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**The above are South African times**

# **NELSON MANDELA**

## **THE WORLD IS WITH YOU**

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was born in Mtata, Transkei, on July 18th 1918. This year the whole world celebrates his 70th birthday. Nelson grew up like many young African men who lived in the rural areas and later went to the cities. His father died in 1934 and David Dalindyebo, an acting paramount, became his guardian.

In 1941 Mandela left the Transkei (after a spell at Fort Hare University where he met Oliver Tambo during a students' strike) for Johannesburg, where he worked at Crown Mines as a clerk. Later he worked for a year as an estate agent for £2 a month plus commission. In 1951 he was articled to a Johannesburg firm of attorneys, Witkin, Sidelsky and Eidelman. He obtained a B.A. degree by correspondence from the University of South Africa and became a qualified solicitor.

Mandela practised in Johannesburg for a number of years in partnership with Oliver Tambo. During this period the influence of Sisulu on Mandela cannot be minimised. He has this to say about this period:

*"Right at the beginning of my career as an attorney, I encountered difficulties imposed on me because of the colour of*

*my skin and further difficulty surrounding me because of my membership and support of the African National Congress ... They insisted that my partner, Oliver Tambo, and I should leave the city and practise in an African location miles away, where clients could not reach us during working hours. This was tantamount to asking us to abandon our legal practice, to give up the legal service of our people, for which we had spent many years training ... For some years we continued to occupy the premises in the city illegally ... It was an act of defiance of the law. We were aware of what it was, but nevertheless, that act had been forced on us against our wishes, and we could do no other than to choose between compliance with the law and compliance with our consciences."*

In 1944 Mandela joined the ANC Youth League and became its secretary. By 1952 he was elected President of the Transvaal branch of the ANC and also became deputy national president. From 1952 to June 1953 he was confined to the magisterial district of Johannesburg by the authorities and also prohibited from attending gatherings. Both these restrictions were later renewed for two more years. Then to those bans a third was added:

*"I was ordered by the Minister of Justice to resign altogether from the ANC and never again to become a member or to participate in its activities."*

In 1953, Mandela was given a suspended sentence of nine months' imprisonment for his part in organising the 1952 Defiance Campaign in which he was the leading volunteer. In February 1956, the bans were again renewed — this time for five years. In December 1956, he was arrested with 155 other members of the Congress movement on charges of "high treason". He was jailed during the state of emergency, declared after Sharpeville when 2 000 Congress members were locked up, and was only discharged in 1961, after the Treason

Trial acquittals. Then:

*"early in April 1961, I went underground to organise the May strike and have never been home since."*

Since then Mandela became an embodiment of ANC's political life incorporating all the three aspects of the ANC's history with all that it entails, namely a leader in the **legal ANC**; an **underground activist** and a **political prisoner**.

Mandela was arrested on August 5th, 1962. He was sentenced to 5 years. During his period of underground work he travelled abroad, mainly in Africa where he did military training and met African heads of state — he became one of them. Rusty Bernstein, one of the accused in the Rivonia Trial in 1964 where Mandela figured as accused No. 1 discusses Mandela's role in this

trial. Michael Dingake who spent 15 years on Robben Island with Nelson Mandela has nice things to say about Mandela. Rusty's article and a review of Dingake's book are in this issue of *Sechaba*.

Mandela's courage and leadership exemplify the aspirations of a free nation yet to be born. His principles and dignity stand as a towering symbol of determination of the oppressed people of South Africa. Nelson Mandela, a lifelong fitness enthusiast and a great lover of the outdoors, is now confined to seeing a small patch of sky above the miserable exercise yard at Pollsmoor prison. A man who loves his people and his family has been separated from them for the past 26 years — doing nothing but breaking stones in a quarry.

Mandela and his comrades — all political prisoners — must be released. This is our resolve and our birthday present to him.

# RIVONIA: TELLING IT AS IT WAS

By Lionel Bernstein



This month, Nelson Mandela celebrates his 70th birthday. July 1988 also marks the 25th anniversary of the Rivonia arrests. The writer of this article, who was one of those arrested at Rivonia and spent nearly a year in detention and on trial, tells the story of this landmark in the history of our liberation struggle.

It is hard these days — twenty-five years on — to recapture the feeling of the time of Rivonia — of the sudden arrest of some of the leading liberation movement's activists, of the triumphant state claims that the 'headquarters' of the illegal ANC and Communist Party had been 'captured' of the trial and its head-on confrontation between state and security police on one hand, Mandela, Sisulu, Mbeki and their colleagues on the other. And yet, whenever the history of the South African resistance movement is being discussed or written, 'Rivonia' becomes some sort of milestone, or the marker of a turning point in the story.

But what is it that makes 'Rivonia' — by which is implied the whole episode of police raid, arrest, trial and sentence — special? Now, 25 years after the raid on Lilliesleaf Farm in the Johannesburg

suburb, we have experienced other and more sweeping police raids, the arrests and trials of thousands of other political activists and freedom fighters; we have witnessed more dramatic confrontations between police and freedom fighters including shoot-outs and murders, and trials with more lurid evidence, and even more draconian sentences including sentences of death. And still Rivonia holds a special place in the tale.

To explain, at least in part, why that should be so, it is necessary to look not only at the events of Rivonia, but more importantly at the times in which they occurred.

## The Rivonia Time

Those activists of the liberation struggle

who are still alive today will probably remember them as "the best of times; ... the worst of times" in Dickens' graphic phrase. The worst of times, because the ANC had been outlawed three years before during the country's first state of emergency, and no public body had been created to carry on the popular struggle for freedom. On the surface, they were times of quiet — of an almost graveyard quiet in which the voice and aspirations of the majority of the people appeared to have been extinguished by a brute force, and the undisputed reign of White supremacists to have been re-established and strengthened after a hiccup during the emergency. The worst of times.

But below the surface, for the activists, for the members of the ANC and their colleagues from the Indian Congress, the Communist Party, and others, things were different. The ANC had been officially outlawed; some claimed it had been extinguished. But its leaders had decided that the organisation would not just give up and die. It would continue underground, unlawfully, secretly. It had done so.

## **ANC Still Alive**

The lines of communication between its leadership and the local branches had been re-established underground; small local units met, gathered in and united former members, discussed and decided upon action on local political and social issues of every kind. The word that the ANC — banned, but still the ANC — was alive underground spread by word of mouth, by rumour, through rare small-circulation, illegal leaflets — until every politically aware citizen suspected it or believed it. But nothing could be proved. Police surveillance and search for the illegal organisation was intense, but evidence for arrest or prosecution remained always beyond their reach, underground. From time to time ad hoc, short-term political campaigns developed publicly on matters of the moment, in which former ANC activists were prominent, and the directing spirit of the ANC

behind the scenes suspected and usually tacitly accepted. The ANC leaders, its politics and its spirit, it seemed, were everywhere; its name, its banners, its organising centres nowhere. For the underground activists it seemed that the outlawing of their organisation had been side-stepped, that the underground had mastered the new conditions, and that their security rules had defied the vast resources of the security police. It seemed in some ways the best of times.

And then came Rivonia.

## **New Political Era**

Even before that, there had been rumours, and portents from underground of the beginning of a new political era, rumours which everyone heard or observed in one way or another, but none could explain with any certainty. In 1961, when the government decided to declare South Africa a republic and change the constitution without consulting the Black majority, one of those ad hoc, temporary, public campaigns grew up out of the shadows, ostensibly headed by the Interdenominational Ministers' Association. ANC leaders, almost all of them under individual banning orders, were nowhere in evidence; yet rumour had it that — as always — they were there somewhere, in the centre of it.

A national conference to consider action against the republican declaration gathered in Pietermaritzburg. Dramatically, Nelson Mandela had appeared from the shadows of a banning order, delivered the keynote speech, and won a decision for a national protest strike in May 31st 1960, for which he was appointed the leading organiser. Just as dramatically, he vanished underground, no longer to be found at home or office, but yet repeatedly available for interviews with press or television '... from underground'.

In an interview immediately after the strike, which had been notable for massive state armed provocation and the use and threat of armed force, Mandela suggested that force would have to be met with force if the peoples' opinions and rights were not to be brutally crushed. The ANC traditions

of using only non-violent actions would, he suggested, have to be reconsidered. And then again he vanished into that ubiquitous 'underground'.

Rumour and guarded suggestions of the use of force by the liberation movement. It was rumoured that the reversal of the policy of non-violence was being considered; but by whom, none could say. It was rumoured that ANC members in local secret branches were being consulted, opinions sought. It was becoming the consensus everywhere amongst the political activists that change was necessary and overdue, and that force would have to be brought into play against a state which knew no other answer to its people's grievances. But who would start, and where? how? In the shadowy, apparently leaderless vacuum left by the disappearance of the substance of the ANC, could the slow drift to anarchic violence evidenced by a new and unknown group calling itself 'Poqo' be followed?

## **MK Appears**

The answer came, again dramatically, on December 16th, 1961 — six months later from the Republic Day strike. In the early hours of the morning, in all the main urban areas, government and municipal installations came under attack by sabotage. Bombs brought down electrical pylons, and damaged pass offices and rail tracks. Posters pasted up during the night announced the actions to be the work of a new body, Umkhonto we Sizwe, which would carry on armed forms of struggle for the liberation of the people.

Before many of the posters could be read and digested by the people at whom they were aimed, police squads scoured the areas, tearing them down and destroying them. Still, the message got out — not to many but to a few; and the news that something new had been formed and had struck against the state, spread by gossip and by rumour. But of Umkhonto itself and its leaders there was no sign. It too had surfaced briefly, and then disappeared into the 'underground.'

From time to time during the following

months there were reports, rumours, tales, some true and some untrue, of further acts of sabotage against symbols and installations of the State. There were tales of deliberate crop burning, and of petty industrial sabotage of machines; but no solid facts. The press, leant upon by government, suppressed the news of actual sabotage, even where reporters confirmed the facts. Sabotage, too, remained a flicker in the shadows, raising the hopes and morale of a suffering population although they could discover nothing solid about its scale, its effectiveness, or who directed and carried it out.

## **Mandela Captured**

Mandela remained out of sight, unreported. Until August, there were rumours that he had been seen now here, now there, that he had addressed secret meetings of activists in several centres; but no one knew for sure. And then the sudden news that he had been stopped at a road block on the Durban-Johannesburg road and arrested, 17 months after disappearing underground. Soon afterwards he was charged with inciting a strike on Republic Day, and with leaving the country illegally. In November 1962 he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment. But mystery remained. Where had he been when 'underground'? Why had he left the country, and returned again to the 'underground'? His vigorous defence of his politics during the trial provided no clues, no answers.

And so it remained — a period of occasional and often unreported acts of sabotage, of occasional legal protest actions breaking the surface; but only rumour and speculation about what really was going on underground. Until June 1963.

