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MANDELA IN FREE AFRICA



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EDITORIAL

21ST MARCH WITH AN ADDED SIGNIFICANCE

Thirty years ago, on March 21st, a despicable and brutal event took place in South Africa. Sixty-nine people were murdered and scores of others injured by Verwoerd's trigger-happy police. The world was shocked into the realisation that what had seemed like mere racism was something immensely different. The true face of the apartheid system had emerged.

From this background Sharpeville Day was born and, with it, a commitment by the peace-loving forces of the world to unite for the total elimination of racism and discrimination in the world. The day was later to be marked as the International Day for the Elimination of Racism. And, in 1978, the United Nations Year for the Elimination of Racism was declared, starting from March 21st 1978 to March 21st 1979.

This day has therefore always been very important for our struggle — not only because its observation throughout the world brought more and more people into the anti-apartheid fold but also because it remained as a constant point around which we rededicated ourselves to muster all our forces to get rid of the racist scourge from our country and everywhere else in the world.

In 1990 it assumes an even added dimension. It finds us in a totally new situation. Thirty-years ago it heralded the banning of the ANC and other organisations and the period of extreme repression that followed, especially after the leadership was arrested at Rivonia. Today it coincides with the unbanning of the ANC, the release of its leaders and prospects for a negotiated settlement looming on the horizon.

But as Africans, committed to the total liberation of Africa, the most important factor about this day, this year is the independence of Namibia. Whether it was by coincidence or design that Namibia, which has been brutally subjugated by the South African racists, accords to its independence on this date does not matter.

What matters is that it has happened on this date and, in that, signifies a further victory over the racist system in Namibia, South Africa and everywhere else in the world.

The racist regime tried, and will never cease to try, to portray the victory of the Namibian people as goodwill and commitment to peaceful solution of problems on its side. Although we have done it every time, we need to emphasise that the victory in Namibia belongs to the Namibian people themselves, led by SWAPO. We cannot forget the innumerable hurdles, including the near invasion at the time of the elections, that the independence process in Namibia has gone through. Yet SWAPO continued to handle matters skillfully, in conditions of peace, in the same manner that it had conducted a successful armed struggle before the New York agreements in December 1988.

Now that independence has come to Namibia and it is clear that SWAPO, which won the elections, is clearly not bent on retribution and black domination, we may ask of the racist regime what the fear is in setting in motion the same process in South Africa. It is often said by De Klerk's friends who want to apologise for him for not going the whole way in order to remove obstacles to negotiations, that he has to look over his shoulder at the reaction of the right-wing. We are told that if he moves too fast the reaction of the right-wing will be vicious. But when we look at Namibia, we find that it was the regime itself which was responsible for the destabilisation of the political process rather than the right-wing. Actually, if the right-wing had started violent acts which the regime disapproved of, such acts would have been put down easily by the regime.

Revelations of the activities of the Civil Co-operation Bureau show to what extent the Botha, Malan regime (of which De Klerk was part) was prepared to derail the peace process in Namibia.

And, we can rest assured that that the incidents of destabilisation in Namibia have never worsened beyond the slaughter of Namibian patriots on April 1st, 1989 is largely because of the self-restraint that SWAPO had displayed in the face of extreme provocation and the determination of the international community to see the process through once it had started.

In our own situation in South Africa, the process that has been set in motion cannot be reversed. This is not to say that the De Klerk regime has effected irreversible changes as stipulated by the United Nations Declaration on South Africa of December 12th, 1989, but that by our own actions, as the democratic majority in the country, we will not allow the situation to be played around with by the regime. This we will ensure by intensifying the struggle on all fronts until the regime creates the climate conducive to genuine negotiations between itself and the democratic forces in the country.

