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national congress south africa

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ISSN: 0037-0509

SECHABA

Volume 23 No 6

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EDITORIAL

WE DEMAND POW STATUS FOR CAPTURED COMBATANTS

Jabu Masina, 36, Ting Ting Masango, 30, and Neo Potsane, 28, undaunted soldiers of Umkhonto We Sizwe, join over 60 men and women who are known to be currently awaiting execution on Pretoria's death row. Charged with treason, terrorism and murder, they and a fourth co-accused, Joseph Makhura, 27, were found guilty of murder and attempted murder after a month-long trial.

On April 27th, 1989, they were sentenced. The three received the death sentence plus 25 years for murder and attempted murder, while Makhura was sentenced to 25 years for attempted murder.

The four have asserted that, as soldiers, they should not be tried by a civilian court. Their courageous stand, in spite of the possibility of the death penalty, comes at a time of growing calls for captured combatants to be accorded the status of prisoners of war.

The South African people have never doubted the legitimacy of the armed struggle waged by Umkhonto We Sizwe. The ANC has argued long and hard in the international community that it was forced to embark on armed resistance by the violence and terrorism of the apartheid state. This is now widely accepted, but we must argue further that the apartheid regime is illegitimate, and that international law permits us to wage war against it.

Force was used to colonise

and enslave the people of South Africa. The Act of Union of 1910 created a parliament without consulting the majority of people in the country. The African people are denied the vote. The Land Act of 1913 gave the African people 13% of the land. Having stripped Africans of their citizenship, the regime has created bantustans, and has used force to remove millions of African people into them. The statute books of Pretoria are filled with laws to subjugate the majority people and to maintain White supremacy, and these laws are reinforced through the brutal use of the state of emergency and a multitude of repressive 'security' laws.

Clearly, the apartheid regime rules without the authority of the people, and this is in breach of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which declares:

"The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of the government; this will be expressed in periodic and general elections."

Apartheid has been declared a crime against humanity. The illegitimacy of the apartheid regime has been recognised by international bodies, including the General Assembly of the United Nations, which has declared that it has no right to represent the people of South Africa. Further, in 1966, the General Assembly described the acts of the apartheid regime as war crimes. The apartheid regime has unleashed its aggression against both the people of South Africa and the peoples of its neighbours.

The ANC is entitled to oppose this illegitimate regime, and to combat it. The right to self-determination is an established principle of international law; and the United Nations has declared that, in pursuit of that right, peoples are entitled to seek and receive support from other nations. Hence, the ANC has a right to engage in armed struggle; and, since 1979, the General Assembly has explicitly given its support to this.

Given that the people of South Africa, led by the ANC, are at war with the apartheid regime, captured combatants must be entitled to claim POW status under the Geneva Conventions. The original Conventions of 1949, narrowly drawn, were widened by the 1977 Protocols. Protocol 1 of

1977 covers international armed conflicts, including struggles against colonial and alien domination, and racist regimes. Since 1980, the ANC has been a party to the Conventions, and has observed its obligations under international law in accordance with the Conventions.

The courts of South Africa

derive their authority from the illegitimate regime, and have no authority to try those upholding international law. The combatants of the ANC have every right to demand POW status. Those who should stand in the dock are the criminals of apartheid.

CONSTITUTIONAL GUIDELINES OF THE ANC

A VITAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID

By Zola S.T. Skweyiya

This paper was delivered by Zola Skweyiya at the meeting between the African National Congress and Afrikaner Lawyers and Academics held in Harare in January 1989. We publish this article in the hope that it will help correct some misrepresentations in the western press and mass media and at home on the motives and intentions of the movement in issuing the guidelines. This article is also meant to be part of the on-going debate and discussion within our movement and at home.

In the last five years different constitutional models have been presented from different quarters, either to try to extricate the apartheid regime from its present crisis or to attempt to draw up a constitution for a post-apartheid South Africa. What is surprising is that the victims of apartheid tyranny, the oppressed people of South Africa and their liberation movement were never consulted nor were their views solicited.

It is significant that most of the attempts at constitutional modelling were presented at the apex

of the struggles launched by the democratic forces which threw the apartheid system into an unprecedented crisis in the period between late 1984 and early 1987. The heightened mobilisation of the oppressed by the ANC, both in urban and rural areas, its concerted efforts at politicisation of the broad masses of our people and the effective actions of Umkhonto We Sizwe contributed towards shifting the balance of forces in the country towards a democratic transformation. Through struggle was built, within South Africa, the most



Votes
FOR
ALL

Down
with
Strict-Law
Equal Work
FOR
Equal Pay

Down with
REMOVAL
OF
PAs Western-Cities

Free
Education

Freedom
OF
SPEECH

We want
Better
houses

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formidable democratic movement our country has ever seen. Its consistency, its perseverance in the face of innumerable difficulties and the tenacity with which it, on the whole, weathered the storms of the apartheid state's onslaught, are worthy of the admiration of all democrats the world over. It bears testimony to the unshakeable foundations on which this democratic movement was built.

It is worthy of note that it was during this period that the democratic trade union movement demonstrated its strength, mobilising capacity and influence. The strike actions it initiated and organised on a nation-wide scale struck fear deep into the hearts of the apartheid rulers and their international supporters. They also demonstrated the latent strength of the alliance of class and national forces both at national and local level and underlined the need to solidify this unity at all levels. Through unity new possibilities for an intensified and sustained political offensive were created. The ANC and the broad democratic movement placed great emphasis on building and solidifying this trend towards unity as a key link in forging an all-out offensive against apartheid.

What terrified the ruling circles in the apartheid state was the open political challenge that these actions posed to the Pretoria regime. Through their concerted actions the anti-apartheid democratic forces challenged the very legitimacy of the apartheid state and deliberately focused their attention on political questions and fundamentally the issue of the apartheid state, its political organs and administrative structures. It is most significant that one of the most important developments of this period was the establishment and multiplication of the organs of "people's power", arising directly out of the struggle to make South Africa ungovernable.

The emergence of street and area committees, people's courts etc. was not only a rejection of the apartheid state's legitimacy but also represented the birth of new organisational forms, rooting the democratic forces among the people and creating new elements which contributed towards broadening the liberation struggle on all fronts. Welded together by the common perspective of a unified democratic, non-racial country, this movement challenged the Botha regime for political power and posed an alternative vision of a new South

Africa which cuts across everything that the apartheid system represents. It ushered in a new era in the struggle for liberation. In actual struggle, millions were moved to train their eyes on the strategic perspective of the National Democratic Revolution, a people's democratic state, with all the socio-economic and spiritual benefits that will accrue to those consigned today, by the apartheid forces, to perpetual wretchedness.

The ANC Inspires the Masses

Although we in the ANC do not claim credit for each and every action taken by the democratic forces during this period, we can safely claim to have, directly and indirectly, assisted and augmented their actions. Through our country-wide underground network, we were able to respond to the increased resolve of our people to act, in fact to draw them into action as well as to expand the organised strength and capacity of the democratic forces. Meanwhile their inventiveness enriched our experience and understanding of the situation in each and every part of the country.

It was under these circumstances that several constitutional models by the apartheid regime, its international supporters and some individuals were presented. These constitutional proposals were part and parcel of the regime's programme of crisis management, which included its several declarations of the state of emergency and the introduction of the National Security Management System. These were coupled with even more brutal campaigns of repression than we had ever experienced. Clearly the regime sought to immobilise the people, paralyse the organisations, silence their leaders and thus leave the political stage clear for its futile attempts to prop up its doomed apartheid system. Through these constitutional manoeuvres it planned to hide the reality of army and police control of the country both at local and national level.

These constitutional manoeuvres of the regime were an assertion that power shall continue to be in the hands of the White minority, that this minority is happy to attach powerless subordinates to itself and that the whole apartheid pyramid will always be presided over by a ruthless clique who

call themselves a State Security Council.¹

It is against this background that the leadership of our movement decided to examine different constitutional options and models for a future democratic non-racial South Africa. It had to reassert the illegitimacy of the apartheid regime and the right of the oppressed to struggle for a democratic alternative to apartheid, a system of one person, one vote, in a democratic and non-racial South Africa, as the only solution that can bring justice, peace and democracy to our country.

The events during this period had made it abundantly clear that the crisis through which the apartheid system was going were an inevitable outcome of apartheid's own social contradictions which could not be hidden and which had reached a crisis point needing resolution. The old apartheid was no longer compatible with the elements of society. Apartheid laws and institutions had become so many fetters holding back the progress of the majority of the South African people in the interest of White minority rule. They were beginning to burst asunder. Hence the international alarm amongst investors and friends of the Pretoria regime and hurried attempts at constitutional modelling.

It was at this time also that different groups and individuals, both domestic and international, started to seek consultations with the ANC. Their objectives differed. Some were anxious to stave off apartheid's final demise and to persuade the ANC to compromise. Some came to hammer out with the ANC new strategies and tactics to hasten the downfall of apartheid and map out a post-apartheid blueprint for a free and democratic non-racial South Africa.

It is in this light that the formation of the Constitutional Committee of the ANC in January 1986 and the issuing of the Statement on Negotiations in October 1987, should be seen.

On Negotiations

In its October 9, 1987 Statement on Negotiations the ANC expressed its serious doubts about the Botha regime's desire to engage in any meaningful negotiations to end apartheid. It pointed out the twofold objectives of the apartheid regime on the

issue of negotiations, namely:

★ To defuse the struggle inside South Africa by holding out false hopes of a just political settlement which the Pretoria regime has every intention of blocking.

★ To defeat the continuing campaign for comprehensive and mandatory sanctions.²

The statement went on to state that the "struggle will not end until South Africa is transformed into a united democratic and non-racial country", and underlined that:

"A non-racial democratic transformation of South Africa is the only solution which would enable our people, both Black and White to live as equals in conditions of peace and equality. The overwhelming majority of our people accept that the Freedom Charter provides a reasonable and viable framework for the construction of a new society".

The statement reiterated the fact that the ANC had never at any time been opposed to a negotiated settlement of the South African question. It reaffirmed the ANC's willingness to enter into any genuine negotiations provided they are aimed at the transformation of South Africa into a united, non-racial democracy. This and only this, should be the objective of any negotiated process.