By then almost all known ANC and Communist Party activists had been placed under banning orders, prohibited from almost all social and political contact with others; many were house arrested and virtually incommunicado. And still rumour had it that the 'underground' survived, lived and operated.

Detention of suspects without trial had been written into the law, and the first vic-

tims had vanished into the silence of solitary confinement in police stations and prisons, from which rumours and evidence of persistent torture, sleep-deprivation and maltreatment filtered out. Other prominent political activists had disappeared into the 'underground' — Walter Sisulu from Soweto, Govan Mbeki from Port Elizabeth, both being sought by security police armed with house arrest orders. On June 26th, an illegal radio transmission programme had come on the air — Freedom Radio — heard with some difficulty; and for its first ever broadcast from underground, the voice and message of Walter Sisulu. Perhaps few people had switched to the right wavelength at the right moment; but word circulated around the townships, and on the grapevines of political rumour. The underground is no longer silent! It speaks! And then it was July 11th. And Rivonia.

## **The State Case**

The triumph of the police and state was unrestrained, the tone exultant. The claims of what had occurred in a raid on a Rivonia house were extravagant. The 'secret headquarters' of the whole national liberation movement, it was claimed, had been 'captured', together with the secret archives of a vast conspiracy of sabotage and preparation for guerrilla war. Those arrested, it was claimed, constituted the 'High Command' of the conspirators, and they had been taken red-handed along with precise detailed plans for armed struggle. The mask had been stripped from the vaunted 'non-violent' ANC, it was claimed, and the reality of a murderous violent conspiracy had been revealed to confirm all the government's fiercest allegations against it.

Whether the organs of state that released a series of lurid statements believed it all or not is not clear. There has always been — as there is today — a vast gap between government propaganda about the nature of the opposition, and the reality of it. The reality — so far as the accused in the forthcoming trial were concerned — was this. They were charged with having jointly constituted a 'National High Command'

— (of what was not stated) — of which nothing had ever previously been heard.

This High Command, it was alleged, had been responsible for organising some 300 acts of sabotage at various places throughout the country over some 18 months; about most of these events, the regime knew neither whether they had actually occurred, nor, if they had, who had carried them out. They were said to have prepared documents showing that they had prepared and started on the development of armed quasi-guerrilla forces in pursuit of a plan for the armed overthrow of the government; of the documents themselves, few of them knew anything at all; perhaps there were such documents; perhaps they were forgeries, but most of the accusers knew neither of their existence, their validity or their contents.

Lilliesleaf Farm in fact had not been 'headquarters' as the state alleged, but a 'safe house' used by various illegal organisations. Each of its users left there, for 'safe-keeping' or for reasons of carelessness, its own documentary evidence. None of the users — or the accused — knew of all the documents, or indeed of their existence until the court case.

## **Possible Death Sentence**

The charges carried a possible death sentence, and the prosecution was putting it about that death sentences would be asked for. There are always, in a political trial, two possible lines of defence; and where charges are this serious, the choice is not to be made lightly. There could be a 'lawyer-led' defence, based on contesting all the state evidence and rebutting it, and on legalistic argument about the scope and meaning of the laws under which the prosecution is brought. Or there could be a political defence, based on a strenuous justification of deeds actually committed, and on turning the accusation of guilt against the state whose policies and actions had made the actions necessary and right.

From this point on, James Kantor must be excluded. He was a strictly non-political lawyer, uninvolved in any of the events covered by the trial, who had been ar-



rested as an act of petty spite and as surrogate for his brother-in-law, Harold Wolpe, who was cited in the Rivonia indictment as a 'co-conspirator', but had escaped from a police cell before he could be charged. There was no case at all against Kantor, and an application for his discharge at the end of the state case succeeded.

## **The Accused of One Mind**

The Rivonia accused were of one mind, which was itself remarkable. They came from different sectors, different organisations within what can loosely be called 'the liberation movement'. Their basic political ideologies ranged from Marxist, through nationalist, to near-Gandhian pacifist. Their participation — if any — in the underground preparation and commission of acts of violence varied; some had been at the very centre, some on the rank-and-file level, some quite outside everything except the political debates and exchanges which had given rise to new policies, some variously outside the country or in prison at the time most of the events took place. But the case rested on a charge of conspiracy in which the deeds of each can be attributed against all the others, regardless of such differences. The decision of how to defend had to be made in common.

They were all of one mind. The political defence had to be followed, even at the cost of any temporary or personal advantage which might be gained by sticking to the legalisms. There was to be no search for self-justification or self-advertisement. Here, it was realised, was the opportunity the whole 'underground' had sought, and failed to find — the opportunity to address the whole country, to explain the reasons why the struggle had to shift from total non-violence to a combination of violent and non-violent means; to explain why Umkhonto had been formed, by whom and for what purposes. Here at last was the opportunity to break out of the blackout of state censorship and press self-censorship, and replace unreliable rumour with an authentic policy guide for the whole people. The Rivonia trial must become the platform from which to tell the whole story, as

it really was.

The main burden of telling it fell, inevitably, on accused No.1 — Nelson Mandela. An unexpected move totally unsettled the prosecutor, who had been preparing his cross-examination of Mandela with some glee. Mandela elected not to go into the witness stand, but to make his statement from the dock. He thus passed up any opportunity to present a legal defence against the charges, or provide any evidence in rebuttal. But he gained what the accused wanted above all else — an opportunity to tell the whole story of Umkhonto and the turn to forms of violent struggle, as it was, without interruptions and without the obscurities which develop in the question-and-answer form of evidence from the witness stand.

His statement has often been repeated as the "I am prepared to die" testimony of South Africa's freedom fighters. That statement was reported and rebroadcast through the country. If it sealed the certainty of a verdict of guilt against Mandela, it broke at last the stifling blanket of censorship and silence which had surrounded the ANC and its allies since the state of emergency of 1960.

## **Leaders in the Witness Box**

Sisulu, Mbeki, Kathrada and others went into the witness box, to discuss the evidence, rebut the lies of which they were aware, and fill the gaps in the story which Mandela's statement had left unfilled. Through fiercely sustained cross-examination, all stood their ground. All defended the decision to start violent forms of struggle, though their personal roles in its execution varied. All refused steadfastly to reveal any of the information about the underground which was not already in evidence, or to implicate by smear ANC leader, Chief Luthuli or leading defence counsel Abram Fisher, who were the targets of the prosecutor's special venom.

The outcome of the case was not in doubt. The accused had ensured that a 'guilty' verdict was certain. All that was in doubt was whether it would apply equally and to all of them; and whether the

sentence would be death. In the event, all but one\* were found guilty; no reasons were given for the judgment; all were sentenced to life imprisonment. All had decided, in advance of the verdict, that whatever happened they would not appeal. They had made their stand as a matter of principle. They had done their duty to their movements and to their people, whom they had tried to serve with all the purpose of their being. They would not appeal to either the mercy or the humanity of a State they had declared at the outset of the trial to be guilty of the violence, oppression and inhumanity which characterised South Africa.

Twenty-five years on. And they are still there, in prison — all except Goldberg, released in 1984 and Mbeki last year. The day of their sentencing 25 years ago seemed to be the very nadir of the liberation movement's fortunes — its best known leaders imprisoned for life; its underground organisation in disarray; its members being rounded up and flung into prison as, piece by piece, the police net work of information widened through systematic torture in solitary confinement without charge or trial. It was the worst of times, for those inside prison and for those outside.

But a corner had been turned, whether or not any of them could see it for themselves at the time. The veil of secrecy had been torn down, and in its place before the eyes of the whole population stood revealed the new, illegal policy and programme of the ANC and its allies. The political case for the new phase of struggle had been made, and the organisational basis of its first units explained. From here on, the downward drift towards passivity and defeatism which had fed on the state's triumphs since the 1960 state of emergency ended. New hope, new confidence new ideas and new leadership began slowly, painfully to break out of the police-state manacles. The corner had been turned; and the countdown to the revival of the peoples' struggle which would dominate the country's politics in the 70s and 80s had begun. Twenty-five years on, and it still continues. Unstoppable now. Irreversible. Because the men of Rivonia talked to the

people of South Africa from the court, pointing the way at heavy cost to themselves.

But as Mandela had written, well before Rivonia: "There are no easy walks to freedom!"

\*Bernstein was found 'not guilty' and discharged. The evidence against him, as against Kathrada and Mhlaba, was of the flimsiest; any or all of them could have been found not guilty. It is believed that the judge decided in advance to acquit one, thus proving the 'fairness' of the trial. Bernstein, being White and middle-class, won the lottery.

## **Accused in the Rivonia Trial:**

Brought from Robben Island, where he was serving an earlier sentence:

### **1. Nelson Mandela**

Arrested at Lilliesleaf Farm, Rivonia:

### **2. Walter Sisulu**

(ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe)

### **3. Ahmed Kathrada**

(ANC, CP)

### **4. Lionel Bernstein**

(Congress of Democrats, CP)

### **5. Raymond Mhlaba**

(ANC, MK)

**6. Dennis Goldberg** (Congress of Democrats) and:

Arrested subsequently in various places:

### **7. Andrew Mlangeni**

(ANC)

### **8. Elias Motsoaledi**

(ANC, CP)

### **9. James Kantor**

(No political affiliations)

All organisational links stated above are those given by the accused themselves in their own statements in court.

# ON BRENDA STALKER'S THEORIES — A REJOINDER

by Thando Zuma

I would like to take issue once again with Brenda Stalker in relation to her last article in the May 1988 issue of *Sechaba*. I will concentrate only on aspects of strategy and tactics and leave out the many other controversial issues raised in her article.

I want to make one point from the beginning, and that point is that **as ANC activists and writers, we have in one way or another an obligation to be guided by the general policies of the movement** as already adopted in democratic conferences such as the one at Kabwe. But I am not suggesting that we have to fall in blindly with the movement policy even where it needs improving because it may be incongruent with the actually changing concrete conditions of struggle.

As a movement marching as the vanguard of our embattled people, we need to show (and correctly so) a unanimity of viewpoint at this hour. More especially in relation to the fundamental questions of the way forward. And the type of slogans that are advanced must conform to what the movement thinks is the best way forward. Which are these fundamental questions?

One, the centrality of the armed struggle. The conditions which imposed armed struggle on us in 1961 have not changed. If anything they have reinforced the correctness of the movement's decision to embark on that road of struggle. Any talk of intensifying the struggle at the present moment which excludes the sharpening of this aspect of our struggle is definitely bound to fail. Those who genuinely want the freedom of our people would indeed be disgusted by any suggestion that we must abandon this aspect of our war of liberation.

But what does sharpening the armed struggle mean, if it is not going to be a hollow slogan devoid of any meaning? For activists the answer is very clear. It is that

we must transform armed action into people's war. How else does one intensify armed struggle without making it develop into a people's war? It is absolutely absurd to suggest that in the present climate of the solution of regional conflicts by negotiation, a policy of developing people's war would endanger regional and world peace.

