

NOVEMBER 1989

SECHABA

official organ of the african
national congress south africa



THE NATION WELCOMES THEM BACK

NOVEMBER 1989
SECHABA

ISSN:0037-0509

Volume 23 No 11

CONTENTS:

EDITORIAL

Let Them Unban the ANC! 1

ANC STATEMENTS

Releases—Current situation—SG at Non-Aligned Summit—Religious Department 2

THE BLACK TERTIARY STUDENT MOVEMENT

By Maticias 9

THE UNIONS UNITED

Interview with Matthews Oliphant 14

IN OUR BACK YARD

By P R Dullay 21

ANC INTERNATIONAL

GDR—Sweden—Nigeria—France 24

YUSUF DADOO AND GANDHI

By E S Reddy 26

Graphic design by Hylton Alcock and Khwezi Kadalie

LISTEN TO RADIO FREEDOM

**Voice of the African National Congress
And Umkhonto We Sizwe, the People's Army**

Radio Lusaka

Daily 7.00 pm:
Wednesday 10.15-10.45 pm:
Thursday 9.30-10.00 pm:
Friday 10.15-10.45 pm:
Short wave 31mb 9505 KHz
Sunday 8.00-8.45 am:
Short wave 25mb 11880 KHz

Radio Luanda

Monday-Saturday 7.30 pm:
Sunday 8.30 pm:
Short wave 31mb 9535 KHz
and 25 mb

Radio Madagascar

Monday-Saturday 7.00-9.00 pm:
Sunday 7.00-8.00 pm:
Short wave 49mb 6135 KHz

Radio Ethiopia

Daily, 9.30-10.00 pm:
Short wave 31mb 9595 KHz

Radio Tanzania

Monday Wednesday Friday 8.15 pm:
Tuesday Thursday Saturday 6.15 am:
Short wave 31mb 9750 KHz

The above are South African times

LET THEM UNBAN THE ANC!

The release of ANC leaders from 26 years in incarceration resulted in both celebration and protest. The two were inseparable, since even the release itself is a product of people's struggles.

When 150 000 people waved ANC banners and flags in a series of nation-wide rallies, they were effectively unbanning the ANC. When Sisulu addressed a press conference where a copy of the statement with the ANC emblem was presented to the journalists as they left the meeting, he was addressing an ANC press conference.

This release demonstrates the power of united mass action. It also shows the changing political climate in Southern Africa since the defeat of the SADF in Angola and the developments in Namibia. It is true these are half-measures — as Sisulu says — since Mandela and other political prisoners are still in prison. Since the ANC is still banned and all apartheid laws are still in force, it will remain a half-measure.

These half-measures will always be with us as long as the SADF feels strong. The force that can weaken it is Umkhonto we Sizwe. There is also the question of the vigilantes, and the danger of the White right wing. Here again the role of Umkhonto we Sizwe in wiping them out is vital.

Pretoria has to consider its destabilisation tactics and activities and threatening behaviour in Angola and Mozambique. Our actions in the coming few months will help neutralise the right-wing offensive in Namibia.

What we are saying is that the release of our leaders should not be misinterpreted to mean that armed struggle belongs to the past — it is still part of strategy. Sisulu was perfectly correct when he said:

"Our political future will be determined by the leadership of the movement, both locally and abroad."

This means that if Gatsha Buthelezi is not careful he will be reduced to a political dwarf.

At a time when some people were becoming confused as to the real intentions of the ANC in posing the question of a future possibility of negotiations, this release has put that debate in perspective. The Front Line States and the OAU understand our position, and, with the threat of debt re-scheduling, the international community is responding to our calls.

After our people turned the White elections of August into a battleground for democracy, and the UDF, COSATU and other organisations showed the people's initiative, and the people in their thousands welcomed their released leaders, it is obvious that the apartheid regime has very little breathing space. These are the results of years of underground work by the ANC under the guidance of President Tambo. Many of our heroes, young and old, have sacrificed everything — including their lives — for the release of our imprisoned leaders. This release is a result of our sacrifices. It has nothing to do with De Klerk's change of heart. If there is a change of heart within the White ruling class, it is that they have stopped saying they have broken the back of the ANC. In the past, they used to repeat this so many times that people started asking, "How many backs does the ANC have?"

What needs to be done now is to intensify the struggle inside the country. Externally, the sanctions campaign and the boycott strategy need to be intensified. Then we shall go beyond half-measures.

ANC STATEMENTS

NEC STATEMENT ON THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS

October 15th 1989 constitutes an important landmark in our long and arduous struggle. The release of our leaders after 25 years of incarceration in racist dungeons is an important victory for our people, rallied around the ANC and supported by the international community. It is the most eloquent vindication of the struggle we have waged over the years. It is therefore an important destruction of apartheid colonialism.

We salute and welcome these heroes of our people both as products and leaders of our struggle. Through their unwavering commitment to freedom and social justice, even behind the grey walls of prison, they have always inspired us all.

De Klerk and the racist ruling circles have done the struggling masses no favour. It is the reality of mass and armed struggle, coupled with international pressure, that has forced an unwilling De Klerk to open the prison gates.

At the same time, by creating an atmosphere of high expectations, De Klerk and his colleagues seek to turn this defeat into an offensive to defuse the militancy and defiance of our people. Internationally they hope to arm their apologists to stave off more sanctions and end the growing isolation of the regime. This would also lay the foundation for the regime's medium-term objective of rescheduling the huge debt repayments.

The De Klerk regime certainly has neither the will nor any intention of tampering with the fundamentals of racial domination and inequality. The National Party's political programme speaks for itself. The continuing mass detentions, assassination of trade union activists and harassment of all sectors of the Mass Democratic Movement betray the regime's true intentions. Thousands of patriots are still behind bars; apartheid, in all its manifestations, is still in place.

This stark reality is a clarion call for all anti-

apartheid forces to give De Klerk no respite. This is the time for us to go on the offensive, to intensify the struggle in all its forms. There is no reason for us to be diverted from the road of struggle for the creation of a united, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

We are at one with the assessment and guidance given by our leaders. We are certain that they will resume their rightful leadership role and promote the advancement of our liberation struggle. Their experience and maturity will lend a new quality to the burgeoning revolt for the eradication of the basic causes that called our struggle into being.

The ANC calls upon our people to rally round our leaders and unite in action for:

- ★ The unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and the hundreds of fighters imprisoned for taking part in the struggle.
- ★ The unconditional release of all political detainees.
- ★ The end of all political executions.
- ★ The expulsion of the SADF from our townships.
- ★ The end of the state of emergency.
- ★ The unbanning of all the people's organisations.

As we welcome our leaders and rejoice at their release, let us intensify the mass defiance campaign and escalate our politico-military offensive.

We call on the international community to intensify the struggle for the all-round isolation of the racist regime, including the imposition of all-round economic sanctions.

The struggle continues!
Victory is certain!

Lusaka, Zambia, October 18th 1989

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE STATEMENT ON THE CURRENT SITUATION

The message conveyed to our country and to the world by the militant nationwide actions against the tricameral elections, the Labour Relations Amendment Act, the state of emergency and the entire system of racist domination is:

Apartheid must be destroyed, not amended.

The 1989 Tricameral Elections will be remembered not for the reverses suffered by the National Party at the polls, but for the strikes, the boycotts and the barricades of September 5th and 6th. Whatever else may have occurred on September 6th, the overwhelming majority of South Africans voted with their feet for freedom, democracy and non-racialism!

The national work stoppage by over three million workers, the Mass Defiance Campaign that preceded it, the impressive street demonstrations which saw thousands of our people united behind ANC banners, the demonstrations on the beaches and at the hospitals, the classroom boycotts by millions of students — all registered our people's determination to end the apartheid regime.

The ANC salutes the people for the tremendous advances we have scored during this period. The momentum generated during this Spring Offensive must be carried forward into the summer and the new year. The unity in action demonstrated by the broad array of anti-apartheid forces in the streets of Cape Town, Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg, Oudtshoorn and Durban must be built on.

We wish to address a special word of tribute to the Church, Church leaders and other members of the religious fraternity for the sterling role they have played in the current struggles.

All these actions have already laid a solid base for the success of the forthcoming National Women's March on Pretoria.

The rhetoric mouthed by De Klerk at his inauguration once more bears out our firm conviction that no White minority regime possesses either the will or the capacity to bring about a fundamental change of South Africa. The promises to execute his mandate for change over five years are as empty as they are insolent. Even before De Klerk's swearing-in, the regime's spokesman had repeatedly made it clear that all they intend doing is to prettify apartheid, which will carry over the essential content under the guise of group rights. The racist President's speech is directed primarily at the international community and allies of apartheid from whom he hopes to buy time with the plea that he needs a chance to deliver on his promises.

The massacres with which De Klerk inaugurated his administration, and his undisguised threat to persist in a policy of repression against the people, testifies to the violence intrinsic to the system over which he presides. He has clearly stated that he will follow the well-trodden path of his predecessors — talk, and ever more talk of change, accompanied by massive repression at home and aggression against South Africa's neighbours.

We reiterate that this intransigent attitude leaves us no option but to continuously escalate our multi-pronged offensive, including its armed component, to overthrow the regime of racist tyranny.

Though De Klerk speaks of a 'message of hope,' his is in fact a message of despair, reflecting the deep and insurmountable crisis of the apartheid regime. The undemocratic elections of 6th September did not and could not do anything to change that.

The battleground on which we have to engage the enemy must encompass every facet of the system of minority domination — be it in the area of housing, recreation, health, schooling, social

welfare or services. The State of Emergency and the restrictions imposed on our mass organisations are being continuously and consistently defied until they are rendered unworkable.

The massive rejection of the undemocratic dummy parliaments by the Coloured and Indian communities shows conclusively that no section of the oppressed is any longer prepared to tolerate this insult to our humanity. Those collaborators who insist on manning these racist institutions should know that they will soon be engulfed by the rising tide of popular struggle.

Central to the successes we have scored is the strengthening of our organisations. The democratic trade unions, the constituent bodies of the United Democratic Front, the Women's Organisations, the Youth and Student Congresses, the civics and community organisations have begun to recover from the dislocations caused by the State of Emergency. Ultimate success depends on our ability to create and build viable organisational structures that will pool the collective strength of our people and thus enhance our striking power.

Every activist must in the first instance be an organiser, whose principal task is to bring organisation to the unorganised.

Every constituency within the oppressed communities must be drawn into an organised democratic structure through which it can participate in the formulation of the strategies of struggle and make its own distinctive contribution to the national democratic struggle.