The statement emphasised the fact that the conflict in South Africa is between the forces of national liberation and democracy on the one hand and those of racism and apartheid on the other. It underlined the fact that any negotiations would have to be conducted by these two forces as represented by their various organisational formations. It rejected without qualification the proposed National Council as a genuine and acceptable mechanism for negotiating a democratic constitution for South Africa. Any constitution for a democratic and non-racial South Africa, the statement underlined, would have to:

★ Define and treat our people as equal citizens, without regard to race, colour or ethnicity;

★ Guarantee this by including an entrenched Bill of Rights to safeguard the rights of the individual;

★ Oppose any attempt to perpetuate the apartheid system by advancing the concept of so-called group and minority rights.

The statement went on to stipulate the minimum

conditions which the apartheid regime should fulfil to convince the ANC of its serious intention to negotiate. It was stressed that all negotiations would have to be centred around the theme of transforming South Africa into a united, democratic and non-racial country and not the amendment of the apartheid system. It emphasised the ANC's rejection of any "secret negotiations" behind the backs of our people.

Pursuant to this statement the ANC issued its constitutional guidelines in late January 1988. They were the product of two years' work by the Constitutional Committee and protracted discussions and consultations between it and the National Executive Committee (NEC). After the NEC's Negotiations Statement the ANC was compelled to explain and expand on its thinking on a post-apartheid blueprint for South Africa and a constitutional model occupied a central place in this post-apartheid strategy. It is however, not meant only for a post-apartheid South Africa.

It is an ideological instrument, a morale booster and a clarification of our objectives in our present struggle against apartheid. At this time when the signs are clear that the apartheid regime has been shaken to its foundations, its allies frightened and confused and its overseas supporters put on the defensive, the guidelines are meant to strengthen the confidence of the liberation forces, and deepen the conviction of all those who have lost their faith in the viability of the apartheid system. They are meant to increase the pressure on the apartheid regime on all fronts and make our force irresistible. They are a response to the demands of the situation the struggle has reached.

Guidelines are not a Constitution

The history of the liberation struggle in South Africa demonstrates clearly that the ANC has never underestimated the apartheid regime's offensive on the constitutional front. Our opposition to the constitutional manoeuvres of the apartheid regime from the 1960s, when it introduced its bantustan system, up to its 1983 constitutional manoeuvres are a clear demonstration of this. They have nothing to do with "Glastnost" or "Perestroika" and there never was any pressure

from the Soviet Union or any other quarter as Belinda Berret tries to suggest.³

All such suggestions are products of fertile imaginations and lack serious academic honesty. It should be clear to our adversaries, if they could once be honest and objective in their analysis of the struggle against apartheid, that the ANC offensive against the apartheid regime on all fronts cannot be slackened as this would give advantage to the regime. Our experience and that of colleagues in independent Africa and the Front Line States, has taught us that constitutional modelling should occupy a more crucial place in our political strategies. It should not be allowed to become the monopoly of our adversaries or those who operate within the existing framework and structures of apartheid's political and administrative institutions. Besides its moral, political, strategic ideological and diplomatic advantages, it assists in promoting a clearer understanding of our motives and objectives to the world at large, and deepens the conviction of our membership, contributes towards a mass understanding of the deficiencies of the apartheid system and magnifies its criminal and oppressive nature.

It is in this spirit that the ANC has tabled these constitutional guidelines. They are no constitution, as some seem to suggest and were never meant to be one. The ANC is of the opinion that the drafting of a constitution for a democratic non-racial South Africa can only be the task of elected representatives of all the people of our country in a constituent assembly. These guidelines are being tabled for discussion by all our people, irrespective of their political inclinations, ideological leanings or party affiliation. They are meant to set in motion a process of national debate. It is hoped that finally a position will emerge out of these discussions which will reflect the broadest national consensus. It is in this spirit that these guidelines have been tabled for consideration by all South Africans.

The Guidelines and the Freedom Charter

The document is divided into two sections, the Preamble and the main principles, composed of 25 clauses. In reading and assessing the document,

one finds that the connecting link between the Preamble and the main principles is the Freedom Charter which remains to this day the main policy document of our movement. The Freedom Charter has a double value in the history of the constitutional development of our struggle.

In the first place it became part and parcel of the constitution of the African National Congress and has in the last ten years been adopted as a programme by a series of organisations in the democratic movement in South Africa today.

Secondly, it projects a vision arising out of the struggles and demands of the people, which are bound to underly any future constitution for a non-racial democratic South Africa.⁴

The Guidelines are meant to carry the Freedom Charter forward, and to distil its essence in a set of constitutional formulations especially declaring what the African National Congress believes the foundations of government in a liberated South Africa should be.

The Preamble is meant to underline this link between the Guidelines and the Freedom Charter.

It is meant to stress and emphasise that the Guidelines present no change whatsoever in our demands for full political, economic and social participation in the government of South Africa.

The Preamble underlines our demand for the creation of a just and democratic society in South Africa that will outlaw all forms of discrimination and inequality and dismantle all apartheid structures and institutions. It emphasises the need for corrective action in a post-apartheid South Africa which will guarantee a rapid and irreversible redistribution of wealth and the opening of facilities to all.

It stresses the need for the protection and extension of human rights to all and the redistribution of land. It rejects completely the notion of "group rights" and regards that as an entrenchment of the existing apartheid inequality of property ownership.

The terms "just" and "democratic" permeate the whole text of the preamble. They are used in a clear and unambiguous manner to underline our objectives. They emphasise the centrality of justice and democracy in our day-to-day carrying out of the struggle and the significant role they will play in the solution of political and socio-economic

problems in a post-apartheid South Africa.

The Role of the Personality and the Individual

The Guidelines advocate an independent centralised, unitary, democratic, non-racial state with the sovereignty belonging to the people as a whole and exercised through one central legislature, executive and administration. Powers will be delegated by the central authority to subordinate administrative units for purposes of more efficient administration and democratic participation. The guidelines advocate universal suffrage based on one person one vote. The promotion of the growth of a single national identity and loyalty binding on all South Africans shall be the central concern of the state. The quest for a single national identity — the creation of a sense of territorial nationality transcending parochial loyalties of race, ethnicity, religion, language and region will not only be a crucial political task but will also be a commanding target for socio-economic and cultural reconstruction. The adoption of a unitary and centralised form of government as suggested in the Guidelines will contribute to strengthening the moulding of a single national identity and national consolidation.

Judging from independent Africa's experience, the majority of whose nations have adopted the presidential form of government, the role of the leader of the ruling party has been critically important in moulding this single national identity and focusing on national development. To fulfil such a role, such a personality must not only possess intellectual and policy-making skills and a clear vision of the future but must also be morally capable of inspiring both devotion and selflessness. He must possess the rare gift of projecting a sense of moral purpose and inspire wide-spread popular loyalty and trust. Possessing such qualities he should be able to enhance not only the legitimacy of his government but also its political system and policy. His skills, and political and moral integrity, coupled with his popularity would be indispensable to the new government's strategy of development and national unification.

To foster national unification and to strengthen

the moulding of a single national identity, the government would have to sketch carefully a policy to counter all the vestiges of apartheid, especially the forces of ethnicity. Government policy should aim at generating a capacity to reach all the people in all areas, especially the rural areas where the bantustan system is presently rooted. To achieve this the policy should attach more importance to the individual roles the ordinary citizens, especially the peasantry and workers, play in developmental policy and foster a spirit of self-respect and honour in each individual.

In this way, each individual would regard himself as an integral part of the new nation. Each individual's and each community's contribution would hopefully be viewed as a contribution to the national effort. Individual and local action would thereby be conceived as intimately bound to the pursuit of national goals and the creation of a single national identity and nationhood.

The consolidation of national identity and nationhood would be complemented by the government's policy of recognition of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the country. The development of our languages and cultural heritage would be prime factors in the broad national development strategies.

The Bill of Rights

The inclusion of a Bill of Rights in the constitution is advocated in the document aimed at guaranteeing the fundamental rights of the citizen, eradicating all forms of discrimination and outlawing the advocacy or practice of racism and incitement of ethnic or regional exclusiveness or hatred. It guarantees a multi-party system, the right to education and social security and protection of the right to work. The Bill of Rights guarantees the centrality of socio-economic liberties in the post-apartheid reconstruction policy. It places great emphasis on affirmative action because, as Albie Sachs puts it:

"It is not just individuals who will be looking to the Bill of Rights as a means of enlarging their freedoms and improving the quality of their lives, but whole communities, especially

those whose rights have been systematically and relentlessly denied by the apartheid system".⁵

According to Albie, such a Bill of Rights should have "an appropriate corrective strategy stating clear and irreversible goals with an undeniable social and moral purpose but considerable flexibility".

The Guidelines propose no definite election system. This is left to the people of South Africa to choose. In assessing the centrality of a Bill of Rights in any constitutional proposal for a post-apartheid South Africa it should always remain in our minds that the enjoyment of human rights in any society although predicated by the economic system, does not hinge on it alone. Vastly influential is the political regime, the level of democracy, traditions, the spiritual climate in society and cultural development. Particularly important is the political consciousness of the citizenry which determines the level of enjoyment of human rights. This also, has to be in the back of our minds, in the formulation of any constitutional dispensation for a post-apartheid South Africa.

We assume that the post-apartheid era will be a dynamic period creating a society rapidly advancing along the path of social progress. The transition from one stage of its development to another, we hope will bring about broader rights and freedoms and stronger guarantees for their implementation and effective protection. Conclusive proof thereto would not only have to be provided for in the constitution, the fundamental law of the country, but also be proved by daily practice.

Human Rights and Democracy

In the minds of millions of the oppressed in today's South Africa, the removal of apartheid is not only associated with the improvement of the political climate and their standards of living but also with the broadening of their enjoyment of human rights. Hence the progressiveness and humaneness of our post-apartheid regime will be judged by its human rights record. It will be expected not only to conform to standards set up by the international human rights covenants, but will

have to make all possible efforts to excel them. Its human rights concept would have to proceed from the close relationship, interlinkage and equal value of all categories of human rights; i.e. economic, political, social, cultural and personal.

They should all be regarded as equally important and necessary for securing a normal life and standards for the whole of society.

Such a concept of human rights should not only stress the dependence of these rights and fundamental freedoms on the state of the national economy, but also emphasise their linkage with the purpose, direction and content of the state's social programme and the level of democracy in the country.

The Guidelines recommend a mixed economy in which the state will play no minimum role, ensuring that the entire economy serves the interest and well being of all sections of the population. The state will determine the general context in which economic development takes place. There will be a public sector and a private sector, which will co-operate with the state in the realisation of the broad development goals of the country. Co-operation between the state and private enterprise will provide the state with the most pragmatic and feasible opportunities in its endeavour to enhance the welfare of the individual and uplift the living standards of the most disadvantaged groups by providing more jobs, better educational opportunities and housing and health facilities. Co-operation between the state, private investment and individual entrepreneurship may contribute to a faster growth rate thus creating possibilities of eliminating presently-existing disparities in income, employment and other opportunities.