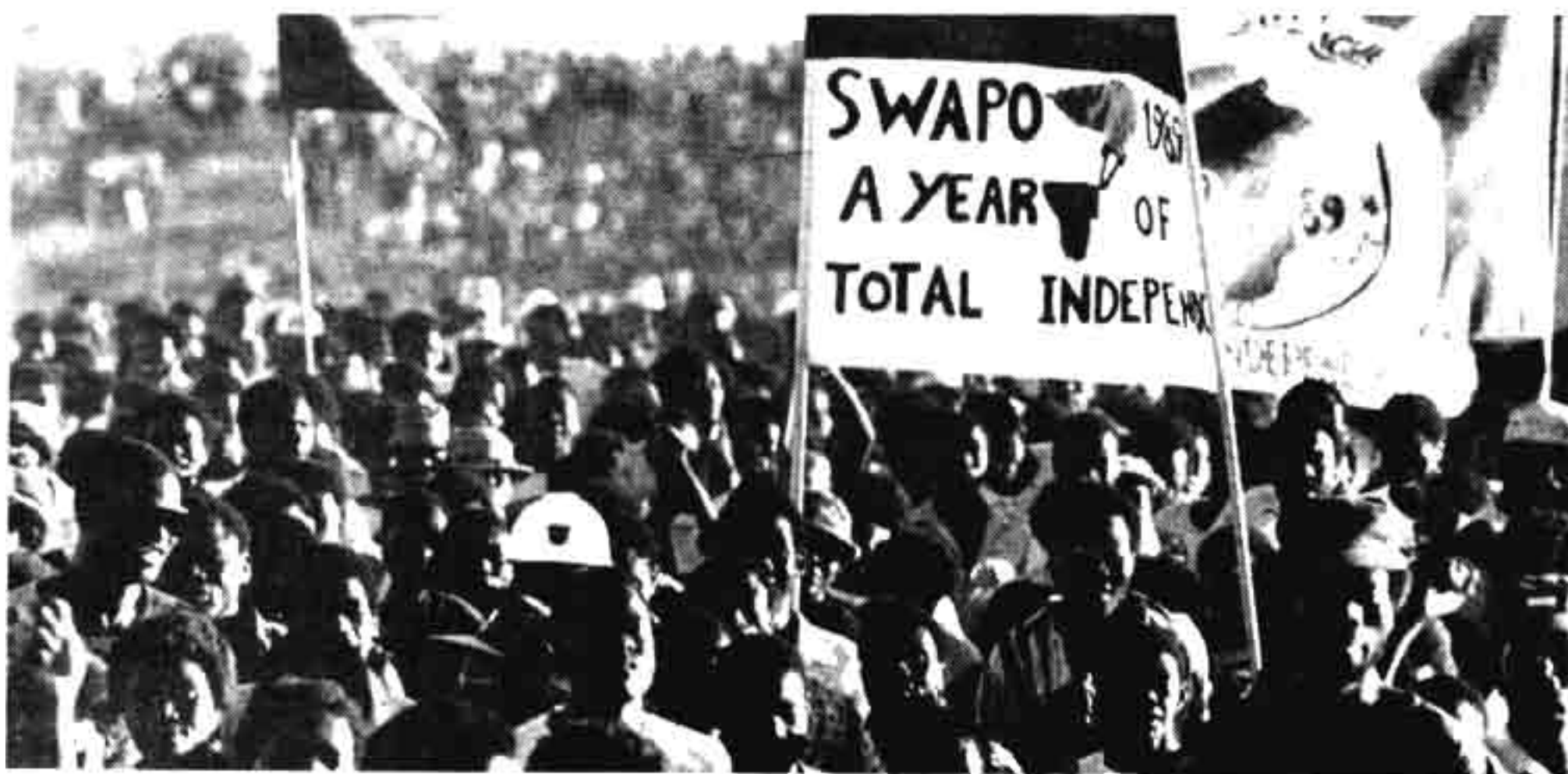
The plan for the independence of Namibia contained no provisions for the continued definition of its people according to racial and ethnic categories. The bantustan system had failed there and there were no plans to make it part of the solution to the Namibian problem. On the blueprint, what would emerge could only be firmly decided upon by the Constituent Assembly when it sat down to draw up a constitution.

We therefore see no reason why the South

African regime cannot free itself and allow the same process to be effected in our country. The climate under which our future is discussed should not be clouded by racial and ethnic provisions. It should be free and democratic with its focus on the creation of a truly democratic, non-racial and united South Africa. The majority of the people in South Africa, a democratic majority composed of Blacks and Whites, want apartheid abolished. This is what those who hold power must realise and act urgently in order to avoid the more bloodshed that must surely result if the peace process is delayed further.