## The NEC Guides Us

Those who live in South Africa and daily experience oppression and exploitation under the apartheid system, would find a lot of difficulty with Brenda's reasoning. **Is there any possibility that our struggle can progress to the strategic goal of people's power without going via the route of people's war?** In other words, are there any possibilities of a transfer of power to the people in South Africa without having to wage armed struggle? If there is to be any lesson learnt by successive uprisings in South Africa in the pre- and post-1960 period, that lesson is that people's uprisings which exclude the use of arms by the people are bound to be restricted by the regime's ability to rely on armed force to suppress these uprisings.

Worst of all is the suggestion that we can rely on certain forces within the capitalist ruling class to bring about political change. This to me sounds indeed like appealing to the movement to abandon the armed struggle and follow the reformist road. This indeed is tantamount to suggesting that we can participate in the structures of apartheid as has been suggested by certain reformist theorists such as Mark Swilling.

I am not suggesting that the movement should not pursue other tactics of weakening the socio-political base of the regime

by attempting to win certain forces within the White community to the side of democracy thus depriving the regime of a vital base. No. In my earlier article I indicated how correct the movement is in that tactic. I am still saying so. But this tactic alone will not bring about **our desired objective** which is **the destruction of the apartheid system, root and branch!**

So far the movement has come to the conclusion that the dynamic combination of the "four pillars of struggle" will go a long way towards the destruction of the regime. But the movement is very clear on the crucial role of armed struggle. In this year's January 8th message, the National Executive Committee says that:

*"The armed struggle constitutes the spearhead of our general offensive, a crucial element in our response to the violence of the racist regime. We must raise the level of this (armed) struggle in a decisive manner, draw the masses of our people into actual combat actions and realise our objective of transforming armed actions into a people's war."*

If the armed struggle "constitutes the spearhead of our offensive" then the necessary implications of this approach must be fully understood. As the NEC statement goes on to say, "the Pretoria regime leaves us with no choice but to escalate our military offensive for the victory of the democratic cause."

But for comrade Brenda this constitutes a dangerous strategy. She says "in conditions of colonialist exploitation and oppression the build-up to general insurrection can only take place along the path of people's war ... the adoption of such a strategy in our conditions would have extremely dangerous implications for regional and international peace" p25. She is motivated to this conclusion by the fact that we are now in a "nuclear age, (and) no revolutionary movement can afford to formulate its strategy and tactics without taking into consideration their implications for the maintenance of world peace" p25.

If the strategy of escalating armed struggle towards a people's war is constrained by:

(a) the fear of nuclear warfare and

(b) that such a strategy would escalate regional conflicts thus disturbing world peace, then I fail to understand comrade Brenda's argument.

The ANC has on many occasions explained that it is the apartheid regime which is destabilising world peace and that actually our struggle is a struggle for peace. If you ask the Front Line States who is responsible for creating havoc in their countries, their answer will be unanimous: the Pretoria regime.

## **Insurrection and the SADF**

Our task is to overthrow this regime. What about comrade Brenda's remarks on insurrection itself? She says:

*" ... from the point of view of the possibility of general insurrection or the conquering of full state power by the people — in this respect it cannot be forgotten that the South African army is White dominated, and the Whites are, in general, not going to be a support for such an uprising. Moreover the extreme rightist elements among them would undoubtedly be dedicated fighters in such eventuality."*

"Here we are faced with two issues:

(a) that no insurrection can take place without majority support in the South African Defence Force (SADF), and

(b) that the lunatic right-wing would fiercely oppose such an armed uprising.

Nobody will doubt that any serious revolutionary movement has to work amongst the enemy forces. We are called upon to do the same too. Sections of the SADF will not, just by themselves, come over to the side of liberation; they have to be organised by the revolutionary movement. Our organisation of revolutionaries must include those in the SADF. They may not be as many as we would like but we can win members of the SADF through persistent political work. **The members of the SADF are part of the socio-political base of the regime but the fact that the SADF is a conscripted army can also work in our favour if we do the necessary political work.**

But the question of the SADF must not be

elevated to the point where if there are no prospects of winning some SADF members to the side of the revolution it means that our armed insurrection is doomed. No, we have to combine political work with armed actions against the SADF. **Concomitantly, the overall conduct of the people's war will condition/influence the political thinking in the White community, soldiers included. And in any case as we prepare for people's war, we would want to increase the level and frequency of attacks against the racist army in order to weaken it with the aim of eventually destroying it.** Is it possible, somebody may ask? The answer must be yes. We may destroy it in one of two ways,

(a) attacking it from both inside and outside through armed and political actions,

(b) by the gradual building up of our mass army of liberation, we can reach a stage when we can 'storm the citadel' during a climate of armed popular uprising. Theorists of insurrection insist that **insurrection must be approached very artistically.** Such will be the demand on our leadership in our approach to insurrection. **The victory of such a strategy, I must repeat, will depend on our actual existing revolutionary forces on the ground.**

## Brenda's Reformism

The second point I want to take comrade Brenda to task for is the question of state power. Here I found the most reformist statement I have ever read in an ANC publication. Says comrade Brenda "I believe that, in the new stage of world development which is just opening ... a conscious policy of choosing the most peaceful path ... offers the revolutionary and democratic forces the most favourable basis for further progress" p26. This new world situation, we are told by comrade Brenda, is favourable for a political compromise in South Africa which can result in ... "qualitative widening of democratic rights" p26. **Politically and philosophically this is wrong. At this moment in South Africa the oppressed have no democratic rights whatsoever and consequently no "compromise political solution" will widen anything.**

## People's Power and not Power Sharing

Flowing from the above, Brenda says that " ... a compromise is likely to mean that the liberation and democratic movement will gain a part of state power" p26 (my emphasis). This is a reformist theory that is being put across as a genuine strategy that the movement must follow. I have emphasised the "*part of state power*" to bring out very clearly what comrade Brenda is proposing in her thesis. **To gain a part of state power means basically that we will not be realising the ideals in the Freedom Charter.** The Freedom Charter is very clear on the question of the future basis of power. It says that "The People Shall Govern". If this is not clear, there couldn't be any clearer document than this one of ours. The Freedom Charter is for **People's Power not power sharing.**

The nature of the present apartheid state is such that it will be impossible anyway to get the sort of "compromise realistic solution" that comrade Brenda proposes. Unless of course the movement agrees to become part of the structures that are being devised by the regime, such as the National Statutory Council or the Presidential Council that chooses the racist president. I hope this is not what comrade Brenda is proposing as a **realistic political solution** because to me it sounds like a classic sell-out that a revolutionary movement such as ours can never be involved in.

I agree with comrade Brenda on the crucial theoretical and political/practical importance of getting to grips with the nature of the ruling class in South Africa and its relationship to the regime. But I fail to understand the bold statement that we can reach a **compromise** with sections of the ruling class which will **entail gaining part of the state power** by the ANC and the mass democratic movement.

Says comrade Brenda, "we must **force the ruling class to throw its weight behind such a peaceful perspective**, which is in our interest — the interest of the ruling class, of the national liberation movement, of the people of South Africa ... " (My emphasis) This **peaceful perspective**, is of course (according to comrade Brenda) the "**genuine compromise**", which will give

the ANC a **"part of state power"**. How this can be in our interest I do not know but I leave it to the reader to judge. All I can do for now is pose a question:

Is it possible that the interests of the ruling class could be the same as those of the ANC? What about Clause Three of the Freedom Charter, the commitment by the Congress of the People to the nationalisation of some of the crucial monopoly interests of the ruling class. Will that not make the ruling class come into conflict with our people's programme? Or should we dare change our people's stated aim in order to get "a genuine political compromise" which will be in the interest of the ruling class?

## **Contradictions in Brenda's Thinking**

While we are called upon to chart this **"peaceful perspective"**, (obviously without force if the strategy is to be peaceful!) we are told that we have to **"force the ruling class"** along. How else does one **"force"** this class? Comrade Brenda says that we have to **"mobilise"** all the forces of our people both in South Africa and internationally to achieve this objective. How? The answer is quickly provided: **"by ... stepping up our struggle ... in particular strengthening of the people's movement and necessary defence (including armed defence)"** p26.

So the road to a **"genuine political solution"** is this:

(a) we **force** the ruling class to accept a compromise for us to have a **part of state power**;

(b) the method of doing this is through stepping up the struggle (including armed force) and;

(c) the solution must be peaceful.

Contradictions abound in this argument!

Let me just mention the obvious. There is no way in South Africa in which we can **"step up the struggle"** as a movement without intensifying the armed struggle. Every January statement of the NEC has been very clear about this, in particular in the post-1985 period. The mass democratic

movement has been stepping up its campaigning against the regime only to be blocked constantly by **the armed force of the regime**. The mass democratic movement has faced massive state repressive measures including the recent bannings of the activities of the UDF, NECC, SAYCO, COSATU and others. **The regime is digging in and there is no prospect of a "compromise realistic political solution"** in South Africa, let alone a peaceful one.

Recent developments show that the regime is determined to press ahead with its spider web of Joint Management Centres whose main programme is to repress and marginalise the democratic movement by township upgrading, co-option of 'leading figures' in the townships and a concurrent policy of detention and absolute harassment of democratic activists, turning large numbers into internal and external refugees. The state is attempting to regain lost ground in the field of local puppet authorities by its attempt at holding 'elections' in October. Troops are still in the townships, some universities are still under complete military occupation and so on ...

Anybody hoping to start a political programme going, must proceed from a sober study of the actual existing conditions of repression that these boers have unleashed on us. Clearly, therefore, **"stepping up the struggle" must mean escalating the People's War in all its facets. The perspective and slogan of People's War must govern our thinking in order to avoid getting bogged down in what are clearly reformist fantasies about "genuine political solutions" which bear no relevance to the nature and tempo of our struggle.**

I hope to return at some stage to deal with the notion that apartheid acts as a constraint to expanded capitalist production and the whole question of state monopoly capitalism which I think comrade Brenda has completely misunderstood. Clearly one will have to return as well to the question of *perestroika* and regional conflicts and how the new thinking on world issues is developing in the Soviet Union, to avoid the sort of confusion inherent in comrade Brenda about the peaceful climate which we must not disturb, as it were, by People's War.



# **ANC STATEMENT**

## **NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **CALL TO THE PEOPLE**

The National Executive Committee of the ANC calls on all the people of South Africa:

- Isolate Botha and his murderous clique!
- Unite in action for People's Power!
- Oppose and boycott the October local authority elections!
- Fight and defeat the Labour Relations Amendment Bill!
- Use all means to sustain the mass offensive against apartheid!

The Botha regime is on the rampage. It is striking out because of the crisis of the apartheid system. It is fighting for its survival. The target of its counter-offensive is all the forces that fight for a non-racial democracy. It brooks no opposition of any kind. No one is excluded from its campaign of repression.

Compatriots, the evidence of the gruesome acts of terror of the apartheid regime inside and outside our country stares us all in the face.

