacrifice, they did not want martyrdom, seeing their removal from their communities as a waste for everyone. In a letter written towards the end of the trial, they said:

"It brings us little comfort to go on sitting here all the time. We are losing golden opportunities to help advance the struggle ... When this witch-hunt has passed, we shall re-start like turbo-charged engines."

The sentences were declared in the media to be 'lenient,' much lower than expected, as if one should be grateful for liberal thinking and an 'independent' judiciary. The kind of thinking that asserts 'it could have been worse' obscured realisation of the completeness of this travesty of justice; in between the 11 individuals deprived of their liberty and the millions of South Africans deprived of their rightful leaders are the hundreds of people whose lives have been swallowed into this trial.

There are the families of the convicted — Popo Molefe's wife gave birth to their daughter just a month before his arrest, yet the family has hardly seen each other. Moss Chikane's wife and Cynthia Lekota both had children after their husbands were charged. Cynthia maintained her teaching job and her family in Durban, using all her leave days to visit her husband. She is a resourceful woman but she is tired.

There are the attorneys, their assistants and their families, who have eaten, drunk and slept of Delmas these past years. "Don't ask me what's happening in South

Africa," said one attorney. "All I know about is this trial." (In a sense it's the same thing.) One young woman immersed herself in the case at the expense of the variety of legal experience vital to her law exams. And of course there are the activists who keep the organisations going.

Human Energy Wasted

At the trial, it was this paralysis of human resources that could otherwise be building a free South Africa which seemed so tragic. No one gave up or was destroyed. Most made medicine out of poison — whether it was Simon Nkoli winning half-marathon medals while out on bail, or Jacob Hlanyane feeding the Pretoria pigeons with the leftovers of the trialists' Black Sash lunches, or Jerry Thlopane using his free evenings to collect details of street children in Johannesburg, or all the bailed trialists taking on their legal team in football matches

It is a tragedy that so much energy is forced out of the struggle, yet it is a victory that cannot be destroyed. Terror Lekota said at the end of the trial that the prosecution simply couldn't understand the depth of the 'Delmas type' of commitment. Perhaps that is why he is still able to look at reconciliation with Afrikanerdom, to try to remove the ignorance of the oppressors.

After the injustices of this trial, such absence of malice, such concern as the trialists showed for their own righteousness in the face of bigotry and bias, is rare. Before the verdict was delivered, one of the attorneys confided:

"There should be another Nuremburg when this is all over. And I would like to be on the prosecution team, calling for the death penalty. For the people who preside over this evil system deserve to hang."

So 1989 has begun, with another 11 South Africans gaoled for their efforts to bring peaceful change. And the apartheid regime has begun another year apparently ignorant that it is cutting off every hand that could bring such change about. But, as another attorney said wearily as he left the court after the summing up: "They learn nothing; they forget nothing."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

THE SEIZURE OF POWER

The Editor
Sechaba

Dear Comrade Editor

What has the Botha regime to show except puppets and collaborators wrestling among themselves for power and loot? In the most recent nation-wide municipality elections, Umkhonto We Sizwe, our people's army, demonstrated that it is well and alive; our people boycotted the elections, once more sending a message to the regime that nothing short of people's power will satisfy them.

This is the time for the liberation movement to consolidate its political superiority, and creatively lead our people in a new era of heightened armed struggle towards the cherished goal of our revolution, the seizure of political power in South Africa. Our position on armed struggle and talks is clear, and whether we enter Pretoria with tanks, mortars and bazookas, or whether it is done via a negotiated settlement, the option is left to the enemy to decide.

While continuing to isolate the regime at home and abroad, calling for increased international pressure, sharpening our ideological weapons and equipping ourselves with the skills for waging an underground struggle, the liberation movement must gather the total of its forces for war.

■ There must be enthusiastic discussion at all levels of the liberation movement at home and abroad, on the revolutionary army and escalating the people's war for the seizure of power. This discussion must be characterised by openness and frankness concerning the expectations, responsibilities and tasks of the liberation movement at home and in exile. Differences, misconceptions and problems must be sorted out.

■ The arming of the liberation forces inside the country is long overdue. They must be capable of defending their ad-

vances and their superior political positions against the murder squads, tribal impis, vigilantes and kitskonstabels of the regime. The enemy has exploited this weakness for too long.

■ The South African working class must take its leading role in our armed struggle. It has demonstrated its revolutionary potential, and its willingness to engage the enemy at whatever cost. A significant proportion of our people's revolutionary army has to be based in the factories, hostels, and townships, where the history-makers of our country live and work.