Even as the racists inaugurate their new President, the apartheid regime is on the retreat. This is the time to press home the attack. Let us give De Klerk no breathing space. Our organised strength must be such as to overwhelm the defences of the regime.

We have by our actions compelled De Klerk and the racist ruling circles to concede the political space to conduct mass political processions. Having reclaimed the streets of our cities and towns and our inalienable right to demonstrate and publicly manifest our opposition to apartheid, we should not permit the regime to reverse these gains. Our acts of struggle must

be consciously directed towards the total eradication of the system of apartheid, root and branch.

The first milestones along this road will be to make the system itself unworkable by refusing to obey its laws and to observe its provisions. The times demand decisive and clear-sighted leadership at every level — in the factories and other workplaces, at the local, regional and national levels. Only thus can we reap the fruits of the new possibilities created through struggle. To be effective, such leadership must be firmly rooted in organisations of the people, accountable to the people, and committed to the cause of the people.

The re-emergence of the Mass Democratic Movement, after the lull imposed by the regime of martial law and the consolidation of its relations with other organised formations, has demonstrated that the racist tricameral parliament is irrelevant to the resolution of our country's problems. The agenda for a new South Africa is being written by the disenfranchised millions, under the leadership of the national liberation movement, the ANC.

Our strategic objective remains the seizure of power by the people. The immediate prospect for our country is hard-fought and unrelenting struggles, both military and political, which will demand ever greater sacrifices.

The ANC leadership and the entire membership of our movement extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of the patriots who were murdered during the demonstrations of the 5th and 6th September. The blame for these brutal killings lies squarely at the feet of De Klerk and his colleagues.

We take this opportunity to commend the stand taken by Lieutenant Gregory Rockman as an example to be followed by all Black soldiers and police throughout the country. The violence that Lieutenant Rockman so boldly denounced should not be regarded as a temporary lapse into unprofessional behaviour by a handful of policemen. It is of the essence of apartheid. Let those in the regime's military, police and other security services, who are repelled by such violence, seize the opportunity to break ranks with the

enemy and join the national struggle for democracy and social justice.

The thousands of White youth who demonstrated their rejection of the South African Death Force by declaring their refusal to be conscripted should be applauded by all democrats. We are confident that these represent a growing tide of opposition to racist repression among our White compatriots.

A crucial aspect of our people's offensive is the restoration of peace in the Natal region. It is clear to all who hold the interests of our people dear, that the continuing bloodletting serves no one other than our common enemy. It is also plain that the matters that unite us are more profound and enduring than those that temporarily divide us. To this end the ANC has lent its unstinting support to every effort made by the leadership of the Mass Democratic Movement to bring about peace amongst our people in Natal.

We repeat our appeal to those who have as yet not committed themselves to the achievement of peace to set aside petty considerations and focus on this issue of national magnitude.

Mobilisation of our people in the rural areas and bantustans remains a high priority task. To be effective, such mobilisation must proceed hand in hand with the co-ordination between urban and rural struggles. The Mass Democratic Movement, in all its formations, must build local and regional bodies of the peasants and rural poor to draw these into the mainstream of the national struggle.

The planned reburial of that great African patriot, King Sabata Dalindyebo, should be an occasion to demonstrate the lasting ties of solidarity that should bind traditional leaders to the people. Those traditional leaders who have rejected the bantustan policy should regard him as an example to be followed. By his own participation in and support of the struggle, King Sabata showed that chiefs will not be judged by the heroism of their ancestors but by their own actions in the present. Let us make this a truly national occasion by attending the memorial services and reburial ceremony in our thousands

from all regions of our land.

Our triumphant march to freedom has already thrown the apartheid state into disarray. A powerful united front of all anti-apartheid forces, that brings together all those committed to one person, one vote in a united, democratic South Africa, is all the more imperative at this time. Such a front should rally around a common immediate programme demanding, amongst others:

- ★ The unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners!
- ★ The end of the State of Emergency!
- ★ The removal of all troops from the townships!
- ★ Lifting the ban on the ANC, the SACP and all other people's organisations!
- ★ The repeal of all politically repressive legislation!
- ★ The unconditional cessation of all political trials and executions!
- ★ The unconditional release of all political detainees!

and which will fight to:

- ★ Save the lives of the patriots presently on death row!
- ★ Smash the Labour Relations Amendment Act!

At the core of such a united front should be the United Democratic Front, Cosatu and the other democratic trade union and community organisations of the oppressed. All those committed to the principles and aims of the United Front, irrespective of their former affiliations, should also find a place in its ranks.

The future of our country is firmly in our hands!

Forward with greater mass actions!

Forward with the armed struggle!

Forward to the seizure of power!

Lusaka, Zambia, September 22nd 1989.

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S ADDRESS TO THE NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT

The Harare Declaration of the Organisation of African Unity (printed in the October 1989 issue of *Sechaba*) was adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement at its Ninth Summit Meeting of Heads of State or Government, in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in September. The Secretary-General of the ANC, Comrade Alfred Nzo, addressed the meeting in Belgrade on the same day that the White elections took place in South Africa. We give here an extract from his speech.

The events that are taking place in South Africa pose a very important question. That question is — how soon shall we vanquish the regime of terror; how quickly shall it be that we transform South Africa into a non-racial democracy?

In reality there are no other substantive questions to answer with regard to the South African issue. It is certain that apartheid will go. It is certain that the issue will be resolved, not according to the wishes of the handful of proponents of apartheid that got themselves elected today. It is certain that the fate and the future of South Africa will be determined by the political and military struggles of the millions who today are denied the constitutional and political right to decide the future of the country.

Today, White South Africa elected the last White parliament in the history of our country. In seven days' time, a small cabal of White South Africans will elect the last in the series of the illegitimate apartheid rulers of our country.

We are able to say all this because we know the strength of the millions of our struggling people, their determination, their willingness to sacrifice, their ability, under the leadership of the ANC and the Mass Democratic Movement, to reorganise themselves into one united and unstoppable fighting force. The current campaign of defiance waged by these masses is transforming every corner of our country into a theatre of struggle for

the destruction of the apartheid system.

No amount of repression will stop it. No level of state brutality and terrorism can compel the people to submit. The enemy has taught us not to fear death itself. By that means, it has unshackled us to march forward regardless of the sacrifices we have to make, until victory is achieved.

By its actions, the Pretoria regime of terror forced the ANC to take up arms to fight for the liberation of our people. To take up arms means to accept the need to make the supreme sacrifice. The combatants of our people's army have sustained the armed struggle over many years and against difficult odds, because of their refusal to submit to tyranny and because of their readiness to lay down their lives to liberate our country. That armed struggle will continue as a central element in our general offensive against the apartheid regime, for the total liquidation of the criminal system of apartheid.

We are confident that victory is in sight. But this does not mean that success will come about easily. The enemy continues to be stubborn. Despite all protestations to the contrary, F W de Klerk remains a firm adherent of apartheid. He has a big machinery of repression at his disposal, which has been trained to kill and destroy for the perpetuation of White minority rule. There will therefore be more death and destruction before victory is achieved.

Struggle on all fronts

But despite all that, and indeed because of it, we must continue to take the battle to the enemy, to wear it down, to weaken it, to prepare through struggle for that moment when it will be possible for us to end the apartheid crime against humanity.

It seems obvious to us that the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, which has played such a critical role in the world struggle to abolish colonialism and White minority rule, should once again renew its commitment to remain firmly engaged, and engaged in a practical way, in the final effort to unseat the forces of racism in South Africa. The Movement must push harder for the realisation of the demand for mandatory and comprehensive sanctions, for the total isolation of apartheid South Africa.

It should further and radically step up its all-round assistance to our movement and thus to the struggling masses of our country. To intensify the common struggle on all fronts necessarily means that we must have not only the fighting forces to realise this perspective. It also means that we must have the material means to translate plans into actual and effective action.

In this regard, we would like to express our appreciation of the noble effort made by the countries represented here, through the Africa Fund. This pioneering expression of concerted action by this important Movement must succeed, not only because the people of Southern Africa need the assistance that the Africa Fund can provide, but also because the Non-Aligned Movement must fashion such instruments as the Africa Fund as part of its evolution into an effective organ for the transformation of the world order, in keeping with the principles on which this Movement was built and consolidated.

Every country represented here, no less than our movement and people, is engaged in struggle against apartheid because of a commitment to the principle of justice and peace. Every time that the peoples of Africa took up arms against colonial and racial domination, it was because they sought justice and peace and had no other means to achieve these objectives.

Because we have always remained faithful to this course, we have, as Africans, presented to this august Summit the Harare Declaration of the OAU Ad-Hoc Committee on Southern Africa. Among other things, this Declaration deals with, and points the way forward to, a genuine political resolution of the South African question. We are certain that this Summit will adopt this Declaration as its own and thus further open the door towards a political settlement of the South African question, while continuing to intensify the struggle for the complete abolition of the apartheid system.

The people of Namibia, under the leadership of SWAPO, are progressing towards their independence, thanks to their own sacrifices, and thanks to the sacrifices of the Angolan people, the Cuban internationalist forces and the support of the rest of progressive humanity in Africa and the rest of the world. We believe this Movement must itself adopt the slogan: SWAPO will win! — and therefore do everything in its power to defeat the criminal manoeuvres of the Pretoria regime to deny the people the possibility to elect SWAPO as their government, and extend maximum financial and other assistance to SWAPO so that it can carry out its historic mission of leading their country to genuine independence.

Emancipation of all oppressed peoples

This is of vital importance to the people of Namibia. But it is also necessary to bear in mind that it is also of central importance to the success of the historic process leading to the total emancipation of Africa. This, in its turn, is of great significance for the liberation of other colonised peoples outside of Africa, such as those of Puerto Rico, New Caledonia and elsewhere.

The Non-Aligned Movement is and must be aligned with all peoples fighting for their emancipation, including those of Palestine, Western Sahara, El Salvador and other countries. Our own struggle is inextricably intertwined with these fraternal struggles. We have to advance together. We have to win together. Together, we will continue to count on the selfless and united support of the Non-Aligned Movement.

ANC DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS PRESS STATEMENT

At a meeting of the African National Congress Department of Religious Affairs, held on September 9th and 10th 1989 in London, the current critical situation in South Africa was considered.

The meeting was attended by members of the National Executive, clergy and lay persons of the ANC.

The meeting:

- 1. Saluted the Mass Democratic Movement on its enormous success, achieved in the continuing challenge to the racist regime, and especially through the Defiance Campaign and the two-day strike.**
- 2. Denounced the fraud of the White and puppet elections, and condemned in the severest terms the brutality and exceptional violence unleashed against peaceful protesters, resulting in large numbers being murdered by the regime.**
- 3. Mourned with our people the loss of life.**
- 4. Demanded that the people shall have the right to bury their dead in a dignified manner in accor-**

dance with their own customs.