Namibia's independence and the peace that is dawning on the country, where terrifying massacres have been perpetrated by the regime in the past, are of great importance for the democratic transformation of our country as well. The thousands who patrol the streets and the borders of South Africa today are doing it for the same doomed cause. Namibia must be an eye-opener for all white South Africans and black collaborators. Apartheid has no future — our common future lies in our working together to create a democratic and non-racial society.

Let us together call for a Constituent Assembly that would be truly representative of the people and be accountable to them; and, once and for all, answer the question of who the genuine representatives of the whole people, black and white, are.



Swapo supporters in Namibia

FREE AFRICA WELCOMES MANDELA'S RETURN

By a *Sechaba* correspondent in Lusaka

For a week at the end of February, an electric current seemed to go through Lusaka and, indeed, the whole of Southern Africa. For the first time in nearly thirty years, Nelson Mandela was to make a triumphant return to free Africa. The last time he had been there was as an underground operator, conducting low-key discussions with African leaders for the support of the South African people's struggle.

Now he was returning as a free man, definitely standing above those who had jailed him for so many years. Even though South Africa still remains a prison for the oppressed masses and those democrats among the Whites who cannot say freely what they want, his return to the political scene has certainly changed the political atmosphere in South Africa and the Southern Africa region. Just as he had spoken and acted with authority behind the grey prison walls, as a released leader, he has carried himself and spoken with a great deal of command. In short, as a prisoner he was a symbol of resistance for all the political prisoners and, as a free person, he symbolises the people's will to continue to fight until victory.

When he emerged from the airplane at Lusaka International Airport on February 27th, a day declared a national holiday by the Government of the Republic of Zambia, every well-wisher and supporter among the more than 50 000 who were there to meet him, was overwhelmed by the very enormosity of the event. It was clear that this was no ordinary visit. It was the visit of a recognised African and world leader whose stature had not been diminished by nearly three decades behind prison walls.

There to meet him was the President of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, Presidents Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Quett Masire of Botswana, Hassan Mwinyi of Tanzania, Eduardo dos Santos of

Angola and Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique. In addition to these leaders of the Frontline States, he met President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda; Foreign Minister Joe Clark of Canada; President of the UN General Assembly Joseph Garba (representing Nigeria); Foreign Minister Gerry Collins of the Irish Republic and other representatives of various states, including the United States, Egypt, Australia and Iraq.

Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dr Mahathir Muhammad, in his capacity as chairperson of the Commonwealth, Sir Shridath Ramphal, the outgoing Secretary-General of the Commonwealth and the Secretary-General elect of the Commonwealth, Chief Nyako, met Nelson Mandela, together with other Commonwealth leaders in order to map out the Commonwealth approach to the situation in South Africa.

There was a most moving meeting between Nelson Mandela and the SWAPO leader, Andimba Toivo ja Toivo who together had spent many years on Robben Island. And, of course, there was a very emotionally charged meeting between Nelson Mandela and other leaders of liberation movements present, Comrades Yasser Arafat of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and Mohamed Abdel-Aziz of the Polisario Front.

His greatest meetings were, naturally, with his organisation, the ANC. For two days he, together with the other leaders who came with him, Comrades Sisulu, Motsoaledi, Mhlaba, Mlangeni and Kathrada, were locked in a meeting with the National Executive Committee of the ANC. From this meeting there emerged far-reaching decisions concerning our struggle. (Further on we publish the text containing the decisions taken in this meeting).

On Friday March 2nd, he was received by the entire membership of the ANC in Zambia. It was a memorable meeting both in the joy displayed

by the mostly young comrades who were coming face-to-face with the hero whose true face they had never been allowed to see, as much as it was displayed on Nelson Mandela's face on meeting the comrades who had stood by him and his comrades throughout their long imprisonment.

Speaking about his feelings at meeting comrades he had previously worked with and those he had never seen before, he said that he was certain that he would leave Lusaka with pleasant memories because he now knew that this organisation he serves, this organisation which leads the fight to a new South Africa, is in safe hands.

He saluted the brave warriors of Umkhonto We Sizwe and said:

"Your contribution to the struggle for peace is immeasurable. I salute all those who have fallen in battle. You have not died in vain. Martyrs to our cause, your courage enables us to remain unflinchingly committed to our goal of creating a non-racial democracy in a unitary South Africa ...