- Dulcie September, Sicelo Dhlomo, Mazizi Masekeza and Johannes Nkomo have all been brutally murdered, on Pretoria's orders, by hired assassins.
- Albie Sachs is maimed permanently by decision of the Botha regime.
- Political activists have been hanged and are being hanged in Pretoria in a veritable massacre on the gallows.
- To accomplish their regional designs, the racists have butchered and starved to

death hundreds of thousands in Namibia, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and the rest of Southern Africa.

Now, in a continuing effort to intimidate everybody and paralyse the struggle, the same murderers have further extended the provisions of the state of emergency to make all democratic political struggle illegal — a crime for which all those who dare to raise the banner of freedom can be victimised by the apartheid courts.

- The UDF and other democratic organisations have been banned.
- Cosatu is prohibited from engaging in political struggle.
- Pretoria is preparing to declare strikes virtually illegal.
- Pretoria is preparing to prohibit international assistance.

The Botha regime is desperate because its guns and its prisons have not affected our

will and determination to fight for freedom and justice. It has failed to make South Africa governable.

■ The racists have failed to create their National Council, thanks to its complete rejection by the oppressed.

■ The mass democratic movement has withstood enemy repression and further increased its strength by drawing in new forces.

■ The Black workers have scored major victories against the oppressors and the exploiters and further increased their fighting potential by strengthening the trade union movement.

■ Patriotic sections within the bantustan structures have, in action, rocked these apartheid institutions and expanded the frontiers of the democratic struggle.

■ The combatants of Umkhonto we Sizwe have delivered telling blows against the enemy, while the people's army continues to grow in strength within our country.

■ The new repressive measures imposed on February 24th have themselves drawn even greater numbers of people into struggle.

All this frightens the enemy of humanity and drives it to further acts of desperation. Through its actions, it continues to drag our country ever closer to the bloodiest confrontation that our continent has ever experienced. The death squads, the vigilante gangs and the kitskonstabels, the police, the armed bandits and the enormous war machine are all being reinforced to increase their capacity to inflict more death and destruction and to protect the iniquitous, illegitimate and oppressive structures of the apartheid system.

No man or woman of conscience can stand aside and watch as a clique of power-hungry men prepare to turn our country into a waste land. Let all who are opposed to apartheid unite now into a mighty movement of struggle for freedom, justice and equality. Only through our united action can we rescue ourselves and our country from our present suffering and from the terrible fate to which the Botha regime seeks to condemn us.

The African National Congress therefore:

■ Calls on all forces opposed to apartheid to isolate the diehard racists and militarists through struggle. Let us all unite in action for the eradication of the criminal apartheid system and the emergence of a united, democratic and non-racial society.

■ Calls on all our people to mount a concerted campaign for the boycott of the October local authority apartheid elections. Let us all refuse to serve the interests of the Botha regime. Let us refuse to participate in these elections in any way. In the build-up to October, let us continue to intensify the struggle on all fronts.

■ Calls on all our people, and the workers in particular, to oppose and stop the passage of the repressive Labour Relations Amendment Bill. Through our united action, let us achieve this vitally important objective, draw more workers into action, reinforce the Living Wage Campaign and cement unity of the democratic movement in general and the trade union movement in particular. As part of this offensive, we have observed May Day in fitting manner.

■ Calls on all activists and formations of the democratic movement to continue to work for the highest organisation and mobilisation of the people into action around both local and national issues. Let us use all methods, open and secret, to keep in touch with the masses, to raise their level of understanding and to intensify the mass offensive against the apartheid system.

■ Calls on all its members and combatants of Umkhonto we Sizwe to be in the vanguard of the continuing political and military offensive against the Pretoria regime. Let us act boldly together with the people to take the battle to the enemy and, at the same time, to strengthen the ranks of our revolutionary movement by drawing in dedicated and disciplined fighters for liberation.

■ Calls on all our people in the bantustans, including the chiefs and patriots who serve in dummy parliaments, to intensify the offensive against these apartheid creations as part of our assault on the racist regime. Let the democratic movement raise its organised strength within these areas and work to unite the people around the perspective of a free and united South Africa.



■ Calls on all the people to intensify the campaign for the immediate and unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners and detainees. Let this call continue to resound throughout the length and breadth of our country, accompanied by other specific demands:

Observe Mandela's 70th birthday on 18th July!

Free Harry Gwala who is gravely ill in Pietermaritzburg!

Let Govan Mbeki and all our leaders speak!

Stop the hanging of the patriots!

Free our children who suffer torture in apartheid dungeons!

■ Calls on the Black soldiers and police to abandon those who are using them as a killing machine against innocent people. Turn your guns against the common enemy for your own liberation and the emancipation of the country of your birth.

■ Calls on our White compatriots to make their due contribution to the attainment of the goal of freedom, justice and peace. Do not allow yourselves to be used for evil purposes by the Pretoria regime. Your fathers, brothers and sons must refuse to do Botha's dirty work in the neighbouring countries and our townships. The business community must break ranks with the racist regime and stop deceiving itself that its interests are best served by these killers. It, too, must oppose the Anti-Labour Relations Bill.

Let all who truly value freedom, young and old, Black and White, believer and non-believer, men and women, workers and professionals, rural and urban residents, unite in action against the common enemy of all the people of our country — the Botha regime.

Let us all combine our efforts in a many-sided offensive to end repression, free our country of the crime of apartheid and transform it into one in which all our people live in peace and friendship in a united, democratic and non-racial society.

**In the year of united action for people's power!**

ANC, PO BOX 31791, Lusaka, Zambia  
May, 1988.

## **Joint Communiqué of the African National Congress and the National Council of Trade Unions**

The ANC and NACTU met in Harare from May 2nd — 3rd 1988 to discuss matters of mutual concern including the unity of the labour movement.

The Meeting was held in a calm and friendly atmosphere.

The NACTU delegation led by comrade James Mndaweni, President of NACTU, briefed the ANC on the intensification of the struggle against apartheid.

The ANC delegation, led by comrade Alfred Nzo, Secretary General of the ANC, briefed the NACTU delegation on the present situation in South Africa and the intensification of the armed struggle and importance of mass action in South Africa against apartheid.

The two organisations reviewed the repressive actions of the minority racist regime against the mass democratic movement and 18 activists, the legislative programme of the Botha government, including the Labour Relations Amendment Bill, the intended municipal elections of October 1988 and other issues of common concern.

In reviewing the situation in the Front Line States, the organisations appreciated the support and sacrifices of the people of the Front Line States against apartheid.

Both organisations recognised that "Unity in Action" is a prerequisite for the quick defeat of apartheid. To this end both organisations agreed that it was imperative for the labour movement inside the country to strive toward **UNITY** with the eventual objective of a single labour federation.

Both organisations reiterated their commitment to the creation of a United Democratic Country, free of racism.

*May 3rd 1988, Harare*



# NELSON MANDELA

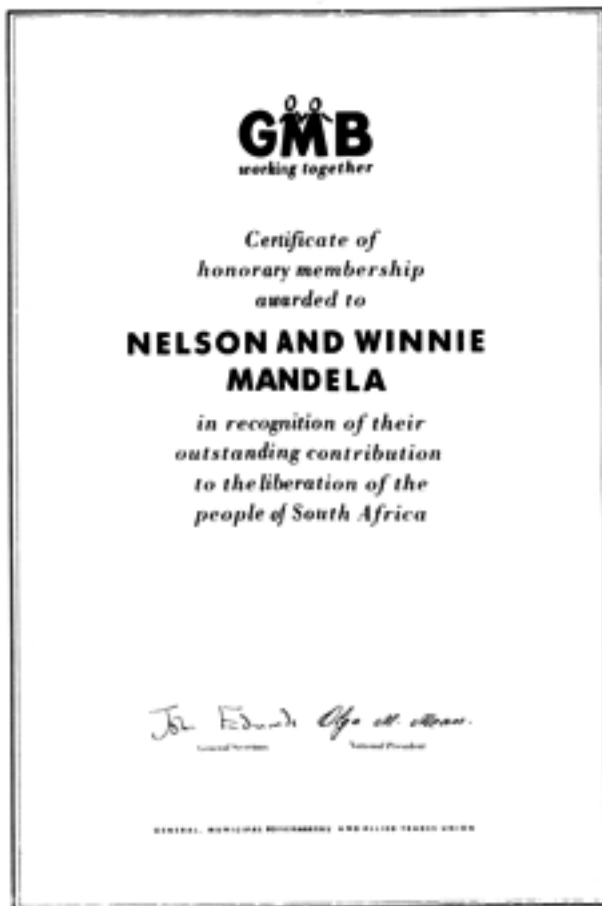


## HONOURS, AWARDS AND OTHER FORMS OF RECOGNITION BESTOWED UPON NELSON MANDELA

This list is not complete, but it gives an indication of the wide variety of forms of recognition accorded to Nelson Mandela throughout the world. It shows too how this recognition has steadily grown and how the call for his release has intensified during the years of his imprisonment.

Where an action expressed support of both Nelson and Winnie Mandela, this is recorded in the list.

- 1964 Elected Honorary President of the Students' Union, University College, London.
- 1965 Elected Honorary President of the Students' Union of the University of Leeds, Britain.
- 1973 A nuclear particle discovered at the University of Leeds named the Mandela particle.
- 1975 Honorary life membership of the Students' Union of the University of London.
- 1979 Honorary Doctorate of Laws, University of Lesotho.
- Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding, New Delhi.
- 1981 Freedom of the City of Glasgow.
- Road named after Mandela by the London Borough of Brent.
- Seventeen-thousand-signature petition handed to South African Embassy in Paris calls for release of Nelson Mandela.
- Dr Bruno Kreisky Prize for merit in the field of human rights, Vienna, Austria.
- 1982 Elected Honorary Life President of the Students' Union at the London School of Economics and Political Science.
- One thousand four hundred mayors in Europe sign petition for Mandela's release; by August 1982 a total of 2,000 mayors in 53 countries worldwide had signed the petition.
- Organisation of African Unity calls for release of Nelson Mandela.
- 1983 Simon Bolivar Prize, Venezuela, awarded jointly to Nelson Mandela and the King of Spain.
- Honorary Degree, Free University of Brussels.
- Honorary citizenship of Rome.
- Honorary citizenship of Olympia, Greece, original site of the Olympic Games.
- Honorary Doctorate of Laws, City College of New York.
- Twelve members of the United States Congress call for Nelson and Winnie Mandela to be made honorary citizens of the USA.
- Second Chamber of Netherlands parliament asks Netherlands government to urge South African government to release Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners.
- Seventy-eight members of the British parliament call for Nelson Mandela's release.
- Park in Hull, Britain, named 'Mandela Park'.
- Freedom of the Borough of Greenwich, London.
- Labour Party of Britain invites Nelson Mandela as a guest to its Annual Conference.
- Netherlands government informs the South African government that it is prepared to grant Nelson Mandela political asylum and requests his release.
- Nominated for election to the Chancellorship of the University of Natal, South Africa, by the Students' Representative Council.
- Honorary LL.D. Degree, University of Lancaster, Britain.
- City Council of Leeds, Britain, names the Civic Hall 'Nelson Mandela Gardens'.
- 1984 Camden Borough Council, London, names the street where the Anti-Apartheid Movement has its headquarters as 'Mandela Street'.
- The British pop group Special AKA releases a record called 'Free Nelson Mandela' which becomes a hit.
- Freedom of the City of Aberdeen for both Nelson and Winnie Mandela.
- Hackney Council, London, renames a housing block after Nelson Mandela.
- Playa Giron Award, Cuba, awarded by Fidel Castro to Nelson Mandela.
- Honorary membership of National and Local Government Officers Association (NALGO), Britain.
- Haringey Borough Council, London, names housing development after Nelson Mandela.
- Resolution sponsored by 135 Congressmen in US House of Representatives calling for