- 5. Rejoiced at the leading role of significant numbers of South Africa's religious community in the Defiance Campaign.**

The meeting, in a message to the people of South Africa, stated its rededication to the urgent and vital task of informing and interpreting to the international religious community the significance of current events in South Africa. The objective in doing so was to call on the international community to:

- ★ condemn these atrocities;
- ★ take further action towards the isolation of the South African regime;
- ★ provide increased support for the liberation struggle to remove the illegitimate and violent regime and replace it with a united, non-racial and democratic government.

The meeting sent a letter to O R Tambo, assuring him of their prayers and support, and wishing him a full and speedy recovery.

TEN YEARS OF THE BLACK TERTIARY STUDENT MOVEMENT

By Maticias

1979 was the year of the birth of people's organisations. PEBCO and COSAS are three of the many well-known acronyms by which activists came to identify themselves. As the successes of people's organisations became known, the number of organisations referred to as 'grassroots' organisations multiplied.



It was in this climate of people's action that the Azanian Students' Organisation (AZASO) was born. Cloaked in a Black Consciousness shroud, AZASO rapidly became the home of thousands of Black students at bantustan colleges (often known as 'bush colleges') English-liberal campuses, teacher training colleges and technikons. Overshadowed somewhat by the militancy, activism, size and spread of its closest fraternal organisation, the Congress of South African

Students (COSAS) the significant strides made by the Azaso membership have often gone unacclaimed.

Throughout its ten-year history, AZASO — renamed the South African National Students' Congress in 1986 — continued to reflect the processes under way throughout the rest of society, but amplified many times over. When there was a high level of mobilisation among the workers and township dwellers, the students were found to be way ahead in their

tactics. It was students who took to the streets to demonstrate their anger at the hanging of three of the Sasol Six.

When the state, or any of its bantustan puppets, embarked on repression, the student organisations would be faced with brutalities, forerunners of the state of emergency tyranny. The massacres in Natal were preceded by the killing of students on Ngoye campus in 1983. The invasion of townships by the security forces nationally was preceded by instances such as that at Fort Hare in 1982, where the Ciskei bantustan tried to stamp its authority on students protesting against conditions in the residences. The situation at Turfloop deteriorated to the point where it resembled an army barracks, with soldiers having set up camp there.

Conceivably, the central question that challenged, and continues to challenge, the national student leadership was the development of organisation in the face of such repression. Unbridled brutality was, and remains, the only response that

students can expect to even the mildest protest. The national leadership continues to be vexed by the problem of maintaining and building organisations, when even a protest march could result in severe setbacks. It could lead to the closure of the campus, denying students their organisational base, and to the tight screening of returning students, 'cleansing' the institution of 'agitators,' often leaving students leaderless. This process, maintained over a few years, has resulted in the weakening of the student organisations.

Part of the oppressed community

A corollary to that question is ensuring that student action, strategies and tactics are in line with developments outside the campus. This was the challenge that Billy Ramakgopa was referring to at the 1987 Congress, when he called upon the student movement "to equip ourselves with fresh strategies and tactics for facing future challenges on and off campus." When students needed to be at their strongest, they were usually to be found locked outside the campus gates, or without leadership. This was because of their need to react to issues as they were faced; because their range of tactics was so limited and the response of the state so harsh.

A further question the student leadership had to address itself to for most of those ten years

was the relationship between the immediate, day-to-day problems the students faced and the political campaigns they were urged to respond to.

Responding to day-to-day problems was initially seen as a way of drawing the student body into the broader political campaigns of the day. This view was to alter later. The debate was undoubtedly influenced by the process unfolding in the townships, where community organisations were demonstrating the efficacy of mobilising people around the questions of washing lines, tarring of roads, electricity and rents. That the student leadership applied this lesson in an apparently mechanical way has to be viewed against the backdrop of the traditions they had inherited.

The 1981 Congress of AZASO resolved to drop the Black Consciousness clause, and to see Black students as part of an oppressed community first and then as students. This was an attempt to rid students of their elitist tendencies, which had developed during SASO days. By recognising that workers were the most oppressed and exploited group, and by committing themselves to developing working class leadership (details of which were never spelt out) they were firmly rejecting the concept of students as the leading lights of a community conscience.

In practice, this was interpreted to mean that students had to play a supportive role to community struggles and political

campaigns. The new leadership was able to get off to a cracking start with the anti-Ciskei and anti-SAIC campaigns. Students were recruited to visit and assist communities facing removals, to distribute leaflets about political campaigns, to help organise rent boycotts, create support committees for striking workers, and so on. Matters of immediate concern to students were taken up, but only in so far as they were able to strengthen the contribution of student organisations to the struggles of the people.

Education the battlefield

The 1982 Congress (which was attended by COSAS and was to initiate national consultations between the two Black student organisations) attempted to examine these questions. It evaluated the activity of the past year, and the result was an insistence on a higher commitment to education issues. To guide this commitment, the Congress decided on an Education Charter Campaign to coincide with the production of a charter of demands concerning the education system.

This campaign became the forerunner of the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC). It went through somewhat mixed fortunes, being raised with enthusiasm in some regions, depending on the strength of student organisations there, only to subside, and pass the baton on to other regions.

Some problems were because the leadership was unable to relate the campaign to the concrete struggles of the students. Many regional workshops and campus-based seminars were held, but produced nothing more than generalised analyses of the present education system and broad principles for a democratic one, while the demands which were to comprise the Charter were not extracted from the crucible of the education struggles being waged.

Another problem was the understanding by some of the leadership that the demands would be gathered through a process, like those in the Freedom Charter. Some of the more enterprising attempted methods like street interviews, canvassing of trade unionists and so on.

These weaknesses were due to an insufficient level of organisational development; also to the fact that the education crisis had not quite reached the levels of intensity and national cohesion necessary to make the Education Charter viable.

In 1984-5, education once again became the central issue; but by then the crisis had become so deep that the progressive camp felt compelled to address itself to the immediate issues of security force occupation of the schools and the return of students to class. The only long-term commitment was to the development of some form of people's education which was aimed at rectifying facts and

approaches, especially in history and English.

It is not surprising, then, that the SANSCO Congress of December 1987 could not help expressing its exasperation when it noted that "the campaign has been dragging for too long," and was glad that the September 1987 conference of the NECC had resolved to commit itself to the campaign. Perhaps the reality of a permanently dislocated leadership at every possible level meant that the Charter would not be the product of the profoundly democratic process initially envisaged. It is important that the Charter should be rapidly drafted by those sectors most interested in the issue of education, at a point when these sectors are reasonably well organised to allow democratic consultation on the contents.

Asserting non-racialism

The fledgling organisation had to undergo an ideological baptism of fire after its well-remembered decision to replace its Black Consciousness-oriented preamble with one which read in part, "that we are struggling against the system and not individual Whites." A rearguard battle was fought by the ideologues of Black exclusiveness, who were organised under the banner of AZAPO. The trauma was like that of parents seeing their child torn away from the breast; reinforcements upon fortifications were

rushed in to stop the little babe from becoming 'communist.' All to no avail.

The ideological battle was pitched at that first congress in 1981; so consistent was use made of a class approach in explaining the need for the preamble to be changed that an AZAPO official remarked he felt he had been to a communist congress. That battle was to degenerate into some of the ugliest incidents of violence witnessed among anti-apartheid forces.

This very baptism was to make AZASO contribute immeasurably to the cause of non-racialism. Of the many organisations which at that time had openly embraced the national democratic position (as it came to be known) it was AZASO which most seriously applied itself to understanding this thesis. There were shades of difference within the organisation, with some of its membership from the liberal campuses arguing for the commitment to be restricted to paper and not to enter the domain of practice. This was firmly rejected at the 1982 Congress, and the commission on this question finished hours after all the others had completed their tasks.

Relationship with NUSAS

It was natural for AZASO then to strike up a principled alliance with NUSAS. The AZASO decision to send its president,

Joe Phaahla, to the 1982 NUSAS Congress represented the first tentative steps towards the working unity achieved today. It was also the first time a Black student leader had addressed a NUSAS Congress in 12 years. Since then, AZASO members have addressed and attended many functions organised by NUSAS.

The relationship flourished to the point where Jay Naidoo, COSATU Secretary-General, and Vusi Khanyile, NECC national co-ordinator, made public calls for the two organisations to be consolidated into a single structure. This was much to the chagrin of the leaders of both, for discussions of this nature had been conducted between the organisations, and they were yet to announce their decisions.

It is, indeed, a mechanical logic which asserts that, given the organisations' dedication to non-racialism and the Freedom Charter, and their common organisational base, that they should therefore be merged. A dialectical accord exists between national unity and the need to consider the specifics of the components of that national unity. Finding the correct balance has been the bane of many an activist in the Indian community, or among the Whites, or even among workers in a certain industry.

Credit to progressive leadership

Organisational considerations,

tempered by our principles, have to reign supreme. And these considerations have to be based on the concrete. While the thrust for such moves come from Black and White student leadership (a reversal of the 1982 trends) on the liberal campuses, the bantustan campuses cannot surface from the tidal wave of suppression even to consider the question. "I wish I had your problems," would probably be their response. And for old SASO hands, like this writer, there would always be the question of the continuity of progressive White student leadership; interruption may lead to the destruction of a single progressive student organisation.

Commitment to a common programme of action can be the only short-term approach. A single student organisation can be attained only when a similar level of political consciousness is reached in the communities from which the student communities are derived. Of course, this does not apply to a post-apartheid situation. However, that the two organisations are engaging in such discourse is a tremendous credit to their leadership over the last decade.

The UDF speaker at the 1987 SANSCO Congress paid a fitting tribute to the contribution of AZASO and SANSCO to the ideological struggle of the day:

"You have not only embraced non-racialism, but you have shown through concrete

interaction with other organisations that non-racialism is a living phenomenon ... We salute you compatriots for the role you have played in building and spreading the progressive influence in this country."

From the mustering of a handful of student representatives in 1979 to the 275 delegates representing 62 branches at the 1987 Congress, the organisation has certainly spread itself extensively. The state of emergency and the repression has had an impact, and as most of the student population is residential, the impact is felt as acutely as management action on hostel dwellers. The attendance at the 1984 Congress was about 400 delegates.

Organise, consolidate and advance!

In all earnestness, the 1987 Congress chose the theme for the year: "Organise, consolidate and advance towards a people's education."