It is my intention, after visiting Zimbabwe and Tanzania, to visit our Comrade President, Oliver Tambo, to wish him a complete and speedy recovery so that he can come back and resume his position. I have no doubt that in expressing that wish I am also expressing your own wishes."

Turning his attention to the South African Communist Party (SACP) he said:

"I also want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the SACP. The SACP was the first political party in this country to be banned by the Nationalist government, and yet it fought back. It remained loyal to the alliance between itself and the ANC. And its members have proved to be loyal and disciplined members of the ANC, and throughout this period they have never attempted to control the ANC or in any way to abuse their positions. That is why, wherever we are, inside and outside prison, we have defended that alliance to the hilt. We have refused to be used by members of the government and other interests to destroy the alliance which has placed us in this position of being vanguard of the libera-

tion movement in this country."

Comrade Mandela said that it was because of the courage and steadfastness of all South African freedom fighters that he was standing before the meeting in Lusaka, representing the ANC, an ANC which unites not only Africans, as envisaged by the founding fathers, but all South Africans. "Since the historic Morogoro Conference in Tanzania in 1969, we are proud to be able to count within our ranks Africans, Coloureds, Indians and Whites. We are one nation in one country ...

"When the time comes to select a delegation to Cape Town, we will think very, very carefully because the non-racial character of our organisation, the alliance that we have established, must be reflected not only in what we say, but also in what we do. That delegation, it must be clear to everybody, is a delegation not from the homelands, that this is a delegation not from the urban councils, not from the archbishops Mokoenas or Mzilikazis. It must be clear that this is a delegation from a people's organisation whose constitution is now based on non-racialism."

He went on to outline the discussions he has had with the regime over the last three years. He had discussed the release of political prisoners; the question of a meeting between the ANC and the regime in order to reach a political solution.

Speaking about his often-quoted description of De Klerk as a man of integrity, he said "I repeat that. In the discussions I have had with him, this has been the most formidable impression I have made of him. I have also found that some of the men around him are also men of integrity who want to travel this new direction that he has chosen. **But** in my report to the National Executive I have warned that as an organisation we are not very much concerned with the virtues of a single individual, even though he may be the President. We are concerned with the policy of the National Party. That party up to today is enforcing the most brutal system of racial oppression this country has ever seen. This is what must influence our policy, our strategy and our tactics.

Lastly, comrades, you have heard the report that I have been elected by the National Executive as Deputy President of the ANC. It is a position which I have accepted with all humility. I expect you to guide me. If I stray from the right path, please catch my jacket and pull me back on to the road. I will obey with all humility. And, with these words, I want to greet you and to thank you for all that you have done during these years.

Amandla"!

For every ANC member, whether he or she was in Lusaka on this occasion, it was an unforgettable historical occasion. It once again brought to the fore the unshakeable unity we enjoy as a movement. It was a moment which said that even though many of us have fallen on the road to freedom, freedom will be attained in the lifetime of those who are still carrying on the struggle. The slogan that Mandela, Tambo, Sisulu and others advanced as young people has become a reality — **Freedom in Our Lifetime!**

STATEMENT OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

A meeting of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress was held in Lusaka, Zambia on 1st and 2nd March, 1990. It was also attended by leaders of our movement based inside South Africa, including Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and other comrades.

The meeting reviewed the situation since the historic release of Comrade Nelson Mandela. It reiterated the fact that despite the undoubted importance of this release, the majority of political prisoners are still in gaol.

It is urgent that this matter be resolved. This urgency is emphasised by the fact of the heroic hunger strikes on which our comrades in prison have now embarked.

It is also of vital importance that the Pretoria regime moves without delay to remove all other obstacles standing in the way of negotiations.

In this regard the NEC reaffirmed its earlier decision to meet the Pretoria regime to discuss the issue of removing these obstacles. It welcomed

the positive response of FW de Klerk to their initiative. Having discussed various matters of detail concerning this meeting, the NEC decided that it was necessary to initiate contact with the regime immediately to seek agreement on the dates of the meeting, the venue and other matters relating to the preparation of the meeting.

The NEC also discussed as a matter of urgency the implementation of its earlier decisions to send into the country some of its members who would, together with the ANC leaders inside the country, carry out an extensive process of consultation with all democratic and anti-apartheid forces on the current situation and our perspectives. The NEC group will be selected and sent home as soon as the necessary arrangements are made.