■ Farm workers should be drawn in. The rural areas must also constitute revolutionary zones, so that the enemy forces can be stretched between the urban and rural revolutionary bases.

■ The propaganda organs of the liberation movement should be co-ordinated, to give concrete and creative guidance, with data, strategies and slogans. Organs of the movement must share information without undermining security, keeping our cadres, both at home and in exile, well informed.

■ The wrath of our people's war must be directed at the personnel of the enemy. Collaborators, puppets, informers and enemy personnel must not be spared the wrath of the people. Let them pay dearly for the blood of our combatants and patriots on death row.

■ The skills of underground cadres should be strengthened. They must be able to address a meeting, lead a demonstration, raise our revolutionary banners, attack known collaborators in the daytime.

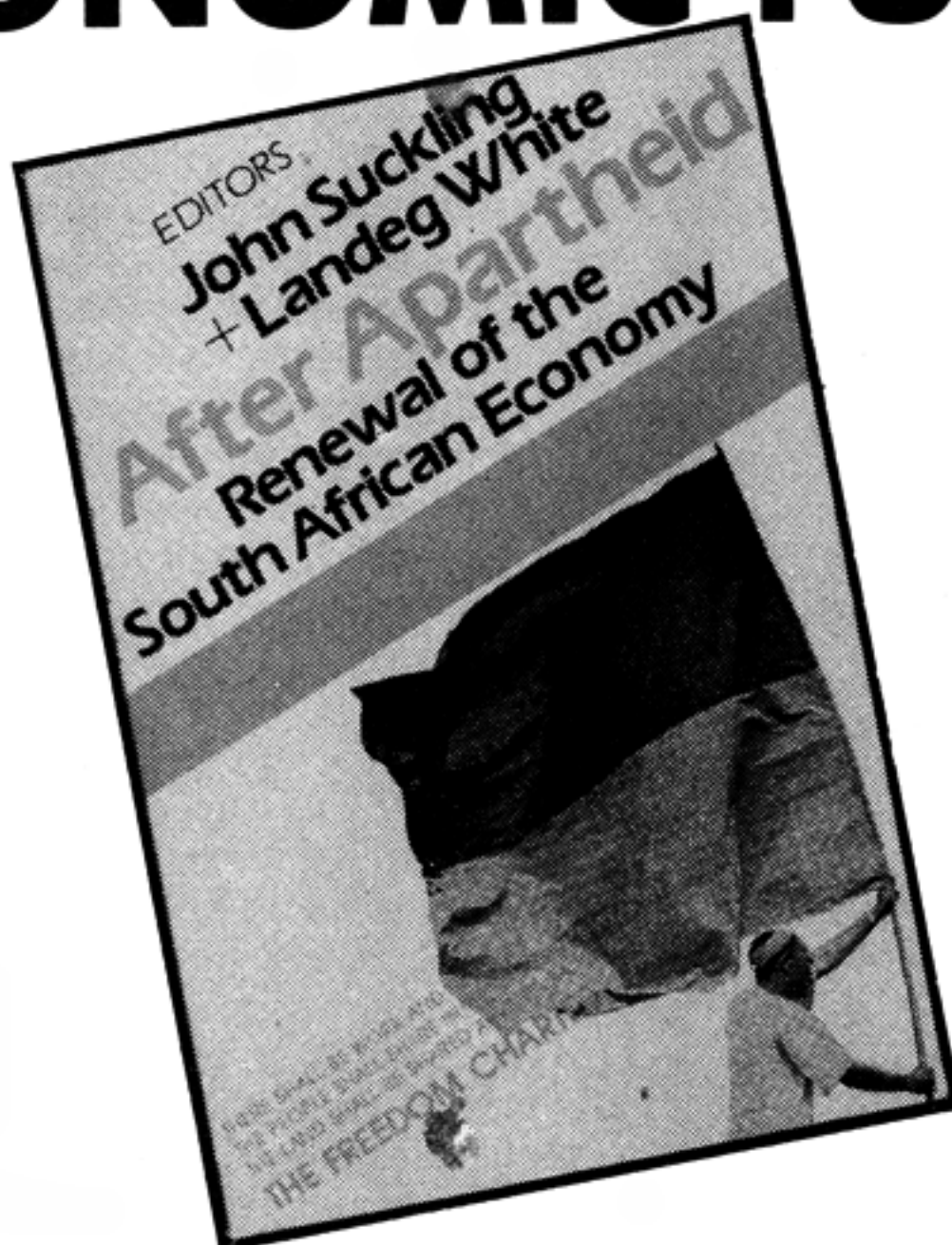
■ Planning and strategy must be outlined, so that all sectors can be clear about their tasks and responsibilities. Lagging sectors should stand out clearly, so that attention can be directed towards finding solutions.