The questions of organisation and struggle around education issues continue to be paramount. Since SANSCO possesses the potential to organise almost the entire tertiary student population, the theme underlined the need for greater responsibility to be shared by the regional structures. A product of this has been advance made in the Orange Free State, which has now consolidated itself as the strongest region of SANSCO.

Two further resolutions indicate the seriousness with which the student leaders intend strengthening the organisation.

The first relates to political education and training. It was resolved that a National Education and Training Unit be created to oversee the process. The tradition of maintaining a high level of ideological content correctly continues. The principle of the second resolution states that:

"for any student body to articulate its views and direction, proper representation is necessary,"

and resolves to get as many student representative councils as possible affiliated to, or closer to SANSCO. The implications of the second resolution are significant. The success of the campaign would ensure that SANSCO can develop into a truly national Black student union.

The realities of prolonged detention of leaders, arbitrary shutting down of universities, banning of organisations, and the ceaseless turnover of the student population (exacerbated by the 'screening' procedures) are sure to undermine the organisational process. This will demand from the membership a critical

examination of its approaches. It will require an examination of the experiences of student movements internationally. It will require a process of engaging in the transformation of power relations within the institutions. It will mean that students must unite with the academic and non-academic staff, with Convocation, and so on.

We learned with regret that police harassment forced the postponement of the 1989 Congress. We look forward to the outcome of the next one.

**Happy tenth anniversary,
Black tertiary students.**

The Congress of South African Students (COSAS) was formed in 1979, an organisation of school pupils that linked itself with the common struggles of the people. It was the largest single organisation affiliated to the UDF, and was banned in 1985.

The South African Students' Organisation (SASO) was formed in 1969, an organisation of Black university students. It had a Black Consciousness ideology, asserted the importance of Black students' organising on their own, and regarded the 'liberalism' of NUSAS as ideologically bankrupt. Steve Biko and Barney Pityana were two of its leaders. When it split at the end of the 1970s, some members went into AZASO and the others formed the Azanian Students' Movement (AZASM).

The National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) is the oldest student movement in South Africa. It has a long policy of non-racism. After university segregation was imposed in 1959 it retained its formal commitment to non-racism, but never adequately engaged with the concerns of Black students. It was radicalised in response to the challenge of SASO, affiliated to the UDF in 1983, and has taken up campaigns such as opposition to conscription. Black students on White campuses now have their own organisations, affiliated to SANSCO.

INTERVIEW

THE UNIONS UNITED WILL NEVER BE DEFEATED

The South African Congress of Trade Unions was formed in March 1955 as the first non-racial trade union federation in South Africa, and in June 1955 it took part in the Congress of the People, at which the Freedom Charter was adopted. In 1964, because of the banning of its leaders, it went underground, and since then has continued to exist as part of the liberation movement headed by the ANC.

Matthews Oliphant, formerly COSATU Regional Secretary in Northern Natal, worked underground as a SACTU operative inside South Africa for about ten years. He recently left South Africa, and is now working for SACTU outside the country. He spoke to *Sechaba* about the growing power of the unions, and their relationship with SACTU.

Matthews Oliphant



What can you tell us about the Workers' Summit in August — its significance in the workers' struggle and in the general struggle for liberation?

The reason why the Workers' Summit was convened in the first place was to devise a strategy to respond to the attacks on the trade union movement by the Labour Relations Amendment Act. The August 27th Summit was a follow-up to the earlier one, held in March, to review what else the trade union movement could do in the fight against this notorious Act. What I think is important about the last Summit is that a decision was taken to continue the fight against the Labour Relations Amendment Act by peaceful protest. Most important was the fact that COSATU and NACTU came together, as well as the unaffiliated, predominantly Black, trade unions.

It is a matter of history what came out of that Summit. The decision was taken to protest against the tricameral elections on September 6th, which saw the massive stayaway of about 3 000 000 workers and students.

Another decision was taken which we in SACTU think was very important: the decision on working class unity, something SACTU has always stood for. That decision states that a certain timetable should be drawn up for a period within which the dream of one country, one federation, should be achieved in South Africa. A decision was

taken at the Summit that this kind of unity must be worked for at local, regional and national level between all the unions: NACTU, COSATU and the unaffiliated unions. Another Workers' Summit will be convened specifically to deal with the issue of working class unity.

Other decisions taken at the Workers' Summit were to continue to campaign for the release of all political prisoners and political detainees, and to campaign for the preconditions that we — the liberation movement and the Mass Democratic Movement — have set for the racist regime before any negotiations can take place. It is in this light that we see the significance of the Workers' Summit of August 27th.

What was the spirit like there? How would you describe the occasion?

Of course the spirit was high, but there was the continued presence of hundreds of policemen around the hall where the Summit was held, and security police with cameras, and so on. They were within hearing distance, and they could see the speakers, so there was a lot of intimidation of delegates there. It restricted people's expressing themselves, especially about what kind of action to take, because under the state of emergency regulations a lot of things that people say are said to be subversive.

The delegates had to exercise maximum restraint in discussing

what kind of strategy to follow: for example, the stay-at-home of the 5th and 6th. That did not come out clearly at the Summit, except that it was agreed that some kind of protest action must take place, which meant people had to assume, from their experience of peaceful protest of the past, that this stay-at-home was implied. People wanted to propose things like a general strike and a consumer boycott, but they couldn't do it openly, because of the presence of the police. This was quite unlike the previous Summit in March, when the police stayed away.

Despite that, there was a massive turnout on the 6th. The oppressed of our people, and a growing number of White democrats, have demonstrated, for everybody to see, that the Nationalist regime in South Africa is indeed an illegitimate regime. This is the Year of Mass Action for People's Power. We believe that the action, the demonstrations of defiance by the people, are a direct response to the call by the national liberation movement headed by the ANC, and the direct call made by the Mass Democratic Movement, despite the state of emergency.

This shows beyond doubt that the people of South Africa are clearly saying to the minority racist regime that it does not represent the interests of the majority, and they will continue to defy it, regardless of repressive measures.

Will you say something about

the way the trade unions are involved in the Defiance Campaign?

I think we can trace that one back to the political policy of COSATU. I'll talk about COSATU, as it is the biggest of the federations and has a clearly stated political resolution about forming "disciplined alliances" with mass-based progressive community organisations, which makes you immediately think of organisations like the United Democratic Front. "Disciplined alliance" means COSATU retains its independence organisationally, but at the same time forms part of an alliance with progressive structures. At that level, there will be actions in which COSATU will participate as a member of the alliance with other progressive-based organisations.

This political policy of COSATU goes further to encourage its members as individuals to participate in community-based organisations, so that when these actions, demonstrations, defiance campaigns, take place the members of COSATU are participating as members of the community structures — civic organisations in the townships, youth organisations and women's organisations. Of course there is co-ordination between the community-based organisations and COSATU. The actions themselves emanate from the people, through their direct participation in the community struggles.

People couldn't discuss this action at the second Workers' Summit, but they went home and discussed it in their organisations?

Yes, because there was restriction of debate at the Workers' Summit. In the townships, people have got street committees, they've got other avenues, other platforms that they use, and on these platforms they came up with ideas for this kind of action.

Hasn't the National Union of Mineworkers been taking part in the Defiance Campaign as a union? Mineworkers have been demonstrating against unequal facilities for Black workers on the mines.

Looking at the history of this same political resolution of COSATU, you'll find it is the NUM most of the time which proposes the political policy of COSATU. Therefore, I think that the NUM, in fact, participates in these struggles through the community organisations. The majority of the members of NUM stay in the single-sex hostels, and they also form their own hostel structures there, which are similar to the structures that people form in the townships. On the face of it, it may seem that when the mine-workers participate they participate as NUM. It's not like that. Those hostels are temporarily their homes. Only members of the NUM live there. You'll find each room in

a hostel has got some kind of a committee; each block has got a committee.

Do you want to say anything more about mass resistance?

There's a lot to say, but sometimes it sounds like rhetoric. I think, therefore, I would prefer not to talk any more about resistance, except to say this: we have seen how our people over the years — especially over the last few years — we have seen how they have resisted any kind of repression from the state. It's a matter of historical record, and it's a fact that they are resisting. They won't go back. The struggle goes forward. This we can judge by the actions of our people.

What about the Labour Relations Amendment Act, and resistance to it?

The Labour Relations Amendment Act — the aim of it is to reverse those gains the workers, especially the Black trade unions, have made over the last ten years or so. It is now very difficult for workers to go on a legal strike. For instance, the Act states that workers may not strike over any issue over which they have gone out on strike during the previous 15 months. Workers negotiate annually, on wages and other conditions of employment, so what it means is that if workers were on strike in January, they cannot strike again when they go to the next round of talks in January of the

next year, because it would be within a period of 15 months.

Secondly, we have this universally accepted slogan, "an injury to one is an injury to all." It implies solidarity — sympathy strikes, for instance. The Labour Relations Amendment Act outlaws sympathy strikes.

It goes further to suggest that an employer has a right to retrench workers on the basis of their work records. In the past, the unions have agreed with employers that when there is retrenchment there must be certain criteria, certain conditions. One of those conditions is the principle of 'last in, first out.' But now, the Act gives the employer a right to retrench a person on the basis of his work record, and employers will always use this against the shop stewards, against the active union members.

Again, the Act promotes competition, rival unions, splinter unions, within one establishment. In the past, employers themselves demanded that, before they sign an agreement with a union, it must demonstrate that it represents 50% or more of its work force. Now the Act has changed that, so that any union, however few its members, has a right to claim recognition in that company. So you have proliferation of unions, destroying the unity of the working class. Therefore, it is to be understood in that light, the seriousness of this Act, that has brought together union organisations like COSATU and NACTU to formulate a strategy

in response. NACTU, COSATU and all the unaffiliated unions that were participants in the Workers' Summit have decided on an overtime ban, so no overtime will be worked, and strategies are being formulated as to how to monitor this kind of action throughout the country. And, together with the Mass Democratic Movement, the unions will observe the two-week boycott of White businesses. And the unions are considering singling out those employers who have used the Act against the trade unions.

One of the things to note about the Labour Relations Amendment Act is that it allows employers to claim for damages from the union for lost production in the event of what they call an illegal strike, whether or not the union was aware of it. That is why the issue of the Labour Relations Amendment Act is seen in such a serious light.

Tell us about the development of strategy in the trade union movement, about consultations and the development of alliances.