Entrenching the mixed economy in the constitution will provide opportunities for maintaining and consolidating the unity of the anti-apartheid forces which has been forged in the anti-apartheid struggle and channel it to the task of national and economic development.

The examples of the developing world, especially those of independent Africa, have shown that the adoption of a mixed economy is always accompanied by the development of extreme social and economic stratification of society. Unlike the present racial and political problems under apartheid, which hopefully will be transitional and will find

solution in the democratisation of a post-apartheid South Africa, the problems caused by severe stratification are always endemic and sometimes inevitable. They are a by-product of economic development, urbanisation and the growth of the bureaucracy. Whether they can be kept within manageable bounds depends fundamentally on the economic regime adopted.

The Land Question and Workers' Rights

Experience has shown that the solution of the land question in such situations is fundamentally central. For most Africans in the countryside who will have experienced apartheid's forced removals and bantustan repression, land acquisition will be a matter of great concern. The Guidelines propose a land reform programme that will:

- ★ Abolish all racial restrictions on ownership and use of land;

- ★ Implement land reforms conforming to the principle of affirmative action, and taking into account the status of the victims of forced removals.

The land question has always been central in the demands of our people. It should be one of our primary concerns in a post-apartheid South Africa. Like the question of the economy it needs careful attention. If not handled rightly it could be a source of grievances and unfulfilled hopes and aspirations. It needs extremely thoughtful and sensitive handling.

In the present stage of the struggle, the working class has emerged as the dominant social force opposing apartheid tyranny. As such the Guidelines will not have fulfilled their task if they have not spelt out the role of the workers in a post-apartheid constitutional dispensation. The document advocates the incorporation of a Charter protecting workers' trade union rights, especially the right to strike and collective bargaining.

The Gender Question

For the solution of the gender question, the Guidelines advocate equal rights in all spheres of public and private life for women. The intervention of

the state through affirmative action to eliminate inequalities and discrimination between the sexes is foreseen. This is in recognition of the role women are playing in the struggle against apartheid today and a stimulus and an encouragement for their more and broader participation in the post-apartheid socio-economic development strategies.

The onslaught by the apartheid regime on the family has always been a source of concern to us, hence the Guidelines advocate its protection and that of parenthood and children's rights.

The struggle against apartheid is indissolubly intertwined with the struggle for international peace and democracy. Hence the guidelines envisage South Africa's commitment to non-alignment, and the principles of the OAU Charter and the Charter of the United Nations. A post-apartheid South Africa will declare its solidarity with the forces of national liberation, world peace and disarmament.

Conclusion

The Guidelines lay down broad and general principles of government structures and powers and the fundamental rights and liberties of the people. They are framed in a broad pragmatic and flexible style. It is this flexibility that makes them a lethal weapon in the struggle against apartheid. They are the product of a deliberate assessment of the present stage of our struggle. They are not only meant to spell out the rights of the people and the responsibilities of the individual to society, but are meant to keep pace with the developments of society and the times. For we regard constitutions as living documents dealing with the real problems of our contemporary generation.

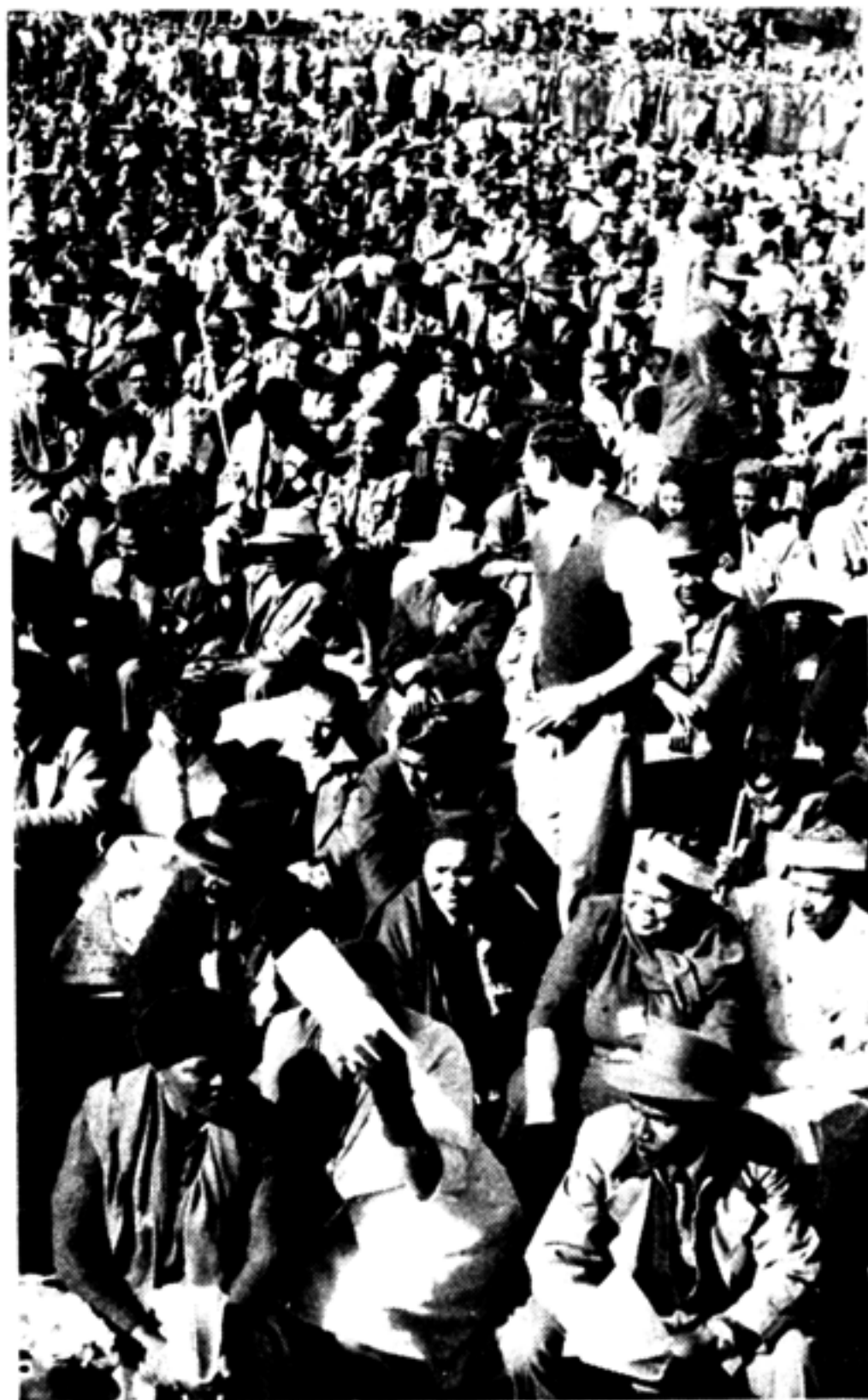
They have been tabled for deep study, and bold and realistic discussions by the broadest spectrum of our people. Through this debate we hope that they will be further enriched. Through them we hope to achieve the greatest mobilisation and organisation of all possible motive forces in the struggle against apartheid.

We strongly believe that the campaign around the Guidelines will have achieved its success only when it has reached our people at grassroots

level and succeeded in focusing their imagination on the achievement of a unitary, democratic and non-racial South Africa.

Footnotes

1. Oliver Tambo — ANC January 8th, 1988 Statement.
2. ANC Statement on Negotiations *Sechaba*, December 1987 (p3).
3. Belinda Barrett — An Analysis of Recent Constitutional Developments within the ANC and its stance on Negotiations, Inkatha Institute for South Africa, September 1988 (p.32).
4. Alfred Nzo — Opening address, ANC In-House Seminar on Constitutional Guidelines, 1-4 March, 1988, Lusaka (unpublished).
5. Albie Sachs — *Towards a Bill of Rights in Democratic South Africa* (p.12); Contribution — ANC In House Seminar on Constitutional Guidelines 1-4 March, 1988 (unpublished).



DISCUSSION ARTICLES

OMELETTES CANNOT BE MADE WITHOUT BREAKING EGGS

By Mzala

Complete victory in the South African revolution will depend on whether or not the working class has been sufficiently organised and significantly armed to provide the decisive force when the apartheid system has to be finally crushed into ruin.

The outcome of the struggle will depend on whether the working class is the leader or disciple of the alliance of classes that is presently waging the struggle against apartheid.

Will the working class allow itself to be used merely as the storm troops and then have the struggle called to a halt while the representatives of the other classes declare their preference for a partial victory and a negotiated deal with racism?

Will the outcome of the present revolutionary events leave the working class at the helm or outside state power in the post-apartheid South Africa?

Capitulationist Tendencies

These are not rhetorical or idle questions. It is exceptionally important at the present time for the African National Congress (ANC) to put to the fore tactical slogans for leading the masses to a real and decisive victory. This becomes even more urgent when a few theorists within its ranks begin to think that what is needed and possible under the circumstances is a partial victory; that the apartheid regime cannot be defeated but has produced a stalemate, which means that the ANC has to effect as peaceful a deal as possible between the apartheid regime and the revolutionary people.

If the articles that have appeared in *Sechaba* during 1988 can be used as an index of the strategic thinking among some theorists,

then a compromising and almost capitulationist tendency can be observed in the views of Brenda Stalker, Theresa and Alex Mashinini.

In her articles published by *Sechaba* (November 1987 and May 1988), Brenda Stalker engages in some mystic theory of "talks", by which she analyses class differentiation among Whites in South Africa and then concludes that a new political situation has emerged in the country which has made it possible for certain sections of the White ruling class to want to negotiate an end to apartheid. Brenda Stalker bases this opinion on the event that took place in Lusaka in 1985 when a delegation of top business personnel met the ANC leadership, as well as a more or less similar event in Dakar, Senegal, when Afrikaner intellectuals met another level of our leadership for discussions about intensifying the struggle against apartheid.

Before the communiques had reached her, Brenda Stalker was already attempting to construct some theory of "talks", which suggested, among other things, that "such talks could represent a step towards eventual negotiation with the government or a sector of it" (*Sechaba* May, 1988, p.20). The theory was not based on any appraisal of the current political situation nor on the assessment of the strength of the various forces that are involved in the contest for state power in South Africa, but, rather, on an elaborate system of class analysis which could have fitted

any other country, which was not even in a revolutionary crisis like South Africa's.