This certificate was awarded to Nelson and Winnie Mandela on 6th June, 1988, by the General, Municipal, Boilermakers and Allied Trade Union. This is the first time an award of this kind has been given by a British trade union. The GMB has 800 000 members

- release of Nelson Mandela approved by acclamation by House Foreign Affairs Committee and approved by Senate.
- Synod of Nedertuttse Gereformeerde Kerk in Africa (NGKA) calls for release of Nelson Mandela.
- Monument to Nelson Mandela unveiled in Merion Square, Dublin.
- Bishop Trevor Huddleston presents 50,000 signatures an international petition to Javier Perez de Cuellar, UN Secretary-General, calling for the release of Mandela and all South African political prisoners.
- Elected Honorary Member of the Students' Association, University of Strathclyde, Scotland.
- Honorary Freedom of the City of Wijnegem, Belgium.
- Awarded Star of International Friendship, German Democratic Republic.
- School in German Democratic Republic named Nelson Mandela School.
- 1985 Statue of Nelson Mandela erected in London by Greater London Council.
- Revenue Staff Federation, Britain, names its Commonwealth trade union scholarship after Nelson Mandela.
- London Borough of Southwark names new road 'Mandela Way'.
- Nottingham City Council names a room in a sports centre.
- Mayors representing more than fifty British towns and cities march through London in full ceremonial dress to ask the Prime Minister to take further steps to secure Nelson Mandela's release.
- The 1985 Third World Prize, awarded annually by the London-based Third World Foundation for Social and Economic Studies, awarded jointly to Nelson and Winnie Mandela.
- On 6 December 1985, Senegal's President Abdou Diouf inaugurates Soweto Square and Nelson Mandela Avenue in the centre of Dakar.
- 1986 Elected Honorary Life President of the National Union of Mineworkers of South Africa.
- Awarded the W.E.B. Dubois International Medal by the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP).
- Coventry City Council name new building after Mandela.
- Presented with the Alfonso Comas Foundation Peace Award in Barcelona, Spain.
- Freedom of the Borough of Islwyn, Wales given to Winnie and Nelson Mandela.
- Presented with the International Peace and Freedom Award by the Workers' International Centre, Stockholm, Sweden.
- Nominated for Nobel Peace Prize.
- Awarded, with Winnie Mandela, the Third World Prize by the Strategic and International Studies Group of Malaysia.
- Honorary Degree, University of Zimbabwe.
- Park in Leicester, England, named after Mandela.
- Honorary membership awarded to Winnie and Nelson Mandela by the National Union of Seamen, Britain.
- Street in Glasgow, Scotland where South African Consulate is sited, renamed after Mandela.
- 1987 First person to receive the Freedom of the City of Sydney, Australia.
- Honorary Degrees, Winnie and Nelson Mandela, United States Ross University Medical School in the Caribbean.
- Named Patron of Isipingo and District Football Association, Natal.
- Honorary Degree, University of Michigan, USA.
- Honorary Degree, University of Havana, Cuba.
- Honorary Citizen, City of Florence, Italy.
- Topped a poll in the Johannesburg newspaper, Sowetan of the people its readers would like to run South Africa.
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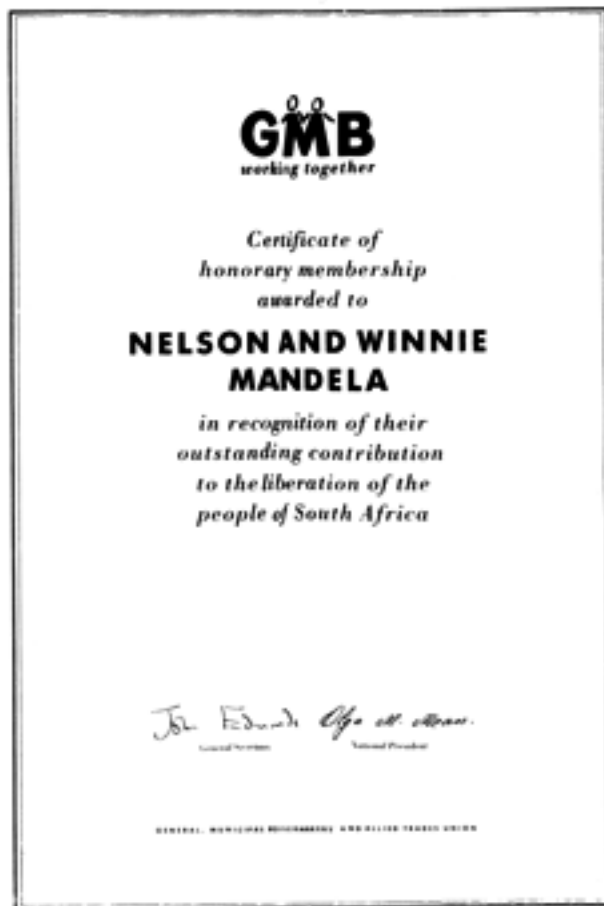


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# ANC INTERNATIONAL

## US Sanctions Movement

As a result of the strong movement at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire for divestment of university funds from corporations investing in South Africa, a symposium entitled, "South Africa — What Next?" was held there in May, to help clarify the issue.

Congressman Ron Dellums, who is at present introducing a bill for sanctions against South Africa, gave a powerful speech, arguing that the US needs to adopt foreign policies based on rational analysis and not on crude anti-communism.

The keynote address at the symposium was given by Comrade Denis Goldberg, representing the ANC. Comrade Susan Mnumzane from the ANC office in New York was also there. In the end, it was generally agreed by all those present that the US should take strong action against the Pretoria regime, and that there is a need to recognise the ANC as central to the South African struggle.

At the Arusha Conference in 1987, it was stressed that it is not enough for our friends throughout the world to be anti-apartheid; they must also be pro-ANC; and a group of people in New York have responded to this call by forming an organisation called Friends of the ANC, SWAPO and the Front Line States. At the end of Comrade Goldberg's week-long visit to the US, they organised an event to raise funds to establish a publication which would give short briefings on the situation in southern Africa. Before he left, Comrade Goldberg was interviewed on radio and television to give the case for sanctions.

## ANC Visits China

At the invitation of the Chinese Communist

Party, an ANC delegation led by the ANC's Secretary General, Alfred Nzo, visited the People's Republic of China, from May 15th — 29th.

The ANC delegation travelled to the Fujian Province and Xiamen next to Taiwan. The significance of these provinces is that this is an area the Chinese government has chosen so as to experiment with the flexible policy of open door.

This policy involves what is called joint (Sino-foreign) ventures that is, for instance China provides land, the buildings and workers and Hong Kong provides the technology, equipment and managerial staff. In China there are also "co-operative ventures" where everything belongs to China except some elements of equipment and technology, which China buys, and the managerial staff is joint. The third aspect of this policy is the encouragement of foreign-owned factories on Chinese soil.

China, this vast country with a billion people and 57 nationalities, attempts to solve problems and difficulties which arose in the past. The Chinese Communist Party is of the opinion they still have a long way to go before they can advance "beyond the primary stage of socialism". This necessary stage, a specific stage China must go through, we are told "will be at least 100 years from the 1950s" — and all these years belong to the "primary stage of socialism."

China has 30 provinces — Fujian province alone with its 28 million people, has more than 20 dialects. In China there are more than 10 religions — a whole nationality can belong to one religion, something which needs sensitivity in dealing with the national question.

These and other facts were revealed to our delegation which briefed the Chinese hosts about the situation in South Africa and the policies of the ANC.



## Gwangwa Honoured With Awards

Jonas Musa Gwangwa is the Director of the Amandla Cultural Ensemble of the ANC. He has, together with the ANC Department of Culture, done a lot to harness the talent of our people and in the course of this he has improved his talent.

Born in October 1937 Gwangwa is still young enough to contribute more to our struggle on the cultural front. The international recognition of his talent is part of that struggle.

It is almost an irony that the musician, Jonas Gwangwa, perhaps the least recorded of his contemporaries, was the one to be nominated first for the 1987 Oscar Award, the highest merit in the western world. In a letter announcing his nomination, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences said that his songs in Richard Attenborough's film *'Cry Freedom'* were nominated for an academy award of merit for "outstanding achievement in the original song and original score" section, this judgment being rendered with reference to motion pictures first regularly exhibited in Los Angeles, California during the year ending December 31st, 1987.

Although Gwangwa did not subsequently win this Oscar Award (it was won by Ryuichi Sakamoto, David Byrne and Cong Su of the film *'The Last Emperor'* and Franke Previte et. al. of the film *'Dirty*

*Dancing'*), his very reception of a nomination certificate for this prestigious award was a recognition of his distinguished musical talent. During that same period Gwangwa and George Fenton won the Ivor Novello Award for "outstanding achievement" for an original song. This award is accompanied by a statuette made of bronze.

The British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) as well as the Hollywood Foreign Press Association also gave him certificates of nomination for outstanding achievement in music composition in 1987. At the beginning of 1988, Jonas Gwangwa received the news that he had won the 1988 Black Oscar Award, which is accompanied by *The Tree of Life Statue*, (a popular African Art object created by the Makonde of Tanzania and Mozambique), in recognition of his "best original song". Founded in 1939, this last-named award has had among its winners such outstanding musicians as Quincy Jones, Duke Ellington, Isaac Hayes, Steve Wonder, Lionel Richie and Herbie Hancock.

When asked by a *Sechaba* correspondent to comment on the international recognition of his music talent, Jonas Gwangwa modestly said:

*"I serve the people of South Africa under the leadership of the African National Congress. These nominations and awards are also a recognition of our people's struggle for liberation".*

# THE SOUTH AFRICAN STRUGGLE IN THE EYES OF TWO NIGERIAN PLAYWRIGHTS

By Lawrence O Udentia, Nigeria

The significance of the South African struggle lies as much in its international character as in its nationalist orientation. That the struggle is central in the world revolutionary process is an incontrovertible reality. Subsisting as it does within the context of many antagonistic social and historical currents (progressive and reactionary), it achieves total meaning and immediacy when placed side by side with the historic and decisive struggles of other oppressed peoples, notably the Namibians, Palestinians, El Salvadoreans, Guatemalans and Chileans.