The NEC considered a report by Comrade Walter Sisulu on work done to re-establish the legal structures of the ANC. It decided that the Headquarters Office of the ANC will be opened in Johannesburg without delay. It also approved

the constitution of other headquarters, regional and local structures which will be put in place as soon as possible.

It resolved to approach its international allies to assist in providing the resources that are necessary for the rebuilding of the ANC.

The NEC considered future international visits by Comrade Nelson Mandela and other leaders based inside the country. It confirmed that Comrade Mandela will, from Zambia, visit Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Sweden before he returns home.

It expressed its appreciation for the very many communications it had received, inviting Comrade Mandela to visit various countries. It therefore directed the National Working Committee of the NEC to look into this question to elaborate a programme of international visits for Comrade Mandela and other leaders based inside the country.

The NEC expressed its profound thanks to Comrade President Kenneth Kaunda, UNIP, the government and people of Zambia, for the unprecedented welcome they extended to Comrade Nelson Mandela, his family and the rest of his delegation. This outstanding demonstration of solidarity and unqualified friendship is a vital factor strengthening our movement and people in the continuing struggle to end the apartheid system and transform our country into a non-racial democracy.

It also expressed its warm appreciation to the Frontline, Commonwealth, EEC and other leaders who travelled to Lusaka to meet Comrade Mandela. The discussions which took place with them have helped further to reinforce the continuing international struggle for the isolation of apartheid South Africa. The NEC also thanked the rest of the international community for the mobilisation carried out to welcome the release of Comrade Mandela.

The NEC saluted Comrade Mandela and other comrades who have served prison sentences for their opposition to apartheid. It paid tribute to them for their outstanding contribution to the struggle for the liberation of our people.

It resolved that immediately the comrades who were members of the NEC before they were arrested, namely Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Govan Mbeki, will resume their places with

the NEC. The NEC further elected Comrade Nelson Mandela as Deputy President of the ANC.

The NEC resolved to convey its greetings to Comrade President Sam Nujoma, SWAPO and the people of Namibia on the occasion of the accession of their country to independence. It further decided to send a high-level delegation to participate in the independence celebrations.

Finally, it paid its tribute to the National Reception Committee, the democratic and anti-apartheid movement and the masses of our people for the manner in which they received Comrade Mandela into their midst. This process has helped further to reinforce the unity of our people and emphasise the necessity further to intensify the struggle.

The NEC conveyed its warm greetings to Comrade President Oliver Tambo, thanked him for his invaluable contribution to its discussions and wished him a speedy recovery. The NEC is confident that he will soon return to his post to lead our organisation and people to victory.

Lusaka, Zambia, March 2nd 1990



Nelson Mandela speaks to ANC members in Lusaka

INTERVIEW WITH MEWA RAMGOBIN

Last month, Mewa Ramgobin, current vice-president of the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) and member of the United Democratic Front (UDF) visited London. He spoke to *Sechaba* about his involvement in the struggle, his role in the NIC and the reaction of the Indian community in South Africa to the unbanning of the ANC and the release of Nelson Mandela. He also addressed issues concerning the future role of the NIC, the Tricameral parliament and the recent actions of the Thatcher government.



Mewa Ramgobin

Q: Could you tell us your official position in the NIC, and how you became involved in the struggle?

A: I am the current vice-president of the NIC. My first involvement with the struggle was in the 1950s when I was a student and a member of the NIC. In terms of the Congress Alliance I was also an ANC member. During this period I was also president of Natal University SRC's black section and a national executive member

of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS). The student movement became an important component of the struggle after the ANC was banned in 1960 and spearheaded demands that the state of emergency be lifted, the leaders released and the ANC unbanned. It was in this political climate that I was first banned in 1965, while holding the position of the organising secretary of the Gandhi Centenary Celebrations. After my banning order expired in 1970 I established the Committee for Clemency, which called for the release of all political prisoners and the unbanning of the ANC. In 1971 I called for the revival of the NIC and began working towards this. We hoped that by reviving one wing of the Congress Alliance, the NIC, we could revive the Congress Alliance and through this, the Freedom Charter. However, before the official convention to launch the revival of the NIC, I was re-banned for five years and placed under house arrest. I remained in this position until July 1, 1983.