The Motive Forces

In itself the class analysis was interesting, but it bore little relation to the topic under discussion, namely, "talks" or "negotiations." In response to a critique of her position by Thando Zuma, Brenda Stalker dismissed the prospect of armed insurrection in South Africa by reminding her readers that the concept of "conquering of full state power by the people" should not be unmindful of the fact that "the South African army is White-dominated, and the Whites are, in general not going to be a support for such an uprising" (ibid., p.25).

In other words, it is the Whites and their involvement in armed insurrection that could determine its success or failure. And because the key elements in Brenda Stalker's theory of talks are "Whites" and the importance of the "Whites", she comes to the conclusion that the ANC strategy should be towards developing its talks with the White business community in Lusaka as well as the White Afrikaner intellectuals towards her 'desired' summit: "eventual negotiation with the government or a sector of it".

As a member of the ANC, Brenda Stalker might not, of course, have intended to arrive at such a conclusion, but she did.

Meanwhile she forgot all about the masses of the oppressed people who constitute the motive force of the South African revolution. It is these forces, at the head of which is the Black working class, who have to be given a special place when analysis is made of the ANC's strategic direction during a revolutionary period.

In the February and July (1988) issues of *Sechaba*, Thando Zuma makes the most adequate reply to the reformist and capitulationist ideas of Brenda Stalker. In the first place he clearly points out that strategies in the ANC are not formulated by individual writers and contributors in *Sechaba* but by structured formations of the movement, at the head of which is the national conference. Tactics are equally not the free creation of the minds of theoreticians, but collectively

developed means of advancing the struggle to victory.

What Brenda Stalker misunderstood in the ANC meetings with the business community as well as the Afrikaner intellectuals, is that these were not the start of a negotiated settlement but simply political discussions by the ANC with political and economic groups inside the country who had come to realise that the apartheid regime was incapable of resolving the crisis which has engulfed the country.

Talks about Talks

These talks had not been in the programme of the ANC. No one even predicted a few months before they took place that they were to become a new phenomenon in South African political life. In that sense it may perhaps be said that we were caught up in a spontaneous situation.

The fact that it was spontaneous, however, was not our fault, and it could not have been. And since the ANC understands the politics of tactics as well as principled flexibility, we correctly assessed this development as a positive one, as an indication that important forces in the South African population, particularly among the Whites, had come to realise the centrality of the ANC in South African politics.

Such a realisation was not a false consciousness, and we were only too willing to confirm it, and use the occasion to strengthen further the forces that stand for change from apartheid.

We talk about the presence of revolutionary forces as well as forces for change. The people, organisations or institutions which have had discussions with us belong to one or other of the two categories.

The apartheid regime is neither a revolutionary force nor part of the forces for change. Rather, it is a problem to be solved, precisely the problem about which we have been meeting various South Africans in order to find a solution.

One can thus be genuinely sorry for Brenda Stalker if, during all the years she was waiting for an opportunity to express her ideas about the need for the ANC to make a "genuine compromise" as well as her notion of the

impossibility of armed insurrection in South Africa, an opportunity which she then found in the talks that the ANC had with the business community and the Afrikaner intellectuals.

Experience is our Criterion

In the January 1989 issue of *Sechaba*, Theresa, very much like Brenda Stalker, using more or less the same arguments, the same misunderstanding of the strategic line of march that has been adopted by the ANC, makes a critique of a very important article written by Ronnie Kasrils, entitled, 'The Revolutionary Army' (*Sechaba*, September 1988).

Theresa does not see the reason for the significance which Kasrils attaches to the development of a revolutionary army. She questions his logic for arriving at the conclusion that the "creation of a revolutionary army is our most crucial task" (p.9). She feels that what Kasrils misses in his analysis is the role that is to be played by the general oppressed population in the seizure of power. In reference to this general oppressed population she refers to the UDF, COSATU and the people's committees. In this regard Theresa speculates and generalises, using logic rather than practice as her criterion of truth, while Kasrils proceeds from studying concrete experience, concrete problems, with which he has been intimately involved for many decades. Not that this makes Kasrils' judgements infallible in all respects, but at least, unlike Theresa, he is reasoning things out from experience.

In general political struggle it is quite permissible for people to think in terms of general mobilisation and general support from the masses. But as soon as one raises the question of people's war or insurrection as a means of seizing state power, then other more specific and particular questions of a practical nature begin to emerge. Who are ready to take up arms? How politically reliable is the supply? Can it sustain armed clashes for a period of a month, a year, two years or five? What if some people are injured, where are they to be treated? In what combat formation are they to fight? What tactics do they employ in the fight? Where does the crea-

tion of these armed units fit within the general political strategy of seizure of power? What kind of relationship is to be created between the political and military leadership? Does such a relationship depend on the state of development of the political struggle and/or the military struggle?

The discussion of these questions is the subject matter of the work of building a revolutionary army. Calling this exercise militarism a hundred times does not change an iota of its significance.

The Gist of the Matter

The question of victory concerns the practical methods of achieving that victory, and so relates to the need to build a revolutionary army. That is the gist of the matter.

Armed insurrection is not about general political education and general organisation. It is not about that phase of a struggle when emphasis is laid on the work of education and organisation of the working class into trade unions and other legally existing associations. It is about preparing to face the SADF and the armed police when we attempt to take over Johannesburg or the main centres in the country by an armed uprising. Such work means the emphasis shifts to the work of organising the working class into a revolutionary army, the principal military organ of struggle which is presently lagging behind in the South African revolution. This is Ronnie Kasrils' concern in the article. Yet, Theresa feels that Kasrils' position "undoubtedly has a militarist tendency".

Politics Guides the Gun

At the present revolutionary juncture, when the struggle has already produced by mass insurrectionary zones that have driven the government into a permanent state of emergency, is it not better to be accused of "militarism" when you advocate the arming of the masses than to be praised for "politicism" which means engaging in the routine political education of the working class

that we undertook five years ago, when people's war and armed insurrection were not yet the order of the day. People's War and Insurrection are themselves better teachers than the academic lectures of Brenda Stalker and Theresa who view the revolution from afar.

The most precise, most carefully considered, and most comprehensive analysis of Kasrils' article will reveal that he does not favour militarism. Right at the beginning of his article he actually states that since Umkhonto We Sizwe was first formed, our positions have been that "political policy and strategy determines our military strategy; politics guides the gun". He goes further in the same militant (often confused as meaning the same thing as 'militarist') way to say that "armed struggle must complement mass struggle, and we seek to combine all forms of struggle: violent and non-violent, legal and illegal".

Whereas Theresa argues that Kasrils' "militarist" tendency ignores the "emergence of a people's movement" (p.27) Kasrils says quite explicitly (p.3) that "the development of the armed struggle depends on its being rooted among the people — our Umkhonto combatants and organisers must therefore base themselves amongst the people in order to involve the masses in a people's war".

Our revolution will confirm the views raised by Ronnie Kasrils in actual practice by demonstrating the true nature of the organisational tasks that face a movement like ours, which aims at overthrowing apartheid and not simply at reaching a "genuine compromise". One great revolutionary theoretician once said that:

"Revolution undoubtedly teaches with a rapidity and thoroughness which appear incredible in peaceful periods of political development. And, what is particularly important, it teaches not only the leaders, but the masses as well" (Lenin, Two Tactics).

The Seizure of Power or Compromise?

Judging by the way he analyses the problems facing our movement at this period, Kasrils certainly

confirms how the revolution has taught the leaders of the ANC about the path to power. In contrast Theresa does not look forward to the overthrow of the apartheid regime, rather she theorises, like Brenda Stalker about the ANC entering "into certain compromises with the ruling class, and even with the apartheid regime, in regard to questions concerning the central state and even regions" so that we could continue the process of democratic transformation of the country "in essentially peaceful forms" (p.27).

Theresa expresses absolute doubt that the national liberation movement can overthrow "an imperialist state, which is necessarily closely linked to world imperialism" (p.28) which South Africa is. As a result, she envisages Umkhonto We Sizwe's principal task as that of playing a purely defensive role, although it may "possibly include confrontations with units of the SADF". Although she sees this possibility, she, does not however desire it and does not see its wisdom. "I am not in agreement with Kasrils' general approach, in which he envisages the armed struggle as centred on military confrontation with the SADF", she says (p.30). Her version of the role of MK is in connection with "the defence of the people's movement" as well as, curiously enough, making certain compromises with the apartheid regime. "The emergence of the people's movement", she says, "opens up a path for compromise in South Africa, a compromise which I believe can only take place on the basis of a less centralised conception of political structures and economic policies than the liberation movement has espoused in the past ... A compromise solution along these lines would present a kind of transitional phase in the framework of the national liberation struggle. It would lay a favourable basis for further progress along peaceful lines" (p.30).

Insurrection or Partial Victory?

The last theorist on these ideas about the need for the ANC to compromise is Alex Mashinini, who has written several fine articles in *Sechaba* in the past. Mashinini's recent theme is no longer people's war and insurrection but partial victory

and the call for the ANC to walk proudly on a red carpet towards a negotiated settlement. In an article published by *Sechaba* in August 1988, Mashinini, like Brenda Stalker and Theresa, argues that the talks that the ANC has had with the business community and the Afrikaner intellectuals were already the beginning of what he regarded as a new element in our strategy and tactics, namely, the negotiated settlement. To Mashinini it was quite new. He maintains "we are confronted with conditions under which absolute victory is impossible, conditions in which both sides must necessarily make compromises" (p.27). Then he advances a "solution", namely, negotiations, which he honestly acknowledges would not bring about the implementation of the Freedom Charter in South Africa since it would achieve only "partial victory". Why negotiations now? What has happened to all the talk about people's war and the need to "prepare the fire before cooking the rice inside the pot"? (See my debate with Alex Mashinini before the ANC Kabwe Conference in *Sechaba* January 1985 and April 1985.

Future Course of Events

Several replies to Mashinini's article have appeared already in *Sechaba*, one by Sizwe Mkhwanazi (January 1989) and the other, which seems to be extremely polemical if not quite violent, by Neil Zumana (April 1989). I will therefore confine myself to certain general corrections and propositions.

It is the characteristic feature of every revolutionary period for 101 ideas to be thrown around. Theorists of various classes almost vie with each other in predicting what the future course of events should be like. Representatives of the ruling class attempt to demonstrate that their ship of state can survive the storm; representatives of the oppressed classes similarly seek to demonstrate the inevitability of their victory. Somewhere in between these forces, a miscellaneous variety of groups or even individuals, make their points as well. It is usually from among this middle ground that an assortment of theories comes which are usually half-measures,

so-called "solutions" and even theories about partial victory.