A Pavlenko has in mind this organic unity of all struggles for self-determination, progress and socialism when he asserts:

*"... there is a profound objective basis for the **unity** of the revolutionary process as a whole, because its **content** is the struggle against imperialism, for democracy, in combination with the struggle for socialism. All these movements undermine the pillars of imperialism, and in varying degrees promote mankind's transition to communism."*<sup>1</sup>

Like these other struggles, the South African revolution draws strength from the dialectic of nature, from historicity and the inevitable triumph of progress over reaction.

This internationalism does not, of course, in any way obscure the peculiar character of the South African situation. Apartheid, in all its extensions and essences, is the fullest combination of the whole structure and apparatus of repression: class, racial and national-religious.

This complexity of obscurantist and fascist forces that tear the nation to shreds is normally a source of analytical problems

to many watchers, observers, and even victims, of apartheid. This inevitably leads to a myriad interpretations that range from liberal-humanist, nationalist-idealist, revolutionary-romanticist to the consistent, objective and materialist position of the South African Communist Party and other advanced sections of the society.

## Drowning Colonialism Clutches at Straws

Seeing apartheid as a purely racial phenomenon betrays a hollow and myopic apprehension of its essential attributes, for, without the ready support of international capitalism and world imperialism, the perpetrators of racism in South Africa would have abdicated power by now. Apartheid is a manifestation of moribund capitalism, and one of the last-ditch efforts of a drowning colonialism and neo-colonialism to catch any straw in order to postpone its day of doom.

In this context, therefore, the struggle against it becomes inseparable from the struggle of socialism against capitalism, the struggle of labour against implacable capital, and the struggle of humanist ideals against the horrors and savagery of annihilationist and reactionary ideology. There can be no meaningful and true democracy without socialism, for, as Lenin said:

*"In the same way as there can be no victorious socialism that does not practise full democracy, so the proletariat cannot prepare for its victory over the bourgeoisie without an all-round, consistent*

*and revolutionary struggle for democracy.*"<sup>2</sup>

This is the same thing as saying that:

*"... just as genuine democracy is impossible without socialism, socialism is impossible without the constant development and improvement of socialist democracy."*<sup>3</sup>

The struggle against apartheid must be an all-inclusive one that draws from the wealth of revolutionary tradition and the experience of past liberation movements and the lessons continually learned in the context of the current struggle itself. It must combine the most varied and wide-ranging tactics and strategies; it must renew and regenerate itself as new phases emerge, as fascism changes tactics and as new elements are forever introduced into the social situation.

Politically, the struggle fulfils itself by making a broad use of legality and illegality imposed by reaction; that is, the UDF, student movements, ghetto and slum associations, the ANC and the SACP. Economically, the diverse operational methods of the struggle include work stoppage, work-to-rule action, industrial sabotage and the openly recognised forum afforded it by unions and by COSATU until its banning in February.

Militarily, there must be an intensification of the armed struggle, the strengthening and consolidation of military gains, the creation of many more cells, and decisive assaults on the nerve centres of apartheid by the efforts of Umkhonto We Sizwe.

## **The Role of Culture And the Cultural Worker**

Culturally (and this is the subject of this article) there must be the further development and perpetuation of the gains of the 'Soweto renaissance', the organisation of impromptu travelling theatres that rely heavily on improvisation, the production of radical and protest literature through the channels of the underground press, the translation of revolutionary literature into the major languages of the nation, and the

simplification (but not vulgarisation or bastardisation) of reading material.

Literature, of course, must retain its aesthetic elements, intrinsic artistic beauty, great power of individuation and realism, but must also become an organ of the revolutionary vanguard, especially in the field of ideological and political education and propaganda. This is necessary, for literature, like all the arts, affects people's sensibilities in a subtle but poignant way, alters their values, changes their orientation and either regenerates or stifles their perception of objective reality. In this, the arts cease to be a mirror of life; they become a participant in struggle, in revolutionary awakening and positive action.

## **The Arts in Nigeria And the South African Struggle**

One of the indications of the international significance of the South African struggle is its representation in Nigerian artistic culture, especially in the 1970s and 1980s. The South African struggle is increasingly becoming an important motif in creative writing in Nigeria, not only because of the demonstration of solidarity and fraternity with the victims of apartheid, but also in the fact that many sensitive, perceptive and progressive artists see some of the contradictions and evils in South Africa reflected in the structures and patterns of social relations in Nigeria.

The medium of drama is one of the dominant means of this representation. The mode often employed is the radio and television play, often of 30 minutes' duration. Virtually all the state-owned radio and television houses in the country have produced numerous plays depicting the agony of living in South Africa, the grim determination of the people to surmount excruciating obstacles and trials, and the hope that a new dawn must surely emerge out of the fires of the struggle. Some of the plays, including *Torrents of Soweto*,<sup>4</sup> originally a TV play, deal with part-topical, part-enduring themes and issues, utilising to full advantage the gains of combining the typical and the individual, the general and the particular in literature.

Amateur theatre groups, especially in Nigerian universities, also produce plays dealing directly with the struggle in South Africa. Intensification of this tradition has remained one of the cardinal objectives of Youth Solidarity on South Africa (YUSSAN), an anti-apartheid, anti-imperialist and anti-fascist mass movement that arouses progressive consciousness on a nation-wide scale on the inhumanity of racism and oppression.

Even in cities and provincial towns, one comes across theatre troupes that create and produce dramatic sketches on the evils of apartheid. My experience at Okwashi-Uku, Bendel State, participating in the National Youth Service Corps Scheme for graduates of universities and polytechnics in Nigeria, was an eye-opener, because there I encountered a thriving theatre group that has already staged three plays, all based on the South African situation.

## Song and Social Criticism

In the field of music, the ready illustration of this representation is Sunny Okosun, who, for over 15 years now, has been a consistent and uncompromising exponent of African liberation and freedom. Such classic numbers as *Papa's Land* and *Fire in Soweto* are already legendary in the minds of millions of people. The central thrust of his protest songs is that unless South Africa is free no part of Africa is free; the condition for the freedom of all is the freedom of one.

Other renowned artists like Fela Anikulapo Kuti, with his blacklist ideology and social criticism, also lend credible voices to the aspirations of South Africans. Recently, too, new groups and artists like The Mandators and The New Avengers, using the medium of reggae in the Bob Marley tradition, are all giving vent to their disgust at the insensitivity of the western world, with its 'destructive engagement', disgust at the horrors of apartheid.

Mention must also be made of the wide interest aroused in cultural revolution by the Amandla! troupe that toured the country in 1986. As a post-graduate student at the university in Benin, I took part in organis-

ing their show, and I can confidently assert that hitherto unknown things about South Africa and her people and what actually is happening there became more visible and graspable by students and staff. That revolutionary exhibition has remained a source of inspiration to very many people and active progressive groups all over the country.

## Dynamics Of the South African Struggle

The dynamics of the South African revolution is a classic illustration of the major, fundamental stages of the revolutionary process. Starting as a somewhat discordant nationalist protest against colonial rape and plunder, exploring all the possibilities of non-violent protest (peaceful marches and demonstrations, petitions, burning of pass books, diplomatic pressure and so on), it has matured to the stage where most of these variables are effectively combined with consolidated labour agitation and unceasing armed struggle. It is these last two decisive stages of the struggle that Tunde Fatunde's *Blood and Sweat*<sup>5</sup> and Tunji Fatilewa's *Torrents of Soweto* apprehend.

*Blood and Sweat* is an exploration of the main content and character of labour exploitation in South Africa, and proletarian response, which starts with trade union agitation and ends with revolutionary armed struggle. Using the 'American Reagan Gold Mining Company' as a case study, the dramatist shows how the demands of the workers, African and Coloured, for more pay, better housing, shorter working hours and visits by their families, are all rudely brushed aside as the subversive proposals of 'Communist saboteurs' ('Communist subversion', as we know, is, in the thinking of the racists, behind all genuine and patriotic demands in South Africa).

The workers' leaders are arrested and detained, and on the day of their trial a combined team of armed ANC guerrilla activists, militant trade unionists and representatives of the students storm the court room, free the workers and take hostage some of the directors of the min-



ing company. Even a despicable lackey of imperialism in the play, like Buthelezi of KwaZulu, recognises the inevitability of change through armed struggle when he ruminates that:

*"I had a bad dream. African workers are in gaol. Some workers and some students are now receiving guerrilla training in some African states. They are convinced that, since people's guerrilla war has brought independence to Angola and Mozambique, South Africa will also be freed through war."*

A major strength of the play is that it describes in detail the gradual awakening of positive consciousness among the workers; the realisation that their destiny is in their hands; that they have a historic mission to accomplish and are becoming increasingly willing to do so through self-sacrifice (what one can consider as a movement from a class in itself to a class for itself).

## **Dialectic of Consciousness**

This gradual but sustained new consciousness and vision begins with trade union demands and culminates in the armed uprising against reaction and obscurantism. The very last speech in the play, by a guerrilla fighter, attests to this dialectic. He affirms that:

*"... armed confrontation and people's war is the only answer to the liberation of South Africa. Dialogue will never work."*

Another strength of the play is that the playwright adopts a consistent dialectical and materialist approach to the contradictions in South Africa. He sees the diametrical opposition of the interests of labour and capital and the class basis of exploitation as the major conflict, but he equally recognises the racial, national and cultural dimensions of repression. In solving the class problem, the writer stresses, the racial problem is also solved; in fighting for socialism, the fight for freedom and democracy is equally won. The two are inseparable and permanently fused.

*Torrents of Soweto* demonstrates the inflexible will and astute determination of oppressed South Africans in confronting repression through armed opposition. In it we encounter a gallery of seasoned revolutionaries, student activists and courageous mothers who, under pain of torture, will not betray the noble cause of liberty. There are camp scenes where guerrillas are instructed and, as in *Blood and Sweat*, a court scene where the student leader, Ndaba Diko, who is being tried under an unjust law, is freed by his resolute comrades.

## **The Pen and the Gun**

*Torrents of Soweto*, much more than *Blood and Sweat*, states firmly that the most viable solution to the contradictions in South Africa is armed struggle, mass uprising and the willingness of all the oppressed to lay down their lives if need be, in order that a great future will dawn. In an age when reaction has become unceasingly aggressive and insensate in its obsessive anger against the people, in an age when fascist and genocidal forces are on the rampage without any restriction, in an age when organised repression has become callous and indifferent to reason and popular opinion, the message is clear: if the oppressors fail to allow history to be written with the pen, it will then be written with the blood that flows from the barrel of the gun.