Since it went underground in 1964, SACTU has continued to operate, like other members of the liberation alliance, forming its own units in the country. This underground work resulted in the re-emergence of the unions in the 1970s, after the historic strikes in East London and Durban and other places. Of course, there was still a lot of work to be done. But to see the role of

SACTU at this moment you would have to measure its activities in terms of the various meetings it is now able to hold openly with other trade union formations in the country, especially with the trade unions that are affiliates of COSATU.

I'm talking here about this year alone — meetings with the leadership of CCAWUSA, for instance, the Commercial Catering and Allied Workers' Union. The CCAWUSA leadership went to Harare to meet SACTU, because there were problems within the union itself. This is important, because CCAWUSA is an affiliate of COSATU, and the problem is being resolved in COSATU structures as well. But because of the confidence in SACTU that the CCAWUSA leadership has, and the role that SACTU has been playing in the trade union movement, it was felt that it is proper not only to try to use the machinery but also to use the experience and guidance of SACTU, to see if SACTU cannot intervene in trying to resolve the dispute within COSATU.

There was another meeting, some time this year in Lusaka, between POTWA, the Post Office and Telecommunications Workers' Association, the South African Post and Telecommunications Employees' Association and the Postal Employees' Association of South Africa, to discuss unity in the postal sector. POTWA is newly affiliated to COSATU, but again, because of SACTU's role, they felt that they wanted

to talk to SACTU, share experiences with SACTU, learn from SACTU.

After that, we had another big delegation from Food and Allied Workers' Union, FAWU. Of course, the food workers' union has got a long history of association with SACTU. When they were Food and Canning, they were one of the biggest affiliates, if not the biggest, and the most militant. They never disaffiliated; in fact, they always remind people that they never disaffiliated from SACTU, so as far as they're concerned they're still affiliated.

SARHWU, too, the Railways and Harbours Workers' Union, sent about 20 people to Lusaka for consultation.

Within the restrictions of underground work, a lot of other work is being done in the trade union movement, not only within COSATU. For instance, there are prospects of COSATU meeting with NACTU to discuss unity. SACTU has made it clear that we support the call for one country, one federation, and it has always been our view that COSATU represents the kind of federation that we want. Therefore, it is our duty to assist this process of getting NACTU to talk with COSATU. The aim is that NACTU and the unaffiliated, predominantly Black trade unions should join COSATU. So the purpose of this envisaged meeting with the leadership of NACTU would be to discuss the issue of unity, because we think it is of paramount importance.



**S.A. CONGRESS
OF
TRADE UNIONS**

HANDS OFF COSATU!

**SUPPORT THE TRADE UNIONS
IN SOUTH AFRICA**



**COSATU DEMANDS
THE RIGHT TO
SPEAK FREELY
THE RIGHT TO
ORGANISE
FREELY
THE RELEASE OF ALL
TRADE UNIONISTS**

**SUPPORT SACTU
SOUTH AFRICAN CONGRESS OF TRADE UNIONS
CAMPAIGN**



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION - SACTU & FLOWERS NEWS ARCHWAY CLOSE LONDON N19 2BT-3233

But, most important, COSATU has passed an international policy resolution. This requires, for instance, that the trade unions in COSATU, the affiliates of COSATU, should start forming bilateral relations with their sister unions in other countries, and this is the kind of work that SACTU can assist in. In fact, SACTU does assist, because of our exposure to the international trade union movement.

There is another thing I think is of the greatest importance. COSATU has stated in the resolution that certain forces outside South Africa are trying to use COSATU as a third force to ANC and SACTU. Some trade union bodies outside South Africa will tell us that they cannot support SACTU — financially, for instance — because they support COSATU, they support the UDF, they support whatever, inside South Africa. This has always been done to try and marginalise the liberation movement, as if its role has expired. COSATU, realising that, came out sharply at its congress in July, saying that international trade union bodies and any other forces must stop using COSATU as a third force to SACTU particularly, and the ANC. Those forces that want to support COSATU at home must also support the liberation movement, must support the organisations fighting against apartheid.

How did you work inside the country? What did you do? Give us some idea of how SACTU

works inside South Africa.

Where we start is that I once worked in the Black Allied Workers' Union, BAWU. After leaving BAWU, we formed a trade union called National Federation of Workers, NFW, which was to organise workers according to industries — it was, so to speak, a co-ordinating body. We organised various unions under it — postal workers, building workers, health workers, metal workers — and I was attached later to the metal union under the NFW. By then I was already a SACTU activist working in the trade union movement.

Even at that stage, SACTU had the goal of seeing the formation of a progressive trade union federation. All the SACTU operatives within the various trade unions at that time, long before the formation of COSATU, had, above all other tasks, the urgent task of preparing ground for getting the various trade unions together in order for those unions to discuss the issue of unity, discussions that would result in a federation being formed. It was a difficult task at that time, because there were some unions that had quite a negative attitude towards the national liberation movement, but which represented a substantial number of the Black workers, and were, in fact, among those unions that were in the forefront of the emergence of the Black trade unions in the 1970s and early 1980s. So it was a difficult task.

The first unity talks meeting was held in Cape Town, in Langa, in August 1981, and many union groupings from different political schools of thought came together there to discuss the issue of unity. It was never an easy thing. For the next four and a half years we had to fight, do everything possible — sometimes suspend the talks and re-convene — until COSATU was formed, in December 1985.

I was elected as Regional Secretary of COSATU in Northern Natal — that was very early in 1986. Then, in June 1986, the national state of emergency was declared, during which I was among the people who were detained. In fact, in Northern Natal, we had eight COSATU affiliates, all operating in the same office block. When we were detained, everybody was detained except the administrative assistant of COSATU, which meant that the whole staff was in detention for about two months, and there was nobody in the office.

Fortunately, the structures of COSATU emphasise shop floor leadership, shop stewards and leading workers on the factory floor. Therefore, when we came out, late in August, we found the work was not affected. It had proceeded well, and the workers had reached settlements; some negotiations were just suspended, with the agreement of the employers, until the leadership came out of detention, and were then backdated to July 1st, because usually wage agreements are concluded by July 1st.

COSATU RESOLUTION

1. To reaffirm that the trade union movement should retain its independence and decision-making structures.
2. To reaffirm that COSATU should strengthen and extend its disciplined alliance with the mass democratic structures at local, regional and national levels and develop a joint programme of action around national, regional and local issues to facilitate the rebuilding and strengthening of the structures of the Mass Democratic Movement at all levels.
3. Union members should become active members and participants in strengthening and rebuilding local, regional and national structures.

— Adopted at COSATU Congress, July 1989

Things like that.

Life became a bit difficult for me after the detention, because of threats by the security police and members of Inkatha. It meant that after I was released in August 1986 I couldn't stay in one place, so I would sleep in various houses of the members of COSATU in the region, until one day I made a mistake and went home, on December 11th 1986, and they came and they took me again. They released me again in June of the following year.

When I came out, in June 1987, there were these threats which resulted in October in some shady gunman trying to shoot me. So COSATU then removed me from Northern Natal to Johannesburg, and I went there to work for the Construction and Allied Workers' Union, until I came out of the

country this year in April.

What I am trying to emphasise here is that the activities of SACTU inside South Africa do not only include its full-time organisers. Yes, we have full-time organisers, who are not attached to any union, but who are able to influence events within various structures. At the same time, SACTU has many activists who are either workers and members of COSATU unions, or NACTU unions for that matter, as well as organisers in unions, who are actually SACTU people. All this is done to strengthen and consolidate COSATU and to encourage other workers to join it.

This is how we operate, in fact, though it is an underground kind of activity. And with discipline, some of us are able to survive for a long time without being detected by the regime.

And part of the discipline is not being able to go home to your family?

Yes.

When your comrades in COSATU learn that you're a SACTU man, there'll be no problems?

No, there will never be problems, because, as stated again and again by COSATU itself, there is no contradiction in the existence of COSATU and SACTU. Indeed, you'll find that many people who have been attached to COSATU, when they are forced by the regime to leave the country, they will safely find a home in SACTU, even those who were not necessarily activists of SACTU while they were inside the country.

IN OUR BACK YARD



ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

By P R Dullay

Apartheid kills in innumerable ways, and big business has innumerable ways of seeking its profits at the expense of human life.

The use of toxic herbicides in South Africa goes unchecked; a timber mill belonging to South African Pulp and Paper recently poisoned a stretch of the Crocodile River with industrial waste; there is the threat that Pretoria will set up a disposal unit for toxic waste from other countries.

A new and terrifying dimension has been added to the lives of all our people in South Africa: massive destruction of the environment.

According to the official figures, South Africa at present handles the disposal of 15 million tons of urban waste, 46 megatons of industrial waste and 250 megatons of mining waste — annually. These are official figures, and therefore they are probably gross underestimations.

Alarmingly, private companies handle industrial and mining waste disposal at enormous profit. It should be uppermost in our minds that there

are thousands of Black workers in these municipal and private companies, who work under primitive conditions to earn super-profits for the company owners.

Officially, about 270 000 South African workers are involved in industrial accidents every year, but current research suggests that the figure is closer to 505 000. The Workmen's Compensation Commission of the regime reports that 1 700 workers are killed, 22 000 permanently disabled and 115 000 temporarily disabled every year.

Secrecy and collaboration

It is not known how many of these deaths and injuries are due to chemicals. The regime has shrouded the entire issue under a veil of secrecy, and has:

- ★ suspended its own testing of pollution levels;
- ★ used its intelligence service to harass environmental scientists who have researched evidence of massive chemical pollution;
- ★ failed to carry out even minimum control of chemicals on farms.

One of the more alarming recent developments has been the destruction of plant life in the Eastern

Transvaal, Orange Free State and most of all in Natal, by high levels of pollutants of the Agent Orange type. Agent Orange is a hormonal herbicide which combines two herbicide ingredients known as '24-D' and '254-T,' and which is used to destroy vegetation. It was used with horrific results by the United States in its war against the Vietnamese people. Its use is banned in most parts of the world. In Natal and elsewhere, it is being used by the sugar and forestry industries to control weeds. Supposedly, it leaves the sugar crop and the forests intact, while destroying the weeds; but it is carried by rain, seepage and wind, destroying vegetables and other natural vegetation. In addition, it causes various forms of skin cancer, liver cancer and deformities in the new-born.

Chemwatch is an environmental group in South Africa, monitoring the use of herbicides containing the ingredients of Agent Orange. In 1988, it revealed that 245-T in samples of rain water was found to be 10 000 times higher than the limit found to be safe in the United States, and about three times higher than the level recorded in Vietnam after bombardment with about four million litres of Agent Orange. The evidence seems to suggest that the findings, and the subsequent cover-up, justifies the belief that millions of litres of pollutants have been used.