Yours in the struggle
Pascal Vivani

Harare

REVIEW ARTICLES

ECONOMIC FUTURE



John Suckling and Landeg White (Ed), *After Apartheid: Renewal of the South African Economy* James Currey, London, 1988, £8.95.

The wide range of articles here seeks to emphatically place on the agenda of the liberation movement the issue of a post-apartheid economy in South Africa. The contributors have focused on a broad spectrum of issues covering land distribution, agricultural policies, the position of African women in the economy, the socialist alternative, the economic clauses of the Freedom Charter, and so on. The articles also draw lessons from the experience of countries in Latin America and in Southern Africa, thus enabling the authors to arrive at an informed conclusion in their analysis of the South African economy.

The first part of the book examines aspects of the current economic crisis in South Africa, the response of the regime and the measures it has adopted in an at-

tempt to rescue the economy. The articles also demonstrate how structural changes have exacerbated the crisis.

The book shows how government subsidies to farmers led to increased mechanisation, and thus displacement of thousands of workers; it also reflects on the state of resistance within the rural areas. For instance in Transkei, people in some villages have started self-help projects in defiance of the Bantustan authorities.

The introduction indicates what the editors consider a fundamental economic problem which a post-apartheid government will face, namely that popular demands on that government will exceed the resources available to it. It states:

"In making immediate decisions under extreme pressure to alleviate equally immediate needs, the (post-apartheid) Government will be setting precedents and establishing institutions perhaps contradictory to its long-term aims." (p.x)

This view seems to be influenced by experiences from the failure of the different economic strategies adopted by the nationalist movements in post-independent Central American and Southern African countries, where, as the editors put it, hard political decisions often had to be made which popularly elected politicians would rather avoid.

Terence Moll contrasts monetarist arguments with structuralist strategies in Latin America. The monetarists, he says, argue that lack of monetary restraint and, in particular, government budget deficits often financed by foreign loans or printing new money, led directly to inflation and balance of payments deficits which served to prevent economic development. Hence the assertion that strict control over the money supply, domestic credit and government expenditure would best control inflation. On the other hand, it is argued that devaluation, lower real wages and fewer controls would improve the structure of relative prices and balance of payment.

Underlying this argument is the assumption that the economy has a dynamic of its own. However, the truth is that where some of these measures have been implemented without regard to social factors, the results have been disastrous.

The basic structuralist argument, on the other hand, as Moll put it, was that economies were far more complex than the monetarists tend to suggest. In the case of South Africa, according to Fuad Cassim, the economic managers of the state expected that liberalisation of the domestic financial market, accompanied by gradual opening of finance to the external sector, would lead to an increase in saving and investment. The reverse has been true. The financial reforms, argues Cassim, are at the heart of the subsequent crisis.

A number of factors have been identified with respect to Latin American economies, which, as many writers argue, led to slow growth, inflation and balance of payment disequilibrium, via 'structural' channels which 'freer' markets could not remedy. Some of these factors may be detected in the South African economy; for example, large farms left idle might have to be taken by the state and redistributed among the

peasants with state help.

Current trends suggest that should a new government take power tomorrow in South Africa, it would inherit a declining economy. Cassim's article suggests that the economic strategies of the regime have so far failed to bring positive results. Attempts to (a) control money supply with the aims of reducing inflation, and (b) control government expenditure to reduce the deficit before borrowing, have failed. Instead, he argues, reducing the growth of the money raises the cost of borrowing. The bank rates increased from 9.5% to 17% during the course of 1981, rose immediately to 18% and subsequently to 20% through most of 1982, reaching an unprecedented rate of 25% in August 1985.

This has affected many companies that could not cope with the impact of interest rate increases. Among other things, companies faced wage and salary costs that affected profits. The result was mergers, and a rise in speculative activity. Recent mergers have enhanced monopoly in the South African economy, making even more complex the economic structure a new government will inherit.

Examining what might happen in the mining industry, Peter Robbins looks at the case of Zambia and Zimbabwe after independence, and concludes that:

"... any country which is determined to bring its mining industry under the control of its government will face three main problems: subversive activity from the multinationals; finding the necessary quantity and quality of skilled engineers and managers, loyal to the cause of independence; and corruption."