Comrade Mashinini did not intend this conclusion to his theoretical propositions since, like comrades Brenda Stalker and Theresa, he was merely attempting, although with much error, to interpret a situation that has become very sophisticated and complex. Errors in themselves do not make people less revolutionary, particularly comrades who have been in the struggle through thick and thin. The problem only arises if theoretical positions do not get constant repair and safe handling.

The Immediate Issue

In the first place, there is nothing more dangerous in a revolutionary period than belittling the importance of victory and the tactical slogan that points the way to complete revolution. Reflecting on this kind of problem, the South African Communist Party wrote in its 1962 Programme:

"The Communist Party considers that the slogan of non-violence is harmful to the cause of the democratic national revolution in the new phase of the struggle, disarming the people in the face of the savage assaults of the oppressor, dampening their militancy, undermining their confidence in their leaders".

The ANC has issued similar advice on numerous occasions. Talking about partial victories at the time when people are making supreme sacrifices for the total destruction of the apartheid system, is to introduce pessimism about the people's ability to conquer. The current task of our theorists is to analyse accurately the present situation in South Africa, the balance of forces and the revolutionary crisis and to define the political conduct of the revolutionary organisations. It is necessary to spread among the people, particularly the working class, a concrete idea of the most probable course of the revolution towards seizure of power or transfer of power (which essentially refer to the same substance). Irrespective of whether negotiations or insurrection will lead us

25 YEARS AFTER RIVONIA



Nelson Mandela

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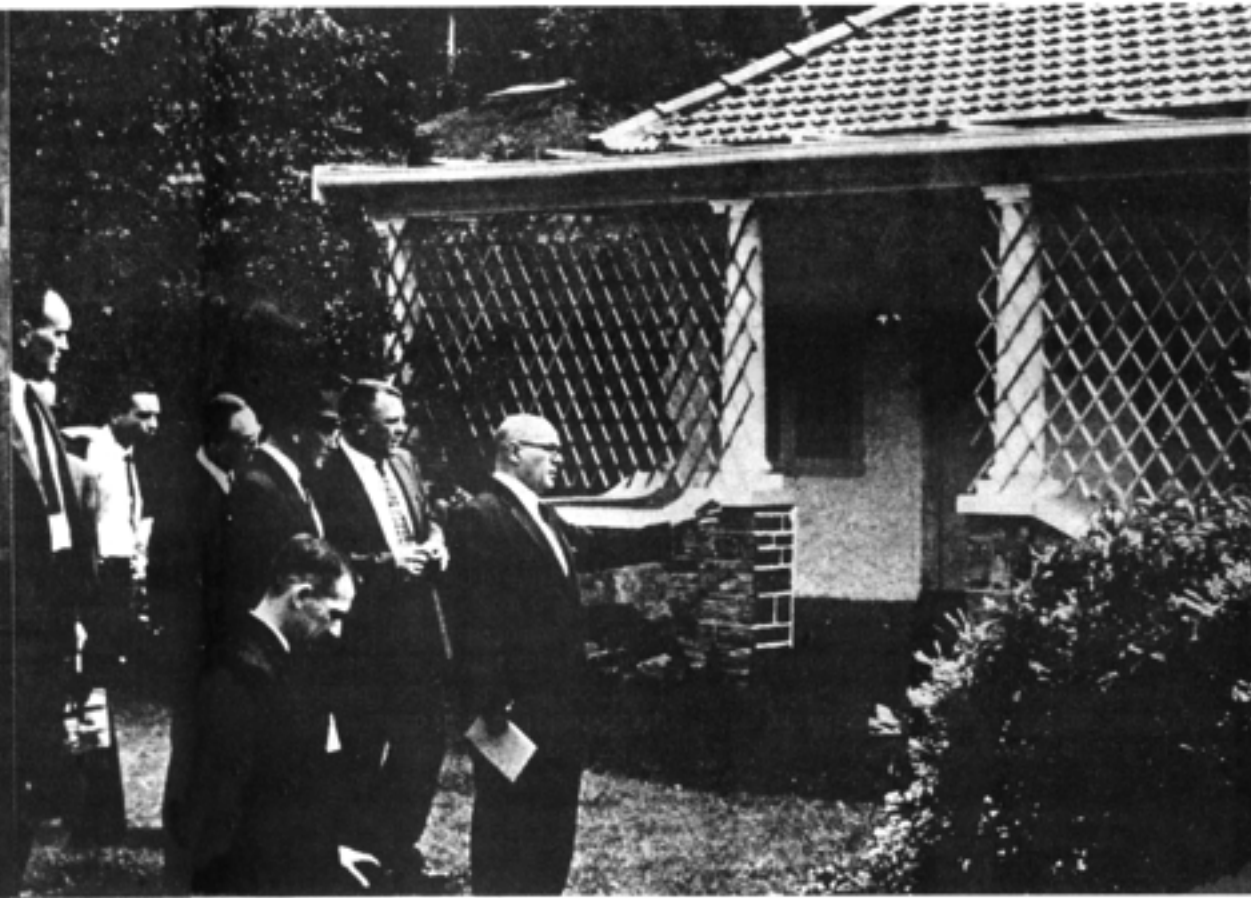
Andrew Mlangeni

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Denis Goldberg



South African police raid Rivonia, Headquarters of Umkhonto we Sizwe - 1963



Police searching house in Mountain View where Goldreich and Wolpe were hiding

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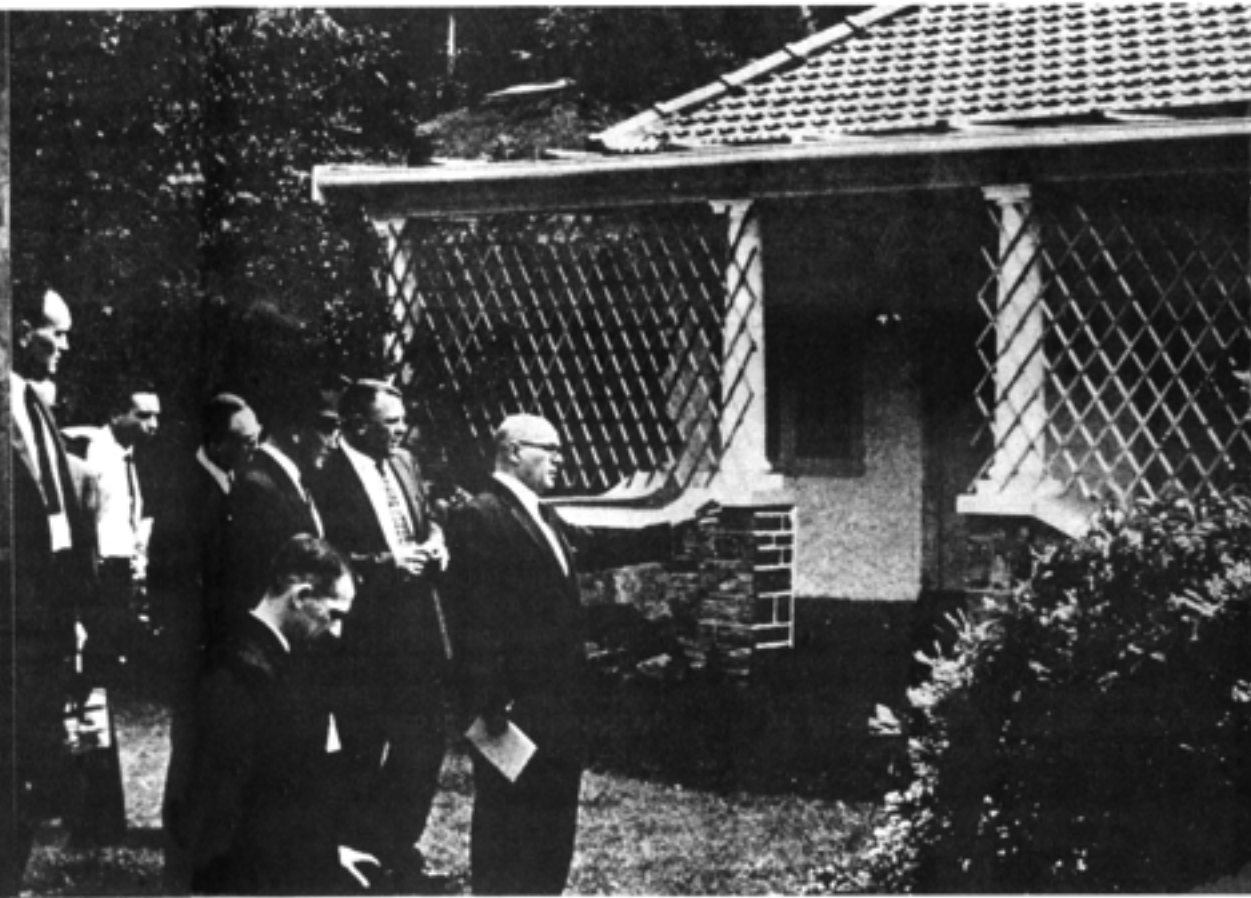
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Police searching house in Mountain View where Goldreich and Wolpe were hiding

to a democratic people's power, we must propagate among the people and within the liberation movement the idea of the arming of the masses as the most important condition for victory.

It will then be clear that the political situation in South Africa does not by any means turn the question of negotiations into an immediate issue. What is an immediate issue, i.e. a slogan around which the working people can be organised into

a revolutionary army now is one that calls for the arming of the masses as Ronnie Kasrils' article does. Tebogo Kgope (*Sechaba*, March 1989) makes precisely this kind of analysis that reinforces Kasrils' idea of the need to arm the masses. Both of them emphasise that the establishment of a people's government in South Africa is possible only as the result of a victorious people's war and insurrection.

PEOPLE'S WAR FOR PEOPLE'S POWER

By Tsepo Nare

This article was written by an activist in South Africa.

I would like to respond to comrade Theresa's article: *The People's Struggle Is Our Guide*, in the January 1989, issue of *Sechaba*. First, I would like to note that it is most unfortunate that the article which posits the perspective of a "compromise" with apartheid fascism was published in the same month as our movement noted that "the Pretoria regime is as determined as ever to use maximum force ... to protest and defend the system of apartheid" (NEC Statement, January 8th, 1989). The statement further pointed out that "None (of us) should therefore entertain any illusion that the regime is softening in any way." If the regime has unleashed an unprecedented wave of terror on our people, on what basis will a "genuine and principled compromise" emerge? Let us see how Theresa arrives at this conclusion.