Chemical companies

All evidence points to an attempt to cover up the manufacture and distribution of herbicides in South Africa by 20 chemical companies, including Agricura, BASF (SA), Ciba-Geigy, Shell, Sentrachem, Maybaker, Bayerchemicals, ICI Chemicals and C H Chemicals; and that this group is powerfully lobbying to prevent restrictions being imposed on their multi-million rand industry. At present, a small group of Natal farmers is taking legal action against these companies, the largest chemical companies in the world, in an attempt to impose a blanket ban on the use and manufacture of all hormonal herbicides in South Africa.

The pesticide, DDT, is banned in most parts of

the world, including White South Africa, but, because of the reappearance of malaria, bantustan authorities use it to spray homes, hospitals and public buildings in an effort to control the spread of malaria. Toxins in DDT take years to break down, and easily enter the human food and water cycle. The threat posed by just this one chemical is alarming indeed. Its use in the bantustans is an example of how the chemical companies find markets in poor and undeveloped countries for products which the rich countries consider too dangerous for their own use.

The South African Chemical Workers' Union and the Paper, Print and Allied Workers' Union, among others, are active in the fight against the indiscriminate use of pesticides, herbicides and other chemical compounds that are banned for use in other countries. However, because of low levels of awareness among workers about what is dangerous or not, and the hazardous nature of pollutants, these unions are hard pressed to put up adequate resistance. Farm workers are the most exposed, and form the least protected group.

Toxic waste dumping

Despite recent denials, South Africa's environment minister, Gert Kotze, reported to parliament in February 1989 that Pretoria was seriously considering building a waste disposal facility in South Africa. Reports suggest that the site could be near Alexander Bay in the North-Western Cape.

Europe and the United States have, covertly and overtly, been waging a campaign to dump their highly dangerous toxic wastes on developing countries. After a series of waste spillage disasters in Europe, the EEC introduced stringent controls in 1986, and this triggered off dumping in Africa and elsewhere. The example of Italian toxic waste dumped in Koko, Nigeria, is a case in point, and similar examples are to be found in Guinea, the Congo, Guinea-Bissau and other countries.

There is a mountain of evidence to prove that present levels of technology have been unable to create adequate disposal plants for toxic wastes anywhere in the world. Problems that the West cannot solve are, like dangerous chemicals, be-

ing dumped on poor and developing countries.

South Africa is already importing toxic waste for destruction. A study by the environmental group, Greenpeace, reveals that three million tons of toxic industrial waste was exported from the developed countries between 1986 and 1988, and that South Africa was one of the recipients.

Greenpeace lists Thor Chemicals of Natal as a major importer of toxic mercury waste from the United States. Since 1986, 120 drums of mercury waste have been imported from American Cyanamid of New Jersey.

Researchers in Natal have pointed a finger at Thor Chemicals for high levels of mercury pollution of the Umgweni River in Natal, around the Thor plant at Cato Ridge. The Umgweni is a tributary of the Umgeni, which supplies most of the Durban area with water. Having entered the environment and the food chain, mercury does not break down easily, and results in disorders of the human kidneys, liver and nervous system. Bill Visagie, South African Director of Environmental Affairs, however, found no problems with Thor Chemicals.

Financial Mail collaborates

Pias Deana, an Italian businessman, claims he has already signed a contract with a Southern African country for construction of dumps and plants to dispose of toxic waste, and he claims that similar negotiations with South Africa and Namibia are at an advanced stage. Investigators in the Netherlands believe that Southern Africa, and especially South Africa, is earmarked for disposal of some of the world's most lethal chemicals. The proposed site of 24 000 hectares near Alexander Bay could be so gigantic as to handle 10 000 tons of toxic waste per day — that is, two shiploads.

The South African paper, *The Financial Mail*, is a prime mover in gaining acceptance for this. Late in 1988, South African MPs were supplied with a leading article from the issue of October 21st, analysing the lucrative possibilities of such a venture and the suggestion that the scheme was worthy of government support. *The Financial Mail* expressed the opinion that:

"... with responsible planning and adequate safeguards, the potential exists to set up an industry which could be a massive foreign exchange earner ... There is an important opportunity here for South Africa — and government should seize it by authorising a detailed feasibility and environmental impact study to confirm that a risk-managed import programme can be established, and where and how this can be done."

In their desperation to extricate themselves from the nightmare of the South African economy, capitalist interests in government and business would sink to any level, even to the destruction of our country. The acute difficulty the regime is experiencing in meeting its debt repayments makes the idea as attractive as heavenly manna.

The ANC, together with the Mass Democratic Movement, should make every effort to:

- ★ stop the use of all hormonal herbicides and pesticides, especially 24-D and 245-T, ingredients of Agent Orange;
- ★ stop the use of DDT and related chemicals;
- ★ stop the import of all toxic waste into South Africa;
- ★ stop the construction of chemical waste disposal plants and dumps for destruction of imported wastes;
- ★ encourage the study of safe chemical waste disposal and safe methods of fertilising and of weed control.

We have to act to stop this madness. The soil and the water are being contaminated now. People are dying now as a result of this contamination, and the health of others is being destroyed. Once the major dumps and plants are in place, it would prove a nightmare to remove and destroy them, not including the cost in human terms. We should act now.

References:

- Financial Mail*, 21.10.88.
- Weekly Mail*, 21.7.88, 30.3.89, 7.4.89, 20.7.89.
- Star*, 13.4.89.
- Financial Mail*, 21.10.88.

ANC INTERNATIONAL

German Democratic Republic Tribute to Heinz Schmidt

When anti-fascist warrior Heinz Schmidt passed away in his 83rd year on September 14th, he left behind a life devoted to the struggle of mankind for a world without wars and the well-being of all on our planet.

Until his retirement, he was Chairman of the Solidarity Committee in the German Democratic Republic. In this capacity he presided over the creation of many fraternal ties of solidarity between the people of South Africa and the people of the GDR, for during his period of office the Solikomitee set up various projects to assist the South African liberation alliance, including the arrangement by which *Sechaba* is printed each month at the Erich Weinert works in Neubrandenburg.

At all times, he maintained close and fraternal relations with the African National Congress. ANC activists who were stationed in the German Democratic Republic at one time or another will always remember him for his grasp and understanding of our struggle. At all times approachable, he was a good listener to problems, ideas and suggestions. He was known for his willingness to help in whatever way he and the

Solidarity Committee could; no issue was too big or too small for him to tackle.

A true internationalist, he continued after his retirement to participate in activities promoting solidarity and friendship among all peoples.

Heinz Schmidt's life consisted of more than six decades in the ranks of the German working class movement. In 1926, he joined the Communist Party of Germany and was active in the fight to prevent the rise of nazism and the outbreak of war. After the nazis took power in 1933, he continued to fight in the German underground anti-fascist resistance. These activities landed him in the notorious Brandenburg Prison. On his release, he was forced into exile, and, unbroken, continued to contribute to the struggle, from abroad, working for the BBC on programmes beamed into Germany.

After the crushing of Nazism, he immediately returned home to play his part in the fight to build a peace-loving and democratic Germany, and thus he became one of those many dedicated, self-sacrificing people known as 'the activists of the first hour.'

From the time the German Democratic Republic was founded in 1949, Heinz Schmidt continued to be active in the social and political affairs of the

country. He became chairman of the Solidarity Committee of the GDR in 1957. His contribution to the cause of world peace and the well-being of all mankind is acknowledged by the peace and democratic forces in both German states, and also by the national and social liberation movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is in this spirit that we in the African National Congress dip our revolutionary banner and say:

**Hamba kahle,
Comrade Heinz Schmidt!**



Heinz Schmidt

Sweden Tribute to Göran Davidsson

After the sudden death of Comrade Göran Davidsson, a collection for the ANC was raised to honour his memory in a useful way. A sum of 21 050 Swedish kroner has been handed over to the ANC, for the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College in Tanzania. In addition, a great number of relatives and friends sent their contributions direct to the ANC, without mentioning that they were intended as part of the memorial collection.

Comrade Davidsson died at the early age of 45 from a heart attack. He had devoted his all-too-short life to the struggle for solidarity with all oppressed

people, socialism and peace.

From his childhood, he had a strong feeling for justice. All his adult life he was an organised Communist, and he suffered years of victimisation in his work, because he fought against social injustice and for tolerable working conditions. He worked selflessly and generously in solidarity campaigns for oppressed and fighting peoples. He spared no pains, if he could help someone.

Everyone who knew Göran Davidsson agrees that the memorial collection was exactly what he would have wished.

Ghana

Revolutionaries from all over the world attended a three-day international symposium in Accra, the capital of Ghana, on the 80th anniversary of the birth of Dr Kwame Nkrumah, who was the first head of state of independent Ghana. The symposium centred on the thoughts and practice of Dr Nkrumah in the context of the liberation struggle of the South African and Palestinian peoples.

The ANC was represented by Comrades Keith Mokoape and Ntokozo Phepo. Comrade Martin Sere represented SACTU.

The ANC in France

In September, the town of Clayes-sous-Bois inaugurated a new housing development, which includes a meeting square. The square was named

Nelson Mandela Square by the mayor of the town, and she and Comrade Denis Goldberg, who represented the ANC, both spoke about the importance of this act of solidarity with the people of South Africa. A marquetry plaque was unveiled, depicting a black figure and a white figure running together.

An enthusiastic crowd of townspeople attended the ceremony. The dynamic music of Julian Bahula and the group *Jabula* — especially the number, *Mandela* — was greeted with wild cheers.

In the city of Lille, the annual Inter-Cultural Festival gave emphasis to the culture of those groups who in France are still called 'immigrant people,' and featured a meeting and round table discussion on the significance of the French Revolution for the countries of the 'South.'

It was clear that the audience was greatly interested in the struggle against apartheid, and the prospect that the people of Southern Africa, once crushed by colonialism, will give meaning to those great concepts of the French Revolution: Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. The festival was held under the patronage of the mayor of the city, M. Pierre Mauroy, former Prime Minister, and General Secretary of the Socialist Party. Participants included representatives from the Cuban and Nicaraguan Embassies, and the former Prime Minister of Burkina-Fasso. Comrade Denis Goldberg represented the ANC.



Göran Davidsson

YUSUF DADOO AND GANDHI AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN STRUGGLE

By E S Reddy



*Yusuf Dadoo addresses a crowd at the Johannesburg City Hall during the Defiance Campaign.
Nelson Mandela is standing on his right.*

The writer of this article, who was formerly Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations, reflects on the influence of Mahatma Gandhi on Yusuf Dadoo, the South African leader, and on the contribution both Dadoo and Gandhi made to the South African struggle for liberation.