In August 1983 I became the first national co-treasurer of the UDF and was subsequently re-detained. In September 1984 I entered the British Consulate in Durban with other activists to protest against re-arrest orders that had been issued against us. Our aim was to express solidarity with other detainees and highlight the harsh security laws of South Africa. I was re-arrested when I left the consulate and held under Section 28 of the revised order. After our release in December we were immediately re-arrested and held for six

months without trial. We were eventually brought to trial and subsequently acquitted.

Q: What is the purpose of your visit to Britain?

A: A few years ago the Oxford Students' Union invited me to Britain to debate Gatsha Buthelezi's KwaZulu Indaba. I accepted the invitation but was unable to make the trip because I was unable to get a passport. I subsequently received a passport and my invitation to Britain was renewed. While in London I will also address Conservative MPs on the need to sustain sanctions against the Pretoria regime. I will then travel to Sweden to address the Swedish Writers' Union.

Q: How do you view the recent developments in South Africa?

A: The present political situation in South Africa is a logical consequence of the decades of struggle of our oppressed people. There is no doubt that De Klerk has moved forward. However, we must make it clear that this has been precipitated by the struggle of the South African people, particularly over the last five years. During this period there has been a mass mobilisation of the democratic forces inside South Africa — as can be seen from consumer boycotts, strikes, rent boycotts, the boycott of the municipal elections, school stay-aways and the defiance campaigns of the past year. There has been widespread refusal to co-operate with the Tricameral parliament, the implementation of local authorities and other exploitative measures. This mass action, coupled with the international disinvestment and sanctions drive, has brought South Africa to where it is today. It is our historical task to strengthen those forces that have led South Africa to its present situation and it is up to us to strengthen and sharpen our struggle against apartheid. The international sanctions lobby against Pretoria must continue to hasten the end to apartheid.

Q: How do you view Mrs Thatcher's recent actions concerning the lifting of sanctions?

A: It is most regrettable that Mrs Thatcher has

chosen not to honour the European Community agreement to impose sanctions against apartheid. We have no doubt that Mrs Thatcher has greater empathy for the apartheid regime than the democratic movement in South Africa — it is the institutions of apartheid oppression that are being supported by her, not those of democracy. Apartheid is a crime against humanity and she and her government have breached the international spirit of fighting against apartheid. We want sanctions to remain as a constant pressure to end apartheid — she wants sanctions lifted so that De Klerk can be given the space to reform apartheid. Mrs Thatcher has highlighted her inconsistency by saying that sanctions do not work, yet she was very quick to invoke sanctions against Libya and the Falklands when it suited her. It will be a regrettable part of history if Britain's relationship with a future democratic South Africa is determined by the vagaries of Mrs Thatcher.

Q: What has been the response of the majority of South African Indians to the unbanning of the ANC and the release of its leaders?

A: There is a new fervour and confidence among South African Indians. The NIC has always been an historical ally of the ANC, and the NIC articulates the view of a majority of Indians. Just as the NIC is linked to the ANC, so the destiny of South African Indians is linked to that of a majority of South Africans, despite the government's efforts to create dissent among African and Indians through events such as the violence at Inanda.

Q: How do you see the role of the NIC at this stage of our struggle?

A: Over the years the NIC has played a crucial role in mobilising Indian opinion and resistance to apartheid. It has also used its historical experience to help create the UDF. However, as the ANC has now been unbanned, there may be a limited lifespan for the NIC, especially as the democratic movement is now seeking to build non-racial constituencies for the creation of a future non-racial, democratic and united South



Indian people reject the tri-cameral Parliament

Africa. It is important for us in the NIC to evaluate and understand the current developments in our country, and seek ways to collapse the NIC into ANC structures if the need arises for us to do so. This can be seen as a way of building non-racial, democratic institutions and the issue should also be addressed by the white and coloured constituencies. The ideals, banners and historical wisdom of the ANC must now be carried in physical and real terms to all the so-called racial constituencies in South Africa — Whites, Coloureds and Indians. The politics of liberation must be determined in a non-racial way.

Q: There are members of the Indian community presently taking part in the Tricameral parliament. What do you think they should do now? Should they resign or do you think they may have a role to play in that parliament?