MK and Armed Struggle

The only way that Theresa could have arrived at her position was through minimising, nay marginalising armed struggle and in the process the role of Umkhonto We Sizwe in our struggle for people's democracy. Theresa's position in relation to armed struggle and the role of MK in our revolutionary war against apart-

heid tyranny contradicts that of our vanguard, the African National Congress (ANC), the movement which has consistently emphasised the centrality of armed struggle. And various contributors in this debate have, in line with our movement's position, clearly stated that: "The conditions which imposed armed struggle on us in 1961 have not changed."

Before I proceed to show how Theresa marginalises armed struggle, it will be important to spell out what armed struggle is. This may seem a trivial and obvious point to make, but I think in order to avoid confusion and possible distortions it is always imperative to spell out one's conception and understanding. What do we mean by armed struggle?

"Armed struggle is a fundamental form of struggle which directly and decisively contributes to the annihilation of the enemy's military forces and consequently to thwarting all his military and political schemes" (Le Duan). It is the highest form of political struggle. In

our situation it is the duty of the armed masses, led by MK to thwart the enemy's military and political manoeuvres. For comrade Theresa however, armed struggle cannot be:

"Centred on military confrontation with the SADF and SAP; I believe it should be centred on the political task of defence of the people's movement" (p.30).

How and through what organisational formations this "political task of defence" will be attempted, let alone achieved, we are not told. We are only told that MK "might (perhaps will) support the people's self-defence, through such activities as arming and training, and armed actions which may develop into genuine military actions, possibly (and not necessarily) including confrontations with units of the SADF" (p.29, my emphasis). Here we can see that for Theresa the role of our armed detachments is reduced to "defence", promotion, guidance and protection. It is not enough to argue that MK structures must arise in the course of struggle; the point is to consciously and in a determined way build such structures. This is precisely comrade Ronnie's point. In other words, for MK even to begin executing these limited (in relation to final victory) tasks, there have to be deeply-rooted underground structures of the ANC — politico-military structures.

To take comrade Theresa's advice that we should learn from the struggle of the masses, let us briefly look at the mass uprisings in the period up to 1987. During this period our people waged heroic battles and campaigns. This was only possible because they were able to develop organisational forms which were able to provide strategic and tactical guidance at all times. True to its fascist nature, the apartheid state responded with force. Our people were then forced to confront the apartheid war machine with stones, petrol-bombs, indeed with everything at their disposal. It was during these heightened moments of conflict with the enemy that one of our major weaknesses became glaringly obvious. The presence of MK units during these moments was rare. The enemy was able to occupy the townships and temporarily disorganise the mass democratic movement. The most important

lesson that we have learnt is that without strong underground politico-military structures, which will thwart (militarily and politically) the enemy's military and political schemes, our advance to victory will remain an unrealisable ideal. The call, therefore is for the intensification of armed struggle, for the annihilation of the apartheid forces in the theatre of war.

What a militarist! comrade Theresa might exclaim. Let me remind her that our vanguard movement, day in and day out, urges and inspires every militant and activist to build and strengthen the underground component of our revolutionary forces as the only way of intensifying our overall (political and military) offensive. Perhaps it will be useful to return to the point on the relationship between armed struggle and political struggle. Our understanding is that together with military struggle, the political struggle by the masses is also a fundamental form (one of the four pillars) of struggle with a decisive effect throughout all stages of the revolution and an avenue towards its success. The political forces not only serve as a foundation for the armed forces but are also built into an organised political army of the masses. In other words, "the armed struggle and the political struggle of the masses are the fundamental forms of revolutionary violence and the combination of the two is the fundamental rule of revolutionary methods" (Le Duan). These are the methods which our historical task of seizing power from the minority regime imposes upon us.

Is the Liberation Movement Weak?

The most crucial lessons to emerge from the offensive of the 1980s is not to "defend" the "people's movement" but to arm the people, politically and militarily, for war with apartheid. This need to "defend," argues Theresa, arises because the "liberation movement has been severely weakened" and "its underground apparatus substantially limited." Theresa further argues that the vanguard movement should therefore "create the conditions for the emergence, consolidation and spread of organs of people's power." The question posed in the

beginning of this article still remains: how is this to be done?

As far as the status of the liberation movement's underground structure is concerned, I am in complete agreement with comrade Theresa. Indeed, this article and those by comrades Mzala, Thando Zuma, Ronnie Kasrils, and Mkhwanazi in various issues of *Sechaba* are meant to address this very question. The point I find puzzling to say the least is the so-called weakness of the liberation movement. It is a fact that our movement has grown tremendously in strength over the past ten years. Even our worst adversaries cannot deny this most obvious fact. This might appear to be contradicting my earlier point about our weakness. The weakness I was referring to was one located at a specific part or component of the movement and not a general weakness. How is it possible then for a member of the ANC to see it as a "severely weakened" movement in 1989? There is a reason for this. In order to argue for and advocate a "genuine and principled compromise" with apartheid, it is necessary for Theresa to argue that the liberation movement is severely weakened.

Arming the People

The line our vanguard movement in this phase of our revolution advocates, is unequivocally an all-sided war, a war fought by the entire people and raised to a very high level on the strength of the general laws governing revolutionary methods in the specific conditions of South Africa. In a word, a people's war.

The immediate task that emerges from this offensive strategy is that of arming the masses. This means that our combat forces and the masses have to sharpen their revolutionary creativity. Simultaneously with the task of building and strengthening the underground, our politico-military forces on the ground have to inspire and guide the masses into seizing arms from the enemy, train them and lead them into an all-out confrontation. The perspective of people's war is the only strategy that will enable us to transcend the phase of armed propaganda and sabotage which has characterised our military of-

fensive for too long.

Our offensive strategy of people's war requires that the revolutionary forces must undertake military operations in the townships, cities and factories; in the farmlands and 'homelands', and, at the same time deepen and broaden the overall political offensive against the enemy.

The history of the past ten years has clearly shown that the combined offensive of the mass democratic forces and the advanced detachments of our liberation alliance headed by the ANC have the capacity to mount and intensify the offensive.

I would like to conclude by saying that as far as militants and activists within the country are concerned, the strategic goal of our liberation movement is not to pressurise the regime into a "compromise." This might sound as if I am against compromises in principle. No serious revolutionary militant or activist can be against compromises on principle. The point is that such compromises should not be made at the expense of the strategic goal of the movement, which in our case is the armed seizure of power.

Given the fact that armed seizure of political power is still firm on the agenda, it is a wrong or infantile politicising posture in the 1980s to aim at opening up "a path for a compromise" with "ruling class" as Theresa seems to suggest. Instead we should see it as creating the necessary conditions which enable us to strike hard, bold, clever, and sudden blows at the enemy. And let me stress it once more, our ability to do all these hinges on our strength on the ground.

Such strength will be reflected by the presence of politico-military units of the ANC throughout the country — in all strategic areas: in every township, suburb, factory, school, church, village, within enemy forces etc. A well developed politico-military underground, nurtured and steeled in the theatre of revolution, will co-ordinate the actions of our advanced political and military forces which will hit the enemy's vital organs. Such an underground will further inspire and guide the general offensive of the mass political forces. Only such co-ordination and guidance will achieve efficiency and effectiveness and enable the revolutionary forces to

advance with bold initiative, imposing our own way of fighting the enemy and preventing him from utilising his strong points, rendering his tactics passive and patchy and therefore depriving his reactions and defences of all effectiveness. This is the surest way to People's Power.

Finally, I would like to raise one general point in relation to the overall debate on armed seizure of power and the accompanying strategy of people's war.

The debate has been generally limited to arguing the correctness or validity of our strategic objective. While this is absolutely correct, I think it misses one crucial point. What we need to address at this point in time is concrete actions that can be taken on the ground to advance the strategy, moving it from its current weak phase

to a higher one.

Concretely, we need to inspire our people to seize arms from the enemy: from the police stations, police patrols, army outposts or temporary camps in the townships, municipal police, bantustan armies, army camps in remote places etc. The increasing number of Blacks in the SADF and SAP and the growth of bantustan armies and police offer us an opportunity to increase our armed strength.

How? Blacks within the enemy forces still suffer all the humiliations of apartheid and therefore can be won over to the side of the revolution. Winning over even a section of these will certainly open up opportunities for obtaining arms from the enemy.

Long Live People's War!



THE BRITISH ANTI-APARTHEID MOVEMENT

30 YEARS OF BOYCOTTING

By Mike Terry

On June 26th this year the Anti-Apartheid Movement will mark its 30th Anniversary. Michael Terry, the AAM's Executive Secretary since 1975 looks back on 30 years of campaigning by the AAM.

In June 1959, a small meeting took place in Finsbury Town Hall in London to mark South African Freedom Day and to launch the 'Boycott Movement.' Speakers included Julius Nyerere from Tanzania and Father Huddleston.

They had come together to try launch a movement in Britain in response to the appeal by Chief Albert Luthuli for an international boycott of South Africa. The prime movers were South Africans, mainly students, associated with the Congress Movement but, they had succeeded in involving other London-based African organisations spearheading independence struggles in their respective countries, Fenner Brockway's Movement for Colonial Freedom and Canon Collins who through Christian Action had already done invaluable work raising funds for the Treason Trial.

Early Beginnings

From such modest beginnings the AAM was formed. The first organisers set themselves the

task of co-ordinating a month of boycott in March, 1960. Mobilising meetings and conferences were called and locally-based boycott committees set up across the country. The Labour and Liberal Parties gave their backing as did the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and the Co-operative Movement. The first council, the famous port city of Liverpool, came out in support of the campaign by itself deciding to boycott all South African goods.

It was an imaginative and effective campaign. The organisers were able to build on earlier efforts of solidarity with the freedom struggle in South Africa reaching back to Sol Plaatje's visit to Britain in 1910 when he addressed literally hundreds of meetings across the country. But above all it provided a simple but effective way in which the growing revulsion in Britain to the tyranny of racial injustice in South Africa could express itself.

It was against the background of thousands of individuals and organisations actively campaigning for the boycott during

the first month of action in March 1960 that the Sharpeville massacre occurred — to be followed shortly by the declaration of the state of emergency and the banning of the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan African Congress (PAC). The impact was immediate. It expressed itself in numerous protest actions both spontaneous and organised. It made Britain's relations with South Africa a major domestic political issue where it has remained, despite ebbs and flows of interest, ever since. Most significantly of all it convinced those who had set up the Boycott Movement of the necessity for it to take on a permanent and comprehensive role as the AAM.