Speaking to a group of South African Indian students in February 1939, Gandhi said that if the Indian community in South Africa had guts in

them, they would launch a *satyagraha*:

"I am hoping that some day, from among the

youths born in South Africa, a person will rise who will stand up for the rights of his countrymen domiciled there, and make the vindication of those rights his life's mission."

He had been distressed for a long time about the situation in South Africa, where he had discovered *satyagraha* and dedicated his life to it, with a conviction that defiance of evil and willingness to sacrifice would prevail over the brute force of the oppressors.

Ever since he had left South Africa in 1914, more and more humiliating restrictions had been imposed on the Indians, undermining all that had been achieved by the great *satyagraha* of 1906-1914, but there had been no resistance. Leaders of Indian organisations had become docile and selfish, and engaged in petty squabbles and shameful compromises of the dignity and honour of the Indian people.

Gandhiji did not know, when he met the students, that a dedicated leadership was emerging from a new generation of South Africans — one that would recapture the spirit of defiance he had taught, and take it forward to a new level.

Transvaal Indians call for resistance

Despite the opposition of the leadership, a mass public meeting called by the Transvaal Indian Congress on March 1st 1939 adopted a proposal from Dr Yusuf Mohamed Dadoo and his supporters, that passive resistance should be launched if a pending segregation bill was enacted. At a subsequent meeting chaired by E I Asvat, a veteran who had been imprisoned 14 times in Gandhi's *satyagraha*, Yusuf Dadoo was elected leader of the campaign and head of the Council for Action. That began the dedication of his life to public service.

Dadoo sought the "advice, guidance and inspiration" of Gandhi, who readily endorsed the emerging leadership. Advising that passive resistance be postponed while he contacted General Smuts and the Indian Government to secure abandonment of the obnoxious bill, he

assured Dadoo that, if his efforts failed, the whole of India would back the resisters.

Recalling that Dadoo's father had been his client, he wrote to Dadoo on August 19th, 1939:

"It has stirred me to find you heading the satyagraha band. You are engaged in a very hard struggle. And if, as a result of the present effort, a handful of you make it the mission of your life to serve the cause there, you will gradually build up a prestige that will stand you in good stead."

The confidence and hope of Gandhi were not misplaced. Dr Dadoo not only led the Indian people in mass defiance, but proceeded to do what Gandhi could not envisage in his time. He became an architect of the unity of all the oppressed people in the struggle to end racist tyranny, not merely to alleviate grievances.

ANC honours Dadoo

The African National Congress honoured Yusuf Dadoo in 1955 with the award of the decoration, Isitwalandwe Seaparankoe. Nelson Mandela described him, in 1960, in evidence during the Treason Trial, as "one of the most outstanding leaders in our movement, revered throughout the country." The ANC elected him Vice-Chairman of its Revolutionary Council in 1969. In September 1983, Oliver Tambo said at his funeral in London, on behalf of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress:

"It would be wrong to conceive of Comrade Dadoo only as a leader of the Indian community of our population. He was one of the foremost national leaders of our country, of the stature of Chief Lutuli, Moses Kotane, J B Marks, Bram Fischer, Nelson Mandela and others."

Yusuf Dadoo was born on September 5th 1909 in Krugersdorp, the son of a prosperous Indian trader. As a child, he experienced racism, and was involved in fights with White boys who insulted

and attacked him. He learned about the struggle led by Gandhi, and took part in *hartals* (strikes) in protest against anti-Indian measures such as the Class Areas Bill of 1923.

Development of a revolutionary

As a student at Aligarh Muslim College in India from 1925 to 1927, he took great interest in the Indian national movement, rejecting communalism. Proceeding to London in 1929 at the age of 19, he joined the London branch of the Indian National Congress, and was arrested in a demonstration for Indian freedom and against the Simon Commission.

While studying medicine in Edinburgh, he took an active part in politics, as a member of the Independent Labour Party and of the League Against Imperialism, which advocated unity of the oppressed people of the world. He joined hunger marches in Britain, addressed meetings in Hyde Park, and worked for the India League. He came under the influence of Pandit Nehru and Marxists who advocated a "united front" against fascism. All the time, he kept close contact with South Africa, trying to encourage resistance against the racist onslaughts.

Returning to South Africa in 1936, he began to practise as a doctor, and his professional work strengthened his political commitment. Interviewed on United Nations Radio in 1979, he recalled:

"I came across the poverty, the misery, the malnutrition, the sickness of the Black people every day ... And that made one's blood boil. What can one do to help these people? Medicine is one thing — you give a few tablets or a mixture — but it doesn't go to the basis of the problem. That has a great deal to do with my thinking, and I got into political struggle."

He proceeded to rally the Indian people against the compromising leadership of the Transvaal Indian Congress, for militant resistance against anti-Indian measures and for a united front with the

African majority against racist-fascist oppression. He was soon able to secure the support of the great majority of the Indian people, including many former colleagues of Gandhi and their children. He organised the Non-European United Front in the Transvaal, and became its Secretary-General. And in 1939, the year he contacted Gandhi, he joined the Communist Party of South Africa.

Passive resistance campaign

The proposed passive resistance of 1939 was postponed, on the advice of Gandhi. The time was utilised to strengthen the organisation of the Indians and to develop unity with the Africans. Dadoo spent much time addressing meetings in African townships, and was imprisoned twice on a charge of inciting Africans against the war.

Together with Dr A B Xuma, President of the African National Congress, he became a leader of the Anti-Pass Council set up in 1943 to campaign against the humiliating restrictions on the movement of Africans. It collected 800 000 signatures to petition against the pass laws, and Dadoo was again arrested, for leading a procession to present the petition to the government.

He earned the respect of Africans by identifying himself with their concerns — a square in Orlando was named after him — and developed a close friendship with African leaders like J B Marks and Moses Kotane.

The Indian passive resistance movement of 1946-48 was led by Dr Dadoo, a Marxist, and Dr G M Naicker, a Gandhian; and 2 000 people went to gaol. It made South African racism a world issue. It also laid the basis for a national mass movement for freedom in South Africa.

The African National Congress backed the Indian resistance. A number of non-Indian volunteers — Africans, Indians and Coloured people — courted imprisonment in solidarity with the Indian people. International solidarity with the Indian and African people was promoted not only in India, but also in Britain and the United States, through the efforts of V K Krishna Menon, Fenner Brockway and Paul Robeson, with whom

Yusuf Dadoo had come in contact as a student activist.

Mineworkers' strike

A few weeks after the resistance was launched, when African mineworkers went on strike under the leadership of J B Marks, and many were massacred, the Indian community rushed to give assistance. Dadoo was brought from prison to be tried on the charge of inciting the strike.

Later that year, when the Indian complaint against South Africa was discussed in the United Nations, a multi-racial delegation led by Dr Xuma visited New York to assist the Indian delegation. In March 1947, Dr Xuma, Dr Dadoo and Dr Naicker signed what came to be known as the 'doctors' pact' — the pact of co-operation between the African and Indian congresses.

Mantle of Gandhi

It may seem strange that the mantle of Gandhi in South Africa had thus fallen on a Marxist. But Gandhi, who followed and guided the movement, fully supported Dadoo, brushing aside complaints by Manilal Gandhi and others. For him, the objectives of the struggle and the means employed were the essentials, rather than the ideological and other labels of the participants; and Yusuf Dadoo demonstrated the integrity, courage and willingness to sacrifice that Gandhi valued in a public servant.

In the United Nations Radio interview, Dadoo spoke of early influences on his thinking:

"I hold Gandhiji in very high respect and affection. He, as a matter of fact, had a great deal to do with moulding my thinking, and subsequently my political activities. I believed in Gandhiji to the extent that there must be resistance, there must be struggle for justice and righteousness. But after Gandhiji went back to India, there arose another great revolutionary fighter, Pandit Nehru, whose broad

views on politics attracted young people at the time. I believed in the policy of Nehru, who also did not believe completely, implicitly, in absolute non-violence."

In his mind, the influence of Pandit Nehru, or, one might add, Karl Marx, in no way erased the spirit of defiance he had imbibed from Gandhi. He became noted for constantly refusing to submit to racist intimidation and repression, and for the numerous resulting arrests. He risked even his life for the cause. And though he did not believe in non-violence as a creed, he took care that the passive resistance was totally non-violent; even when White ruffians began brutally to assault passive resisters, including women.

The interaction of Gandhism and Marxism perhaps enhanced the significance of the *satyagraha* of 1946-48, and made it a rehearsal for mass resistance by all oppressed people in South Africa. For Gandhi, who was deeply anguished by the Hindu-Muslim carnage that spread in the Indian sub-continent on the eve of independence, as if his life's work had been in vain, the resistance in South Africa was a solace, demonstrating that *satyagraha* was alive and well in the land of its birth.

Gandhi's attitude explained

Much has been written about Gandhi's opposition to a united front of Indians with Africans, but his attitude is often misunderstood, and requires explanation.

During his stay in South Africa, the Indian community was composed largely of people born in India, who were essentially alien settlers, though some Indians had arrived there long before the first shipload of indentured labourers in 1860. Many Indian traders maintained contacts and property interests in India. The struggle led by Gandhi was for the security of the settlers, in defence of their self-respect, and even more for the honour of India, which was affronted by the racial legislation. It was thus a contribution to the Indian national movement rather than an attempt to change the

social order in South Africa.

The victory of the *satyagraha* in India — when the determination and sacrifices of resisters and the savage repression by the regime aroused opinion in India and persuaded the Imperial Government in London to intervene — was of great historical significance for India and the world. Its effect in countering racism in South Africa, however, was very limited. Gandhi secured satisfaction of the minimum demands, leaving the rest for the future. Further Indian immigration to South Africa was virtually stopped, and Gandhi assured the authorities that Indians did not seek political rights.

The Indian demands — ending of the poll tax, validation of Hindu and Muslim marriages, and protection of vested rights as regards ownership of property or trading licences — had little to do with the legitimate aspirations of the African people for self-determination in their country. There was little possibility of a united struggle, since the African political movements were then at a nascent stage.

Gandhi foresaw the inevitable confrontation between the Africans and the White rulers. Replying to fears that his passive resistance would place a new weapon in the hands of Africans, he said soon after the Bambata uprising, as reported by the Reverend Doke in *M K Gandhi: An Indian Patriot in South Africa*:

"Men who see far believe that the problems which are connected with the Natives will be the problems of the future, and that, doubtless, the White man will have a stern struggle to maintain his ascendancy in South Africa. When the moment of collision comes, if, instead of the old ways of massacre, assegai and fire, the Natives adopt the policy of passive resistance, it will be a grand change for the Colony ...