A: I can imagine how threatened participants in the Tricameral system and the bantustans must feel at the recent developments in South Africa. The junior partners of Mr De Klerk must be agonising about the inevitable loss of their artificial privileges, such as their inflated salaries and pensions. It is imperative that a non-racial

seat of power democratically elected by all South Africans, be created. The House of Delegates for Indians and the House of Representatives for Coloureds are nothing more than the instruments and extensions of white power. They were created to manipulate Indians and Coloureds, just as the bantustans were created to manipulate Africans. The seat of power lies within the House of Assembly and that is what the democratic movement is concerned with. We want the power to transform our divided society into a united, democratic one that is representative of **ALL** South Africans. The future of the Houses of Delegates and Representatives must be seen in its correct context — we must also examine the future of the bantustans. None of these must be seen in isolation from each other.

Members of the Houses of Delegates and Representatives will do what their masters tell them to do. However, we in the democratic movement would consider it a tremendous step forward if they were to offer their resignations and throw in their lot with the democratic forces. In fact, we urge them to do so. We wish to make it quite clear that positions of privilege in preference to solidarity with the rest of the community will not be tolerated.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF SACTU IN TODAY'S SITUATION?

By Elijah Barayi

Since the formation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions at the end of 1985, there has been a consistent debate and discussion on the role that the South African Congress of Trade Unions has played and must play within the trade union movement.

On March 5th, in an historical meeting of SACTU, commemorating its 35th Anniversary, one of the speakers was Elijah Barayi, President of COSATU. His intervention was particularly important because it put into correct perspective the role that SACTU has played and then poses the question on what SACTU's role should be in today's situation.

We live in truly historic times. Twenty years ago the name of SACTU was only whispered in the factories and mines of our country. Open propagation of SACTU was a one-way ticket to the detention cells. Today workers throughout South Africa are openly holding celebrations, marking the contributions SACTU has made over these three and a half decades of struggle.

Some armchair critics have claimed that SACTU abandoned the workers by going underground. What these people do not know, or choose to ignore, is that SACTU leaders were detained, banned, harassed, tortured and assassinated for years. This is what forced SACTU underground.

Workers are proud of SACTU and see it as their own. That is why workers are celebrating in South Africa today. We in COSATU have always known that SACTU has been an organisation which has consistently held workers' interests foremost. COSATU has followed on in that tradition. That is why COSATU has organised SACTU anniversary celebrations throughout the country today.

What is the situation in which these celebrations are taking place?

There is a revolutionary excitement in our country today. The celebrations are taking place in a situation where our entire country is being swept by the mood which prevailed in 1985 and 1986.

The bantustans have become flash-points of resistance. Even the so-called "independent TBVC states" haven't escaped this. The pillars of "separate development" are crumbling. Popular uprisings have burst out in Ciskei, Venda, Bophuthatswana, and enormous advances continue to be made in the Transkei.

In South Africa, Brigadier Oupa Gqazo of Ciskei has released political prisoners and stands for reincorporation into South Africa. He spoke below the flags of the ANC and SACP. The state security council met in Cape Town to decide whether to intervene. We appeal to the international community to prevent the regime from reinstating the tyrant Sebe.

In every township, village, factory, farm and mine the flame of freedom is burning. Our people know that victory is finally within our grasp, but that we are going to have to redouble our efforts to reach our liberation. We have no illusions that De Klerk is about to free us.

In fact, the forces of reaction are mobilising for a counter-offensive. The death squads continue to plot murder despite the commission of enquiry which began today. Vigilante gangs are springing up all over the country, most recently in Soweto where they have murdered members of the Soweto Youth Congress. The fascist right is mobilising its forces. Reports of police and army brutality grow daily.

We believe that these are the desperate kicks of the dying animal, apartheid. The longer this animal lives the more of our people get crushed

by its blows. Internally and internationally we have to intensify our efforts to kill this beast now!

The contribution of SACTU

I would like to give a general outline of the contributions which SACTU has made to the trade union movement in our country.

1. Non-racialism

Right from the outset, SACTU has been the champion of non-racial trade unionism in South Africa. Where the regime and bosses sought to divide, SACTU sought to unite. Today we see the fruit of that work, particularly in my federation COSATU.