Robbins' assertion implies that if an ANC government considers nationalisation of the mining industry in the future it may not be in a position to escape these problems.

According to Stoneman, half or more of the wage and salary bill in South Africa is the costs of skilled labour and professionals at near-international rates, and the benefit to capitalists of even the cheapest of unskilled labour is marginal. These factors, plus the Latin American experience and the experience of countries like Zimbabwe and Mozambique in Southern Africa, lead

him to the conclusion that unless all employment costs are kept down, capital intensity is forced even higher, and the mass of the population becomes permanently excluded from the job market.

If this were to prove true in post-apartheid South Africa, the workers would feel independence had brought them only misery instead of freedom. However, some assumptions underlying the arguments raised here need careful examination:

■ The assumption that there will be a peaceful transition with fewer disruptions in the economy that a post-apartheid government will inherit.

■ The assumption that western industrialised countries, upon which the economy largely depends, will support the economic strategies of the post-apartheid government.

However, experience of other Third World countries tells us that economic support is dependent on the ideological orientation of the incumbent government in the country concerned. If a post-apartheid government in South Africa pursues the socialist path of development, as the book seems to suggest, there is every reason to believe that there will be economic pressures from western countries. Analysis of what such an economic squeeze might do may be essential for a future government. Failure to acknowledge the devastating ef-

fects of western pressures on the economies of newly independent countries often leads analysts to place the blame for the post-independence economic crisis on the policies of the new government.

The other weakness of the contributors to this book is that they tend to centre their arguments around the major contending classes, the capitalists and the working class. There is little analysis of the different social groupings and the institutional framework upon which the economy is structured. Failure to analyse the state institutions which are an expression of capitalist culture and defenders of the system makes this collection of articles lean more towards an economic approach. The book does not fully analyse the different forces seeking to transform the society.

However, this book remains significant, as it raises fundamental economic issues which the liberation movement and the entire democratic mass movement can only ignore to the detriment of the future of our country, and helps to provoke more discussion on these issues. But it would be dangerous if the discussion were to ignore analysis of the process by which freedom might be achieved, and a careful analysis of the social and economic costs of redressing the inequalities created by the apartheid state and how this might affect a post-apartheid government.

Thozamile Botha

A SORT OF THEOLOGICAL MK

Albert Nolan, *God in South Africa*, David Phillip, Cape Town; Wm B Berdmans, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Mambo Press, Gweru; CIIR, London.

The liberation of religion is part of our struggle. When a social transformation occurs in which a people are freeing themselves from oppression in an inhuman system,

every aspect is brought under review, including politics, economics, the law, procedures of government — and belief and behaviour. This is particularly necessary in South Africa, where the apartheid system is promoted as 'defending Christian civilisation,' and acceptance of the ruling power is demanded as a sign of religious orthodoxy.

The ability of human beings to transcend

their contextual circumstances is an essential element in any revolution (whether expressed in theistic or agnostic terms) and our struggle has never accepted it when religion acquiesces with oppression. Whatever our religious bent, we rejected any notion that God in South Africa could support the system or keep quiet in the face of it. We felt in our guts that God was part of the struggle, that the church should go beyond tut-tutting into proclaiming a thrusting revolutionary faith that would set us all on fire. But it didn't, and lacking the theological skills to do it for ourselves many of us drifted away from the church because the church seemed to have drifted away from faith, though we couldn't quite put a finger on it.

Nolan can. In recent years, skilled people have started doing theology from inside the struggle, and one of them is Albert Nolan. He was born to White working class parents in a mixed area of Cape Town, became a priest, scholar, student, pastor, and widely travelled political and theological observer, but turned down a high post in the Vatican to continue his work in the struggle in Soweto. He is now engaged at the Institute of Contextual Theology, which helped produce the Kairos Document.

Bringing these influences together in *God and South Africa* produces a manual for Christian revolutionaries, a sort of theological MK, demolishing the symbols and systems of the oppressor, and revealing the liberating God in the heart of the people's struggle.

"The youth of the townships have lost patience with the Churches and with all the confused and contorted interpretations of the gospel ... it is out of the purifying fires of this challenge that a new understanding of the gospel is emerging — an understanding that is more faithful to Jesus Christ."

Nolan's book is a scholarly work, yet he writes:

"I have learnt more about what it means to be a Christian from the people of my country, and especially from the youth in the townships, that I have ever learnt from books."