It is imperative to note here that Fatilewa never imbues the freedom fighters with any extraordinary and supernatural essence; they are seen as very realistic individuals who are aware of their limitations and the danger of false optimism, revolutionary idealism and romanticism. They know that the road ahead is thorny and rugged, and that at the end of the journey not many of them who are the originators and inspirers of the struggle will be alive. Ndaba captures this mood powerfully when, in addressing the young revolutionaries, he asserts that:

*"... we must take up the gun in order to get rid of the gun ... Even if we don't achieve our objectives in our lifetime the fire of revolution has been enkindled"*

*and our offspring shall keep fomenting it until our freedom is granted us."*

Ndaba's mother realises this too, for she knows that her son can die at any moment. She thus tells her daughter, Dantiago, that:

*"... a revolution can emanate from a man but never ends with him, otherwise it is no revolution."*

*Blood and Sweat* and *Torrents of Soweto* are centrally located within the tradition of the ever-growing body of creative work in Nigeria that represents the South African revolutionary process. Such works act as a morale boost to that fierce struggle; they internationalise it and point out its affinity with the working-class struggle in Africa and elsewhere. While thus exposing the oddity of repression in South Africa and the internationalist commitment that must be rendered to the revolutionary combatants, they also expose the oddity of oppression at home and the need for all patriotic elements to expose it.

## **The Limitations of Literature**

Literature can never replace revolutionary action in the process of social transformation and regeneration of society. Literature is capable of affecting man's spiritual life profoundly, but, left on its own, is quite in-

capable of altering significantly the course and content of social being and the structure and pattern of social relations.

In South Africa, the African National Congress, its armed vanguard, Umkhonto We Sizwe, the Communist Party, the labour unions, student movements and other patriotic groups must therefore harness the products of revolutionary literature and incorporate them into their broad programme of all-round and decisive onslaught against repression and reaction. Literature should be consistently seen as a product of the ideological and political confrontation between two opposed interests, and therefore must be utilised alongside other more positive means and strategies in the struggle to smash the oppressive and inhuman forces that debase mankind.

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# NIGERIAN SOLIDARITY WITH THE ANC

By Patrick F Wilmot

The writer of this article is a patron of the Nigerian organisation, Youth Solidarity on Southern Africa (YUSSA).

The Nigerian African National Congress Friendship Association (NAFCA) was founded in 1987. Branches were launched in the Federal capital, Lagos, in October, in the ancient northern city of Kano in December, and in Kaduna and Maiduguri since then. Other major cities should soon follow suit. Branches are planned in schools, colleges and universities.

Playing leading roles in the formation of NAFCA were the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), YUSSA, the ANC Chief Representative in Nigeria, and patriotic Nigerians from all walks of life. NAFCA has since launched a journal, *Battlefront*.

The principal objective of NAFCA is to advance the liberation struggle in Southern Africa by mobilising support for the African National Congress, the leading force in the struggle against the vicious apartheid regime in South Africa itself.

Progressive journalists in the organisation educate the population on the evils of the system of racist domination, and the role they can play in overthrowing it. Revolutionary intellectuals analyse the political economy of apartheid, and its threat to the peoples in the Front Line States, to all the peoples of independent Africa, and to democratic peoples throughout the world.

Students, who are also members of YUSSA, organise symposia, public lectures and rallies, make posters and issue communiques to educate and mobilise fellow students as well as the wider community.

NAFCA also solicits for funds and material aid for the ANC.

The launching of the branch of NAFCA at Kano on December 16th was impressive.

Several hundred attended, including representatives of the state government, labour unions, ANC, YUSSA, the university staff union and many other progressive organisations. It was extensively covered by the media.

Professor Dandatti Abdulkadir, Vice-chancellor of the Bayero University, Kano, and chairman of NACAP, the government-supported anti-apartheid committee, argued that both the Nigerian Government and the Organisation for African Unity should recognise the ANC as the sole liberation movement in the racist enclave.

Other speakers placed the struggle against apartheid within the context of the more general struggle against imperialism, of which apartheid, zionism and neo-colonialism are all varieties. It was necessary to analyse the social forces involved in all forms of imperialism, and to identify the specific contradictions that required solution, if the liberation struggles were to move forward.

For years in Nigeria there was a debate concerning the role of local revolutionaries in supporting the liberation movements. Dismissed out of hand were those ultra-left positions claiming that MPLA, FRELIMO, ANC, SWAPO and PAIGC were petty-bourgeois organisations unworthy of support by 'true' revolutionaries. For serious cadres, however, the problem still remained of the role they could play in supporting Kaduna and intellectuals.

In 1982, when he was Nigerian Permanent Representative at the United Nations and chairman of the UN Committee Against Apartheid, Alhaji Yusufu Maitama Sule came to launch branches of YUSSA at

several institutions of higher learning in the country. He was accompanied by E S Reddy, then UN Assistant Secretary-General.

Maitama Sule said he felt pleasant surprise and satisfaction at being invited to attend public, non-governmental organised anti-apartheid activities in Africa. He was tired of attending such activities in Europe and North America, rather than in Africa. Apartheid was primarily an African problem, though not exclusively so.

He was instrumental in registering YUSSA as a non-governmental organisation at the United Nations.

## **Non-Governmental Anti-Apartheid Organisations**

What explains this apparent paradox — that strong anti-apartheid movements exist in the West, where governments are neutral or in favour of the apartheid regime, while they are weak or non-existent in Africa, where governments are opposed to apartheid?

One answer lies in the differing relations existing between state and society in the metropolitan and neo-colonial countries. In the advanced capitalist countries, the state grew out of civil society and is, to some extent at least, controlled by it. The state protects the long-term, general interests of the capitalist class, but, in order to do so, must recognise the formal, universal, democratic rights of liberty and equality. Powerful institutions in the working class movement, media, church and schools give some content to these rights. In the ultra-right, pro-apartheid environments created by the Reagan and Thatcher regimes, powerful anti-apartheid movements can operate to influence policy.

In neo-colonial society, the state precedes civil society, and secular civil institutions tend to be relatively less powerful. Neo-colonial society is statist, and state capitalism tends to recognise democratic rights in the breach, if at all. Non-governmental organisations are regarded as *ipso facto* oppositional, in the sense that they challenge the monopoly of state control over society. And those groups that

organise grassroots opposition to apartheid — workers, students, intellectuals — tend to be the same that agitate for the extension of democracy in the neo-colony.

This poses problems for the liberation movements, whose natural allies among the working class and revolutionary intelligentsia are seeking both political and economic democracy through the emancipation of the productive forces from Western imperialist control. Since political democracy is the vocation of the neo-colonial ruling class, the state is used both for primitive accumulation and to block the advance to economic democracy. At the same time, it sees apartheid as a threat to its own legitimacy, since apartheid denies the right and the ability of the Black man to rule himself. It supports the liberation movement because it sees the struggle against apartheid strictly within the context of the rights of peoples to self-determination, strictly in political terms of formal independence, strictly as an instance of neo-colonial state capitalism, never as a movement of socialist transformation.

It is necessary to draw more general lessons from this particular example. During the Murtala and Obasanjo regimes in Nigeria, pressure from grassroots organisations gave rise to dynamic policies on Angola, Zimbabwe and the southern African region generally. Succeeding governments have been unable to alter these policies significantly. What if these organisations did not exist? These may be no ready answers, but the question is worth thinking about.

# RESISTANCE TO APARTHEID ARMY SERVICE BROADENS

By a War Resister

Opposition to conscription in defence of apartheid has always been broadly based. Within the context of a growing debate among Whites about the possibilities of broad anti-apartheid alliances the campaign against conscription has brought together universal pacifists, selective objectors, and those who argued that opposition to conscription was a fundamental part of White democratic resistance to apartheid. By focusing on the largest single demand which the apartheid state makes of Whites — the army — it has provided many whose opposition to apartheid has been unfocused with a political home.

A succession of religiously and politically motivated conscientious objectors took public stands inside South Africa between 1979 and early 1983.

Opposition to conscription became a widely debated issue in the churches and on liberal campuses. But it was not until early 1984 that the End Conscription Campaign (ECC) was launched nationally. It has continued to function as an umbrella group of women's, youth, school, religious, peace and student organisations. To date it has worked mainly with a White urban English-speaking constituency.

## The 23 and Ivan Toms

When thousands of troops invaded the townships from late 1984 onwards the link between apartheid and the SADF became clearer to many future and serving conscripts. The ECC's 1985, *Troops Out of the Townships* campaign received widespread support and became a demand of all mass democratic organisations. The six-year gaol sentence for politically motivated refusal to serve in the SADF has meant that only a relatively small number

of conscripts, who had already completed their two-year basic obligation, have been willing to face gaol for their refusal.

These objectors acted individually but with wide support. However the stand of the 23 Cape Town objectors who in August last year publicly and collectively refused further participation in the SADF has changed this situation. Comprising students and working people, ex-conscripts and those facing initial conscription, English and Afrikaans speakers, their joint statement made clear that apartheid is the source of conflict in South Africa:

*"It poisons relations between our people and our neighbouring countries. It creates poverty and inequality. Its bitter fruits are hatred and violence ... We believe that the SADF is not a shield behind which peaceful change can occur but an instrument for defending the privileges of a minority. The SADF continually contravenes international law. It illegally occupies Namibia. It violates the sovereignty of neighbouring states and commits acts of aggression against the citizens of these countries ... We believe that there is a future where all South Africans can live in peace and harmony with each other. We pledge ourselves to build and be part of that future. To serve in the SADF would contradict such a pledge," it concluded.*

Then on March 3rd 1988 ex-conscript and ECC founder member Dr Ivan Toms was sentenced to 21 months for refusing further service in the SADF. Toms was the first of the 23 to stand trial. He had already completed two years' conscription as a doctor in Namibia and had worked in the Crossroads SACLA clinic until 1986 when the SADF took it over during the destruction of squatter resistance. During the publicity campaign preceding his trial he

received widespread national and international support from religious, gay, medical, anti-apartheid and war resisters' groups.

## Resentment of Relatives

The actions of the 23 have exposed one of the regime's potentially greatest military weaknesses — its reliance on consenting or compliant conscripts. However only the more articulate and politically conscious sections of White youth make public their opposition to apartheid conscription. Many who are marginally involved in democratic and progressive organisations, or who are simply concerned, identify with their actions but will never follow their example:

*"I have often been told by young White men that they support what I have been doing and respect me, but that they could not do it themselves. At the same time they are thankful that I am doing it, almost on their behalf", said Ivan Toms after completing a speaking tour of universities shortly before his trial. (South p10 16/03/88)*

As a result of years of militarism through school cadets, 'youth preparedness' schemes and racist education the majority of conscripts reject political or moral arguments. But conscripts and their families cannot ignore the rising number of conscript deaths in the regime's current Angolan offensive.