If, then, the Natives accept the doctrines which are now so prevalent amongst the Indian community, South Africa need not fear the horrors of a racial uprising. It need not look forward to the necessity of maintaining an army to keep the Natives in awe. Its future will be much brighter than its past has been."

While this early experience conditioned the thinking of Gandhi, the situation in South Africa had changed by the 1930s, when Yusuf Dadoo came on the political scene. Most of the Indians had been born in South Africa, and saw the rise of African political consciousness.

Dialogue and co-operation between Africans and Indians began to develop in the trade unions and among intellectuals. As the regime continued with its plans to force out or segregate the Indians, more and more Indians began to feel that new means of struggle had become necessary. The small Indian community could not by itself stop the racist onslaught, nor could it depend on the agents of the colonial government in India. Unity with the Africans, they felt, was the only hope for a secure future.

The issue of Indian-African unity provoked a public debate in India in 1939, when the Non-European United Front was set up in South Africa. Gandhi strongly opposed a proposal by Dr Ram Manohar Lehia that the Indian National Congress welcome the efforts towards united struggle. The reasoning behind his opposition may be found in an interview he had given to the Reverend SS Tema, and which was printed in the *Harijan* of February 18th 1939. When asked for his views on the "talk" of a united front for Indians and Africans. He said:

"It will be a mistake. You will be pooling together not strength but weakness. You will best help one another by each standing on his own legs. The two cases are different. The Indians are a microscopic minority. They can never be a menace to the White population. You, on the other hand, are the sons of the soil who are being robbed of your inheritance. You are bound to resist that. Yours is a far bigger issue. It ought not to be mixed up with that of the Indian. This does not preclude the establishment of the friendliest relations between the two races."

He added that the Indians should never put themselves in opposition to the legitimate aspirations of

the Africans, and encouraged the development of an African mass movement.

Gandhi still thought of Africans as the only rightful owners of South Africa, the Indians as alien settlers and the Europeans as: "undoubtedly usurpers, exploiters or conquerors, or all of them rolled into one." (*Harijan*, July 1st 1939)

He was not persuaded that the new trends of thinking had taken hold among Indians, or that the Africans sought a united front. Neither seemed well organised to be able to combine strength.

When his position in the Congress came under wide criticism in India, he conceded that his view "need not deter the Indians from forming a non-European front if they are sure thereby of winning their freedom." (*Harijan*, July 15th 1939) He was to change his views in the light of further developments in South Africa, and the sentiment in India.

Unity in the cause of freedom

Indian nationalist opinion was essentially in favour of identification of Indian settlers abroad with the indigenous people, in the cause of freedom and human dignity. Mrs Sarojini Naidu forcefully expressed this view on her visit to South Africa in 1924. Pandit Nehru spoke out for a united front of the oppressed people and advanced sections of the Whites in South Africa and elsewhere, after the Congress against Imperialism in 1927.

The urge for unity in struggle grew stronger during World War II. This was reflected by Indira Nehru, who visited South Africa in April 1941, on the way home from studies in England. Together with a party of fellow students, she issued a statement, which was published in *The Guardian* of Cape Town, on April 10th 1941. The statement welcomed "the new awakening of the exploited and oppressed nationalities in South Africa," and added:

"We wholeheartedly support the Non-European United Front in its historic task of mobilising the progressive forces against all manifestations of political and racial tyranny

of your existing government.

At a time when we are fighting our battles in India, this growing movement in your land provides the basis for united action by the enslaved peoples of our two countries."

By the end of the war, Gandhi, too, began to espouse the principle of unity of the exploited races of the earth. Never again did he oppose a united front in South Africa, but merely kept warning against any abandonment of non-violence.

In the message he gave to Dr Dadoo and Dr Naicker on their visit to India, soon after the pact of co-operation between the African and Indian Congresses, he said, as reported in *The Harijan* of May 25th 1947:

"Political co-operation among all the exploited races in South Africa can only result in mutual goodwill, if it is wisely directed and based on truth and non-violence."

He constantly stressed the primacy of African interests. He even told the All India Congress Committee on July 7th 1946, on learning of the murder of an Indian near the site of passive resistance, that he would not shed a single tear if all the Indian *satyagrahis* were wiped out, for they would thereby point the way to the Africans and vindicate the honour of India.

Defiance Campaign and after

Gandhiji was no more when the National Party came to power in May 1948 and began to erect the structure of apartheid for perpetual White domination and the dispossession of all the Black people.

Dr Dadoo and Dr Naicker came out of prison in July, calling for a united front against racism — Dr Naicker used the term, "united democratic front" — and they immersed themselves in efforts to build a firm alliance. This led to the Campaign for the Defiance of Unjust Laws — organised jointly by the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress — in which over

8 000 people of all racial origins went to prison. Yusuf Dadoo was among the first to defy.

The African movement had come of age. It contributed most of the resisters, and from their ranks emerged inspiring national leaders such as Nelson Mandela, who was the Volunteer-in-Chief, Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo.

The non-violent Defiance Campaign was not only a great landmark in the long struggle of the South African people, but had a much wider significance. For it was that campaign in South Africa, and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States which followed, which showed that the concept of *satyagraha* was not for the Indians alone. These campaigns, as much as Gandhi's *satyagrahas*, were to inspire numerous upsurges of aroused peoples around the world to topple mighty dictators, stop wars and save the human environment.

With the launching of the Defiance Campaign, the perspective was no more of petitions or actions to alleviate grievances, but a long and hard struggle to end racist rule. Victory would be the culmination of a series of ever more difficult battles, each perhaps ending in defeat but ultimately leading to triumph. That required a band of determined men and women willing to dedicate their lives to the cause, and make the supreme sacrifice if need be.

The Defiance Campaign, which began as a joint African-Indian effort, transformed the freedom movement into one, under African leadership, and buried for ever the myth that the Africans were not advanced enough to undertake and lead a well-organised and humane resistance. The mantle of Gandhiji passed from Dr Dadoo and Dr Naicker to Chief Albert Lutuli, who was to carry it with honour and dignity.

Legacy of Yusuf Dadoo

Yusuf Dadoo continued to make a crucial contribution — for eight years under severe restrictions and three decades in exile — as an elder statesman as well as a militant, under the leadership of the African National Congress. The tremendous contribution he made, under condi-

tions of illegality, will not be known for some years. But he fought on to the end with unbounded faith, exhorting his colleagues even on his death bed on September 19th 1983:

"You must never give up; you must fight to the end."

Yusuf Dadoo began his political life in the small Indian community in South Africa, with a conviction that its destiny was with the African majority and that its future should be built by its willingness to sacrifice in the struggle for a free, democratic South Africa. That conviction was in harmony with the views of Gandhi, who warned in *Young India* on April 5th 1928:

"Indians cannot exist in South Africa for any length of time without the active sympathy and friendship of the Africans."

Yusuf Dadoo carried forward the tradition of Gandhi by building an alliance of Indians and Africans as the basis for widest unity of the people against racism.

He became the prototype of the new men and women of the future — as against the caricature of a human being that apartheid sought to mould. As early as 1956, Ezekiel Mphahlele, the African writer, said, perhaps half in jest:

"One might even say Yusuf Dadoo has a Marxist head, a Hindu heart, Mohammedan nails and an African blood-system."

Under his leadership, and with the legacy of Gandhi, the Indian community, consisting of hardly three percent of the South African population, has been privileged to make a very significant contribution at a crucial stage of the freedom struggle. Let us hope that it will make a worthy contribution in the coming final effort to transform the country from a prison of the Black people to a land that can inspire the world with people of African, Indian and European ancestry living in freedom and harmony.

The epic struggle in the south of Africa can now look forward to its triumph if the world community can be mobilised to exert its collective influence. India cannot fail to make its fullest contribution to that end.

Sechaba and other ANC publications are obtainable from the following ANC addresses:

Annual Subscriptions:

USA and Canada (air mail only): institutions \$30; individuals \$25

All other countries £12

Please make cheques payable to:

Sechaba Publications c/o ANC PO Box 38 London N1 9PR

ALGERIA

5 Rue Ben M'hidi Larbi
Algiers

ANGOLA

PO Box 3523
Luanda

AUSTRALIA

Box 49 Trades Hall
4 Goulburn Street
Sydney NSW 2000

BELGIUM

PO Box 137
1040 Brussels

CANADA

PO Box 302
Adelaide Postal Station
Toronto
Ontario M5C-2J4

CUBA

Calle 21A
NR 20617
Esquina 214 Atabey
Havana

DENMARK

Landgreven 7/3 t.h.
1301 Kbh Copenhagen K

EGYPT

5 Ahmad Hismat Street
Zamalek
Cairo

ETHIOPIA

PO Box 7483
Addis Ababa

FINLAND

PO Box 336
00531 Helsinki

**FEDERAL REPUBLIC
OF GERMANY**

Postfach 190140
5300 Bonn 1

FRANCE

28 Rue des Petites Ecuries
75010 Paris

**GERMAN DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC**

Angerweg 2
Wilhelmsruh
Berlin 1106

INDIA

50KP Thacker Block
Asian Games Village
Siri Fort Road
Khel Gaon Marg
New Delhi-110049

ITALY

Via S. Prisca 15a
00153 Rome

JAPAN

Square-House Shin-Nakano
Room 105
4-38-16 Honcho Nakano-Ku
Tokyo

KENYA

PO Box 40432
Nairobi

MADAGASCAR

PO Box 80
Antananarivo

NETHERLANDS

PO Box 16657
1001 RD Amsterdam

NIGERIA

Federal Government
Special Guest House
Victoria Island
Lagos.

NORWAY

PO Box 6765
St Olavs Plass
N-0130 Oslo 1

SENEGAL

26 Avenue Albert Sarraut
PO Box 3420
Dakar

SWEDEN

Box 6183
S-102 33
Stockholm

TANZANIA

PO Box 2239
Dar es Salaam
PO Box 680
Morogoro

USSR

Konyushkovskaya Street 28
Moscow 123242

UNITED KINGDOM

PO Box 38
28 Penton Street
London N1 9PR

UNITED STATES

801 Second Avenue
Apt 405
New York NYC 10017

ZAMBIA

PO Box 31791
Lusaka

"The release of these stalwarts of our struggle was a massive victory for the people of South Africa, the international solidarity movement, the sanctions campaign and the campaign to isolate the regime."

— MDM

**Front cover: Walter Sisulu with his wife, Albertina
Below: Oscar Mpetha and Wilton Mkwayi**