It is difficult to trace a history of 30 years' in a few paragraphs especially given the tremendous variety and scope of the AAM's campaigning activities. Although launched as the Boycott Movement it soon found itself shouldering a range of other campaigns. The most significant in those early days were the 'Arms Embargo' and the 'Rivonia Trial.' It was also



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NO FUEL FOR
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ISOLATE
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NOW!

STOP
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during this early period that it looked beyond the borders of South Africa and began campaigning on the regional dimensions of the apartheid crisis. The pamphlet *The Unholy Alliance* marked the start of campaigns against Portuguese colonialism and racist Rhodesia which became a more and more important element in the life of the AAM right up to Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 and of course continue today with a very different content when we mobilise in solidarity with the Front Line States.

Turning Points

There have been many turning points over the past three decades, for instance the great rally in 1963 when the leader of the Labour Party, Harold Wilson, declared that a future Labour Government would impose an Arms Embargo against South Africa — only to be bitterly disappointed by Labour's record in government on Southern Africa and in particular Rhodesia. There were the two International Conferences initiated by the AAM on sanctions in 1964 and Namibia in 1966, which demonstrated that the AAM was much more than a protest organisation in that it had a key role to play in developing international policy on Southern Africa.

There were the militant demonstrations of 1969-70 against the Springbok rugby tour which sounded the death-knell for major sporting links between Britain and South

Africa. There were also the huge protests in the early 70s against the moves by the Heath government first to lift the Arms Embargo and then to negotiate a sell-out to Ian Smith in Zimbabwe.

There were the excitement and challenges as a result of the collapse of Portuguese colonialism in Africa and consequent independence for Mozambique and Angola in 1975. This fundamental shift in the balance of forces in the region created new prospects for the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe and Namibia, and in South Africa itself but also new campaigning tasks for the AAM as South Africa launched its policies of aggression and destabilisation against the Front Line States.

Hard Times

But, there were hard times too. Whilst the Soweto massacre of 1976 shocked public opinion, the AAM proved unable to arouse it in such a way as to compel any fundamental change in British policy. In the end, and only after the cold-blooded murder of Steve Biko and the banning of the South African Student Organisation (SASO) and other Black consciousness organisations did Britain finally agree to a mandatory Arms Embargo in November 1977 but then singularly failed to ensure that it was effectively implemented. Likewise as the struggle intensified in Zimbabwe it was never possible to generate such a powerful

solidarity movement, either in Britain or internationally, that it could be a really decisive force on the side of the liberation movement. And the same can be said of Namibia in the sense that it took 11 years from the adoption of the United Nations plan for the independence of Namibia in 1978 to the beginning of its implementation. And then it started with the carnage of SWAPO guerrillas by South African forces operating under the authority of the United Nations.

The 1980s, however, have seen the AAM develop and expand in such a manner that it will be able to meet its responsibilities during the final and most crucial stage of the freedom struggle in the region — the destruction of the system of apartheid itself. It has demonstrated an increasingly effective capacity to mass mobilise. When Mrs Thatcher had the audacity to invite PW Botha to Britain in June 1984, she had to abandon plans to wine and dine with him in Downing Street; instead he had a fleeting visit to Chequers — the British Prime Minister's country residence — and was not even prepared to meet the press. Meanwhile some 50 000 people filled the streets of London to protest at his very presence in Britain.

Solidarity is the Key Factor

By November, 1985 with South Africa increasingly ungovernable and support for sanctions

reaching unprecedented levels up to 150 000 people tried to march on to Trafalgar Square for a huge rally addressed by Oliver Tambo and Jesse Jackson. And with the Thatcher administration as adamant as ever in its opposition to sanctions 250 000 gathered on Clapham Common in June 1986, within a fortnight of the publication of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons' Group Report and the declaration of the state of emergency to demand sanctions at the huge AAM/Artists Against Apartheid Freedom Festival. And even these massive mobilisations were crowned by the 'Nelson Mandela Freedom At 70' campaign in 1988.

How has all this been possible? The most important and key factor is that the AAM has been true to the principles of its founders — that it is a solidarity movement in support of the freedom struggle.

That struggle is being waged under the leadership of SWAPO and the ANC and the role of the AAM must be a complementary and supportive one to that of the liberation movements.

Secondly, the AAM has sought to build and develop a mass popular base amongst the people of Britain. However important lobbying and delegations to the government may be, they are no substitute for popular campaigns.

All the successes of the AAM can be attributed to such work. The Gleneagles Agreement on sporting links was adopted seven years *after* public protest had made such sporting links

impossible. Britain's major bank — Barclays — withdrew above all because of the impact of the boycott campaign.

Other British companies have been forced out due to the success of disinvestment campaigns. Today, the mass base of the Movement is evident: one hundred and seventy five (175) local anti-apartheid groups in most towns and cities; strong national structures in Scotland and Wales and regional co-ordinating committees covering most of the country; some 30 000 national and individual members, and over 1 000 affiliates.

Thirdly, the AAM has been consistent in its policies. It has stood firmly for comprehensive sanctions and for the total isolation of apartheid South Africa. It has fully supported the right of the liberation movements to use all forms of struggle including armed struggle. Such policies have not always been popular. Many have advocated "softer" policy options which would be more acceptable in western decision-making circles. Yet experience has demonstrated time and again that there are no short cuts to freedom in Southern Africa and that if we are to be genuine in our solidarity then we must remain firm and clear in the policies we advocate.

Finally, we have stressed the need to develop the understanding of our members and supporters of the issues at stake. Despite numerous difficulties *Anti-Apartheid News* has gone out ten times a year to our members and supporters in

Britain and internationally since it was first published.

Countless speakers from the AAM and the liberation movements have addressed meetings, large and small, conferences, seminars, etc. across the length and breadth of Britain. In this way we have been able to ensure that there is an informed and educated public that cannot be easily swayed by distorted and biased reporting of events in the national press and media.

Future Challenges

The future for the AAM is daunting. The 1990s must be the decade of the final stage of the liberation struggle. This represents above all a challenge to the struggling people of South Africa and the region but it is almost as great a challenge to the international solidarity movement.

From that first meeting in Finsbury Town Hall, there has grown an unprecedented movement of solidarity with the freedom struggle in South Africa, reaching across all the continents of the world. However, with Mrs Thatcher wishing to cast Britain in the role of the number one protector of apartheid, a very heavy burden will fall on the AAM in Britain. After three decades of campaigning it is as well placed as ever to accept this challenge, but it will be no easy task.

ANC INTERNATIONAL

South Africa Banned From West Berlin Fair

Ursula Schmidt, a West Berlin Anti-Apartheid activist, reports: After the ANC's Arusha Conference in 1987, the Anti-Apartheid Movement in West Berlin initiated a new project of material assistance for the ANC — shoes for the children of Mazimbu. We gave a report on the conference at our meeting of January 8th, 1988.

We were raising funds wherever an opportunity was offered, for example, at the rally against South Africa's participation in the International Tourism Fair 1988; at an ANC support meeting; at a demonstration and rally with about 1 500, mostly young, people in support of the Sharpeville Six; at a fund-raising party; at our 8th Concert with Abdullah Ibrahim in October which brought in more than DM5 000. We were then in a position to send 572 pair of shoes to Mazimbu at the end of January 1989.

The Mandela Birthday rally during the summer vacation was well attended; we collected DM3 200, for Radio Freedom. During the year we got more and more support from church and political groups, trade unions, youth and women's organisations, peace groups and some other solidarity groups.

Programme for Action

At the beginning of 1989 we issued a programme, "Our Town Against Apartheid," which has been signed by more than 60 groups and organisations. It demands the total ban of the apartheid regime's propaganda in West Berlin, boycotts and disinvestment and full support for the liberation movements of South Africa and Namibia.

At the beginning of 1989 we had to organise protests against the boxing match between Rocigiani of West Berlin and Malinga of South Africa. For the first time the media had approached us, asking for interviews, for our opinion and demands and about our activities.

Our protest actions were shown on television. Our 24 hour Solidarity Fast was organised in the centre of the city on February 18th and 19th this year.

The elections in West Berlin at the end of January showed that the new Senate will be composed of members from the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Alternative List (AL), both parties supporting the anti-apartheid struggle.

During our rally at the opening of the International Tourism Fair 1989, March 4th, the Mayor of West Berlin, Walter Momper, SPD, addressed the 1 500 protesters, saying:

"Next year South Africa will no longer be allowed to spread apartheid propaganda at this fair."



Walter Momper, SPD, Mayor of West Berlin addresses Anti-Apartheid Rally

Speakers at the rally were Manfred Muller, chairman of the Union Trade, Banks, Insurances, and our special guest from South Africa, Farid Essak. His speech was well received and so inspiring that the audience said: "We don't need any interpretation." Thuthukile Radebe from the ANC Women's Section represented the ANC. Our daily protests inside the exhibition halls directed at the South African stall were not stopped by the police, as had been the case before.

The promise that apartheid South Africa will be expelled from future Tourism Fairs in West Berlin was our first success after 15 years of protest, beginning with a few people from the AAM, growing and growing throughout the years with the assistance of all

progressive forces.

Together with all of them we will continue the struggle against apartheid, especially against the co-operation between the apartheid regime and the government of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and its commercial giants.

Greek Musicians Pledge Solidarity

Comrade Khulu Mbatha, ANC Chief Representative in Greece reports:

In commemoration of the 29th anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre a press conference was held at the University of Athens on Tuesday, March 21st, 1989. At this conference three prominent Greek artists announced a rare cultural project dedicated to the people of South Africa.

In his speech the Rector of the University of Athens, Mr Mihalis Stathopoulos, underlined the fact that it was the obligation of that institution and the people of Greece to honour the struggle against the inhuman system of racial oppression in South Africa. In his address, the Director of the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), Mr Theo Loir, spoke on the importance of the day and on the world-wide support, including that of the United Nations, for the fight against apartheid.

Having elaborated on the current situation in South Africa, the ANC Representative, Khulu Mbatha, then thanked, on behalf of the movement, the

rector, the director of UNIC, and the solidarity and peace organisations, for their political support.

Katsaros, composer, Dimitris Iatropoulos, poet, and Lakis Halkias, singer, then took the floor to announce their cultural work, called Africa Now, a musical composition.

An album is to be released in a few weeks time by Polygram and on May 6th, the artists will give a concert featuring the same composition. The proceeds will be donated to the ANC. Africa Now is the first of its kind on an international scale. It "proclaims that now is the time for every activist to shoulder his or her responsibility. It is also the blood-stained testimony of Black intellectuals at a time where we boast of being able to send a man to the moon, but have not yet managed to bring brotherhood to people on earth", say the Greek artists.