His basic thesis is that something stupen-

dous in world history is happening in South Africa right now. Within all the suffering and struggle, liberation is coming. This is the Good News, the gospel of God in South Africa, that the time is ripe for liberation, and we have to seize that time and take it.

The gospel is about the meaning of the present, not a set of ethics from the past:

"The gospel for us today is what God is doing in South Africa today in the light of what God has done in the past."

Theological reflection is a rotating involvement in which practical action (what God is doing now) meshes with historical and scriptural study (what God was doing in the past), and each helps the other in discovering "the role of God in the situation."

"The gospel is the news about our time and country that God is revealing to us today through the signs of our times, but this subjective experience ... is shaped by all that is revealed about God in the Bible ... the anger of God has become visible for all to see, in the anger of the people."

You can start at either end, but Nolan starts by examining several key biblical concepts, and then interprets them in terms of the struggle. Gospel, sin and salvation are evaluated in a highly relevant and enlightening fashion, and then examined in terms of the recent political history of the struggle. The meaning of sin and salvation in South Africa reveals a crucified people, un-masks the system of what he calls 'racial capitalism' and leads to salvation, and hope.

"I remember a Mass in Sebokeng ... at the height of repression in that township in 1985 ... the people presented to their bishops the instruments of their repression: rubber bullets, teargas canisters, rent bills and chains ... the modern crosses, the symbols of repression that were being transformed like the cross into sacred symbols of our hope and liberation."

Much of the book is:

"an attempt to liberate people from the alienating forms of religion or Christianity that are an obstacle in the way of God's plans and purposes for peace in South Africa."

Part of that liberation means freeing ourselves from the notion that the purposes of God are particularly religious, and that his followers are to be found only in the Church. Theology is a way of understanding the whole of life, looking at how God acts in South Africa in the experience of the people. In particular, it means recognising that the focus for living a full 'christian' life in South Africa is to be inside the struggle.

"... the practice of the struggle is the practice of faith even when it is not accompanied by an explicit expression of faith in God or in Jesus Christ ..."

It is a delightfully shocking book: profound theological explanations trip over into popular language:

■ "... the God of the Bible cannot possibly be identified with capitalism."

■ "People's power, like the power of God, is invincible ... God is present in our situation in a mood of anger and indignation ... The way of compromise and moderation is not the way of God."

■ "... the evil in South Africa is dressed up to look like Christianity and makes use of the name of Christ."

The constant cry of the system and its supporters throughout the West is that the church must keep to its own business, which is merely the salvation of souls. Nolan believes that this is a perversion of the gospel.

"The challenge to turn to God is a challenge to turn to the community, to learn to work with people instead of for them. It takes time to overcome our individualism and to become truly democratic.

"Any idea that we can succeed against the power of evil by just being kindhearted and dedicated without a carefully thought out plan and strategy is plain foolishness ... Any idea that we as human beings can sit back and wait for God to save us, or just pray and hope that God will intervene, is simply heretical.

"The question is not, 'What must I do?' but 'Which organisation or group or community should I join?'"

The stereotype of a milk and water lovey-dovey Christianity gets short shrift:

"... those who cannot get angry about what is happening in South Africa have no real love for people ... the only way to follow Jesus Christ in our circumstances is to become an activist."

Within that activism, it is crucial to make space to examine and evaluate together our motives and progress, for,

"... without continuous reflection there is a danger we shall lapse into dogmatism and ideological rigidity."

The book is very readable, not asking you to handle technical theological language or unacceptable thought forms, yet prompting deep thought; for example, about God. The idea of an old man in the sky has long ceased to trouble most of us. Nolan sees God, the gospel, religion, in terms of an experience of transcendence at the heart of humanity. Of this transcendence, he says:

"... the most revealing way to speak about it is in personal terms, as God ..."

The political value of a positive religious understanding is made quite clear. Nolan will have nothing of a church that tries to blunt issues by proposing a third way between siding with the system or the struggle. There is no such path; the church must side with the struggle and against the system.

There can be no artificial separation of political and theological, of sacred and secular:

"... a religious experience is a perfectly normal experience ... with a religious interpretation."

The quest for new economic structures, proper education for all, health and welfare services, trade unionism, lifting the fetters on women, enacting the Freedom Charter through a people-based democracy — all this has profound theological implications, whether we come to it with a religious predisposition or through a sociological awareness of the human need for spiritual fulfilment. As it emerges from the struggle, this gospel or Good News is the religious significance of what is happening in our country, and it makes sound political sense.

— Cedric Mayson

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