The SADF claims since May 1987 it has lost only 31 soldiers in Angola, but monitoring of individual releases shows that at least 57 have been killed during this period. These figures are largely White conscript deaths. However given the extent of the fighting the Angolan count that 230 South African Troops were killed before February 6th 1988 and more since then is more likely. Young inexperienced conscripts, often with little idea of why they are there, face battle-hardened and politically motivated FAPLA forces. The deaths of members of the prestigious President's Guard and the capture intact of SADF tanks at Cuito Cuanavale in March has shaken White South Africans out of their complacent racist belief that their 'boys on the

border' receive a military training and use equipment which somehow protects them from Black/enemy soldiers.

Many feel that conscripts take the losses while professional soldiers avoid the fighting. The father of one of the conscripts killed in the Ratel told the press: (Citizen 17/2/88)

*"Our young boys leave school, get called up for service, train for three months and then face rocket fire while the Permanent Force are sitting behind desks controlling them from a distance."*

The death toll is forcing many conscripts and their families to realise that to fight for apartheid is to die for a government that makes unacceptable demands of them.

The manner in which deaths have been announced and covered up has also caused alarm and suspicion among ordinary Whites. Though they passively accept state propaganda and the suppression of virtually all resistance they remain deeply worried about the lack of information on how their sons or husbands have died.

## Thousands Resist

Since 1985, when official figures stated that over 7 500 troops did not obey their call up instructions, the SADF has refused to disclose the number of those who do not turn up.

There is other evidence that increasing numbers are avoiding conscription. As early as 1985, when 35 000 troops were sent into the townships, several Witwatersrand units reported an average absentee rate of 25%.

Within the army itself there are signs of internal resistance and strain. The attempted suicide rate has risen from 260 in 1985 to 404 in 1987, 335 of whom were conscripts. Many of these deaths are caused by conflicts within the SADF such as English-Afrikaans hostility, and the harsh treatment of gays and drug offenders, and especially by harsh and meaningless discipline punishment exercises and military detention barracks.

These forms of internal conflict and dissatisfaction have always been present in

the SADF. But at a time when conscripts were being used to suppress widespread national resistance and the campaign for troops out of the townships had widespread support, it prompted the SADF to try and improve its image among conscripts and their families and to step up its attacks on all those opposing conscription.

In February 1987 Army Chief Lt General Liebenberg's traditional letter of welcome to conscripts took the unusual step of 'congratulating' them for deciding to turn up at their bases. Simultaneously national Sunday papers carried an open letter from SADF head General Geldenhuys explaining why the army needed discipline and how every effort was made to accommodate individual needs. (*Resister No 48*)

Simultaneously it stepped up its attacks on all those who opposed conscription. By 1986, state of emergency legislation prevented the ECC from "bringing the system of conscription into disrepute". Since this legislation also prevented the ECC from campaigning for an end to conscription itself, the organisation was forced to retreat into a campaign for the right to campaign against conscription.

The March trial in Cape Town of three serving conscripts charged with passing secret military information to an unauthorised organisation, the ECC, has revealed the extent of its anti-ECC smear campaign. In the Cape Town Joint Management Council area this was run by a Komops, a secret JMC sub-committee based at the Cape Town Castle, headquarters of the Western Cape Command. Its actions included smear campaigns directed at the ECC and Ivan Toms. The SADF had also produced anti-ECC T shirts, posters and pamphlets and dropped pamphlets from a helicopter. (*Weekly Mail 5/2/88*) But the trial also showed that for conscripts and those campaigning against conscription work no longer stops at the army camp gates.

## **Integrating Conscripts' Experiences**

Though short of manpower and increasingly dependent upon sophisticated armaments, the SADF still has sufficient con-

scripts, police and auxiliary forces. Despite factors such as the growth of political, religious and moral opposition to apartheid conscription in the context of mass resistance and the effect of material factors such as suicides, camp conditions and deaths in Angola, the majority of conscripts still report for duty. This has led those working against conscription to reassess their strategy and to seek wider appeal among Whites.

Though the ECC was the fastest growing White organisation in its first years, the size of the progressive White constituency also meant that it quickly reached the limits of its potential growth. In addition the state of emergency regulations, which ended public work for many organisations, prevented it from reaching mass audiences and limited its broad appeal. (*South Scan 6/1/88*) Within this context the ECC has acknowledged that it has not been successful in reaching conscripts as a whole, or in convincing conscripts that it represents their interests. (*South p10 16/3/88*)

Since early 1988 the ECC has been trying to integrate the experiences of current and ex-conscripts into its work. "We have taken quite a massive shift to a sympathetic approach to the conscripts and to building into our organisation an understanding of their experience; our activity must be organic to the White experience," said Nick Boraine, the ECC's 1987 National Organiser. He noted that already the "increasing number of conscripts who are joining us are bringing that gut popular understanding of politics into our organisation." (*South Scan 6/1/88*)

The ECC has also identified a significant constituency that will not call for an end to conscription but would support an alternative form of 'national service'. This campaign will take as its point of departure their 1986 *Working for a Just Peace* campaign through which it popularised the idea of alternatives to compulsory military service. In close consultation with township youth and community organisations local ECC branches worked on construction and recreation projects such as gardens, hospitals and play areas.

During 1988 the ECC's *Action for Alternative Service* campaign will seek to per-

suade big business and community, religious and welfare organisations to back its programme. At the same time, in keeping with its aim to integrate conscript experience, the new campaign will provide the future and serving conscript with detailed information about his rights in the army and his options for alternative service.

By providing this information it aims to help what Cape Town ECC chair Dr Crispian Olver terms 'the reluctant conscript and the conscripted community', such as those whose sons, husbands or lovers have been sent into Angola, to challenge the SADF and assert basic rights in the army. (*South Scan p10 16/3/88*)

This step does not automatically compromise the ECC's clear political opposition to apartheid conscription. It acknowledges that conscripts are defined by their relationship to the army and to a White society which is less and less unified as a result of opposition to apartheid and the cumulative effect of successive anti-apartheid initiatives, and that the anti-conscription movement cannot develop without consideration of the material conditions of army life and the anxieties and frustrations of the 'conscripted community' in a variety of White areas.

*"Now we want to hold meetings where we can talk to people who don't agree with us. That means we will have to move away from comfortable southern suburb areas where we enjoy support and move into hostile areas," said Olver. (IBID)*

People oppose apartheid conscription for different reasons. There are those who op-

pose it for religious and moral reasons; some are motivated by political analyses that locate the SADF and conscription at the foundation of the apartheid state; still others by a combination of these reasons. Whether part of an act of organised opposition to conscription or an informal chat between friends or relatives, the experiences of those who have already done two years increasingly persuades future conscripts not to go into the army.

Organised opposition to conscription involves a small proportion of the White population. The apartheid state still has sufficient conscripts for its purposes, but it has growing manpower problems. The most widespread opposition is not based on moral, religious or political objections but on material and 'non-political' factors such as disgruntlement at the disruption of business or relationships and the fear of death.

There is also a growing realisation among a section of Whites that apartheid is the cause of the problems they face. Despite the regime's propaganda, as the demands of the army on daily life increase, the quality of life for Whites declines, the conscript death toll mounts and the liberation movement's presence increases, more and more Whites are realising that apartheid, and the army on which it depends for survival, has no future.

Existing White democratic organisations are well placed to unite those who question the apartheid state's legitimacy and its ability to continue serving their interests. In so doing they can also win them over to support for a democratic, non-racial and peaceful South Africa.



# BOOK REVIEW

## A Voice from the Ghetto

**My Fight Against Apartheid**, Michael Dingake, Kliptown Books, International Defence and Aid Fund, London 1987.

Michael Dingake, born in Bobonong, Botswana in 1928 went to school in South Africa, worked in Johannesburg and lived in Sophiatown and Alexandra Township. He joined the ANC in the 1950s, was deeply involved in the movement's activities of the time, was instrumental in the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military wing of the ANC, and took part in the underground activities of the ANC before he went back to settle, and got married in Botswana — after 16 years in Johannesburg. He had plans about the future of their daughter but T X Makiwane intervened by asking him, in fact instructing him to go to Lusaka. Makiwane was then still somebody in the ANC circles especially in Lusaka where he was based. He was subsequently killed in Mtata where he was serving the Transkei bantustan.

Dingake never reached Lusaka. He was arrested in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and handed over to the South African authorities — with his British passport and all. He served 15 years on Robben Island after being severely tortured. All this and much more is related in detail in this marvellous book.

In his childhood, says Dingake, he knew of a disease they called "colour bye" which affected Whites. Later in life he came to understand and know what this really means. There is something philosophical in his remark: "The South African government is its own enemy" (p.55).

Dingake talks about his torture both physical and psychological: "after three days of sleeplessness and non-stop bombardment with imputative questions, sleep

had deserted my eyes and brain ... The brutes would not let me. I had many wishes. A wish to die" (p.104). On the psychological forms and effects of torture he has this to say:

*"That the form of psychological torture did not work as expected does not imply that it did not work at all. The fact that I underline it so much, means I am still smarting under its effects. The common characteristic of torture, whether physical or psychological, is that it is painful to every sensitive victim. The psychological pain is more painful for, having to do with human dignity, it lingers in memory long after the physical pain has gone and as long as it has not found equitable redress" (p.203).*

This is not an ordinary autobiography. Although Dingake tells us a lot about his political involvement in the ANC, I suspect he has left out half the story — he also deals with the history, policies and politics of the ANC, the political and social life in Sophiatown and Alexandra and above all the conditions and struggles on Robben Island. His argument that Robben Island is not just a dumping ground for political prisoners is unassailable. Robben Island is a field of battle, an extension of the struggle which is being waged in the streets and valleys of South Africa. Nelson Mandela and the ANC leadership were, and are leading that struggle right inside Robben Island and Pollsmoor.

This book is well written — the language, style and above all ideas, reflect the spirit of the suffering and struggling people of South Africa.

However, Dingake says Lilliesleaf Farm in the Johannesburg suburb of Rivonia was the underground headquarters of the

liberation movement (p.71). It was not. The title of the book also gives me some problems. Michael Dingake regards himself as part of a movement he is proud of — his fight against apartheid was part of that struggle. Nevertheless, he would be the first person to agree that he is not the only courageous fighter.

Mike is today a staff member of the University of Botswana. He holds three degrees, having graduated in prison — his university was the struggle itself and he used the 15 years on Robben Island to improve his skills so that he can be more useful in his home country — Botswana. Getting those degrees was a struggle, a battle which he won. The prison authorities

did everything to deprive our people of the only right they had — the right to study.

This book, written by somebody who knows what he is talking about, has become one of the voices from the ghetto. It is a must for all those who are against apartheid, but I would also prescribe it for the upholders of apartheid. After 15 years on Robben Island and more years of humiliation and torture, Dingake is more convinced than ever before of the justness of our cause and the correctness of the policy of the ANC. He typifies the quality of ANC leaders which the young generation is emulating.

F M

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**Oliver Tambo and Nelson Mandela  
in the days of their law practice**