Also attending the press conference were the peace and solidarity organisations, which have assisted in making the project a success. These are the Peace Committee of Intellectuals and Artists, the Athens Labour Centre, the Greek Committee for International Democratic Solidarity (EEDDA), the Greek Trade Union Organisations Peace Committee (KESOE), the Independent Peace Movement (AKE), the Greek Committee of International Detente and Peace (EEDYE), the Movement for National Independence, International Peace and Disarmament

(KEADEA) and the United Nations Information Centre.

An appeal in support of the struggle, to be signed by Greek artists, scientists, writers, journalists etc. was issued. The signatures will be handed in on May 6th, the day of the concert.

Attending the conference were representatives of the local mass media.

The main aim of their cultural project is to raise funds for the ANC so that an office can be established in Athens, Greece, and the funds collected will either be used to rent an office or to buy equipment for the office.

Luthuli Peace Award for Freedom Fighter



Comrade Denis Goldberg received this Award

Each year a group of United States organisations, the Africa Peace Committee, concerned with peace and justice, sets up an *ad hoc* Africa Peace Tour Committee (APTTC). The purpose is to arrange a month-long Africa Peace Tour through part of the USA, to inform people about freedom struggles in Africa.

This year, the tour covered California and Nevada. As in previous years ANC and SWAPO speakers were included. Many people who were aware of events in Africa seem mainly concerned with apartheid South Africa and Namibia, and the Front Line States.

One of the ANC participants was Denis Goldberg. He toured for two weeks, addressing meetings up and down Southern California during April. The meetings included one convened by SCLC (the late Dr Martin Luther King Jr's organisation), one arranged by South African Students at UCLA, and a Shell boycott campaign conference.

The sponsoring organisations, through the APTC, this year instituted the Albert J. Luthuli African Peace Award.

The first presentation was made to Denis Goldberg on

April 12th, 1989 in Los Angeles, for his 'outstanding contributions to Peace and Justice in Africa', recognising his work in the struggle for freedom in South Africa, his 22 years' in prison as a Rivonia trialist, and his continuing activity in the ANC. Zakes Mokae was the master of ceremonies.

In his acceptance Denis said he was very moved to be honoured in the name of his leader whom he had loved and respected. Earlier, he had reminisced about Chief's leadership role in the struggle for freedom in South Africa.

The second award the same evening, was accepted on behalf of her mother, Thandi Gcabashe, by Chief's granddaughter, Nomhle. It was given in recognition of tireless work in the USA in the anti-apartheid cause.

Coincidentally, high school students from Beverley Hills Students' Coalition Against Apartheid occupied the South African Consulate in Los Angeles for two days. They were arrested and charged with trespass. On their release they defiantly restarted their picket. They were delighted to have an ANC person with them and insisted that Denis take part in an impromptu press conference. At the end of the week they organised a large rally and picket outside the consulate where Denis addressed them again, this time together with Dr Mose Tjitendero of the SWAPO Central Committee.

Two striking features of this student action were (a) their explicit understanding of the links between apartheid and racism in the USA, and (b) the pride of their parents in their activist children.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR



Dear Comrades,

I am a Republican POW in H Block 3 Long Kesh, Ireland, and along with a considerable number of my fellow POWs have been quite fortunate in that we have been able to receive your publication *Sechaba* over the past few months (which incidentally is where I found your address).

Although we believe ourselves to be aware in a general sense of the situation in South Africa, I would have had to express ignorance until of late of the existence of *Sechaba*. Could I add in passing that even at this early stage *Sechaba* fills a very important gap in our ability to get a fuller and truer picture of South Africa in that it is the journal of, and written by, those who are effectively engaged in the struggle for liberation in South Africa.

While there are many areas covered in *Sechaba* that I would like to comment on, unfortunately circumstances dictate that this letter

be brief both in length and in the topics that it can cover so I would like to confine myself to two areas. Inevitably because of my present "abode" prisons and imprisonment is one of those areas.

Over quite a number of years now for me there has been a clear identification between the struggle of prisoners and the overall struggle in South Africa. That this has been so is a logical consequence of attempts by the racist regime to crush the people of South Africa, whose determination, no matter when or where the need arises, to resist and to fight back and will indeed eventually achieve their historical goal.

Many have died fighting, like Hector Peterson in Soweto, and of course many have been jailed but as I stated earlier, even in gaol that resistance goes on, and I'm sure you will understand if I select one individual out of all those thousands of political prisoners — Nelson Mandela. He is not only an inspiration to the people of South Africa but also to all those

struggling against oppression (a work that seems so inadequate at times) wherever they may be. That this is the case comes as no surprise to us in the H Blocks for even in our own struggle prisoners have been and continue to be an inspiration. From our limited knowledge of prisons in South Africa, in terms of conditions, there would appear to be no comparison but on the level of political motivation and being an integral part of our struggles that comparison is there for anyone who wishes to look. It was while reading a copy of *Sechaba* that I was struck with another comparison, albeit on a different level, that of education. In that copy of *Sechaba* there was an article about the "Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College" in Tanzania. My reading of the article leads me to believe that what is aimed at is to give children an understanding of their place in the world, an understanding of and a building of commitment to the on-going liberation struggle in all its facets, so that they are prepared for the time when they will administer their own lives and their country. I do hope this is not a vulgar interpretation of the College.

We in gaol here are involved in a similar process; for the most part we had only a basic education before going to gaol; any political education that we may have had, had been passed down from generation to generation or learnt from our day to day practical experience of the British Forces. As such we are now engaged in an education process which covers areas mentioned above; although that is by no means an easy task, the necessity for it (as seen in countries such as Zimbabwe and Mozambique who travelled the road before us) and the mutual reinforcement of seeing the people of South Africa, El Salvador and so on the same road today is of vital importance and immeasurable help.

Before finishing off and bearing in mind the undoubted busy schedule you all have, I wonder if you could be of help towards our gaining a better understanding of how the African National Congress view the racist regime's continued imprisonment of Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu etc., and the proviso that Botha has continued to put in front of them, namely that they should renounce the legitimate struggle of the people. My own view is that Botha is using the prisoners

as political hostages, in that their release is dependent upon the ANC giving up the struggle. A declaration that Nelson and his fellow prisoners have rightly refused to take and as such provided another nail in the coffin of apartheid. Any comments you have on my reading of the objectives of the Solomon Mahlangu College would be most welcome, even if they may be critical, for the criticism would be taken in the spirit of comradeship.

**Yours in solidarity,
Danny McGarrigle
Waterside
Derry.**



BOOK REVIEW

Breaking Contract: The story of Vinnia Ndadi.
Recorded and edited by Dennis Mercer, IDAF
Publications Limited, London 1989, 134
pages, paperback, £5.00.



BREAKING CONTRACT

The Story of
VINNIA NDADI

In this autobiography Ndadi, who was born on October 14th, 1928, tells us everything about himself. He remembers:

"At school I couldn't concentrate on my lessons very well — mostly because I was always hungry and tired" (p.15).

Hunger and tiredness accompanied him throughout his adult life. He was hungry because of exploitation as a contract labourer and tired because of the long hours of work. But even before he got the job he was hungry and tired because of the long hours of travel from the recruiting centre to his place of work:

"I went by train from Grootfontein to Mariental, in the South. It was a small train that we called 'Katanla' (cutting through) because it went so fast. We squeezed into small cattle cars, more than 20 men in each. They put canvas down to cover the cattle mess but it was impossible to lie down. I stood or sat the whole five days to Mariental. There were no buckets or latrines. We just had to wait each time till the next station — if we could — then run to the bush or latrine. Also there was no water on the Katanla; cattle could survive without it for days. Eating dry bread I got extremely thirsty, which was worse than the hunger ... At Mariental station I was told to wait till my boss came for me. I stayed in a station pondok till Mr Jooste arrived a week later" (pp.18-19).

The other aspect of the contract system was the pass and work permit which the police demanded at any time of the day and anywhere. The brutality of the police was an extension of the brutality of the bosses. The working conditions were horrifying to say the least: there were no medical services — if your feet got so swollen that you couldn't put on your own water boots, you were simply given a bigger pair.

It is these conditions which led to dissatisfaction and then to action against the inhumanity. Ndadi was in the thick of it all — he was a contract labourer himself though he used to run away before the end of the contract, thus breaking it, and hence the title of the book.

The name of Andimba Toivo ja Toivo features prominently in the book. He founded the Ovamboland People's Congress (OPC) in Cape Town where he was working. Toivo made history even at this early stage of the political mobilisation of the Namibian people:

"He was arrested and deported for sending a tape-recorded message to the United Nations (UN). He'd cut out the centre of a book, put the tape inside and sent it as a parcel to New York. It was later played at the UN. This, of course, was big news, broadcast over Radio South Africa and reported in all the newspapers. I was very excited to learn about it ...

Nanyemba and I often talked about the case and Toivo's statement on the tape. It was

an important moment for the Namibian people ... and a turning point in my own life" (p.69).

Sam Nujoma, together with some "Ovambo workers who'd been to Cape Town", formed the Ovamboland People's Organisation (p.70). Nujoma went up and down the country mobilising and organising the people. This was in 1959. He inspired many people — old and young, contract workers and peasants, men and women.

These were the early beginnings of SWAPO whose main objective was to "help liberate all the peoples of South West Africa from Boer oppression and win national independence" (p.97).

As the struggle of SWAPO grew in intensity and scope, so did repression increase. Ndadi had to leave the country, not before he was arrested many times. He became involved in the External Mission of SWAPO. It is the actions and activities of people like Ndadi which have deepened the crisis in which the apartheid regime finds itself. With a sense of satisfaction Ndadi says:

"Having been in the liberation struggle from the beginning, I know that if the people of Namibia, under the leadership of SWAPO and our president, Sam Nujoma, had not taken up arms to fight for freedom, Namibia would have been a colony of racist South Africa for many more years to come" (p.132).

The publication of this book on

the threshold of Namibia's independence is timely. The original edition was published by LSM Press, Canada, in 1974. Its significance and merit lie in the fact that the book is written by a contract labourer who became a leader of SWAPO thus testifying to the role the working class plays in the struggle for Namibian independence. It is written in simple, plain language — working class language. There is no sterile academic pontification. Ndadi comes across as an experienced, versatile, down-to-earth politician. With such leaders, the future of Namibia and SWAPO is assured.

F. Meli

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Annual Subscriptions:

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

All other countries £12

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