2. Anti-Apartheid Trade Unionism

SACTU correctly identified the fact that in South Africa there can be no artificial separation between the workers' struggle against economic exploitation, and their struggle against national oppression. If you compromise on your fight against the one, then you end up compromising in your fight against the other.

This legacy of so-called "political trade unionism" which SACTU pioneered has served workers well. It has helped develop our trade union as a powerful weapon in the struggle for national liberation and social emancipation.

SACTU played an important role as part of the Congress Alliance in contributing to our great beacon of freedom, the Freedom Charter. The demands put forward by our people in 1955, remain as relevant today as they were then. Cosatu is committed to fighting for the realisation of these demands.

3. Trade Union Unity

Thirty five years of trade union unity is the theme of today's celebration. SACTU has consistently fought for the creation of a single, united, trade

union federation in South Africa. SACTU has consistently said that every worker must be a trade unionist, and every trade unionist must be in COSATU.

SACTU has made an important contribution to help realise this goal. They fully backed the formation of COSATU and resisted all divisive approaches aimed at splitting the trade union movement.

International Work

SACTU has spear-headed the campaign for international solidarity with South Africa's workers. SACTU worked under difficult conditions to help secure political, moral and financial support from the international trade union movement for the independent trade union movement in South Africa, and for the anti-apartheid struggle in general.

As part of the liberation alliance, SACTU has therefore contributed to the isolation of the regime and the worldwide support which our movement receives. While it has welcomed international support, SACTU has consistently resisted attempts by international interests to divide the trade union movement in South Africa. Workers in South Africa refuse to be dictated to on which methods and approach to use in trade union struggles.

As long as trade unions are putting workers' interests first, and acting in a way which furthers trade union unity, we believe that our comrades internationally will continue to give us unconditional support. We call on workers and trade unions in Britain and other countries to be vigilant against attempts to undermine and divide the trade union movement in South Africa.

There are powerful interests internationally who do not want to see a united and militant trade union movement in a liberated South Africa.

What is the role of SACTU in today's situation?

Let me turn now to SACTU's role in the changing situation in South Africa. The recent dramatic

developments have radically changed the conditions under which our organisations can operate. A lot of space which had previously been closed has now opened up. This not only affects the trade unions but the entire liberation movement.

It was in the light of this that the NEC of SACTU and the NEC of COSATU have decided to meet on the 19th of this month. We would be assessing the current situation and in particular looking at the future role of SACTU in the changed situation. Obviously as President of COSATU I cannot express any view on this matter until our NEC's have met.

But what I want to say is that I am confident that whatever decision is taken will be aimed at strengthening the formations of organised workers in South Africa, and furthering the aims and objectives which both COSATU and SACTU share. That is, one united non-racial trade union movement committed to the interest of workers and the liberation of our people.

Challenges of the current situation

The trade union movement has identified a number of important challenges facing us in the immediate period ahead:

★ We have to organise the unorganised and disorganised workers. This includes farm workers and many workers in the rural areas as well as many of the workers who are still unorganised in the city. We also include here the disorganised and unorganised white workers who have been driven to the hands of the extreme right, whereas their only true security lies with their black fellow workers.

★ We need to resist the measures aimed at smashing the trade union movement. The Labour Relations Act and deregulation are aimed at rolling back the gains we have made over the last ten years and restoring the the cheap labour system in our country. The new attack we have to resist is the attempt by capital to destroy the national collective bargaining system by sabotaging industrial councils. They are now attempting to divide our strength by forcing us to bargain

at plant level. They have learnt many tricks from Thatcher's Britain.

★ Another unwanted Thatcher import we have to fight is the privatisation of people's property in South Africa. The regime is trying to ensure that when a people's government takes over in South Africa it will have no resources to implement our revolutionary programme — the Freedom Charter. This we can never accept!

★ We need to advance rapidly towards our goal of One Industry, One Union! One Country, One Federation! Our affiliates have completed the merger process and many unions are still streaming in to COSATU. We have made giant steps towards our goal of one federation, but we still need to speed up this process.

★ We need to intensify discussion and develop a clear perspective about the role trade unions should play in a liberated South Africa. We need to carefully study the experiences of the socialist countries and other national liberation struggles to draw lessons from these countries, both positive and negative.

At a practical level, we are embarking on a massive campaign to collect workers' demands for a workers' charter, something like the campaign which led to the adoption of the Freedom Charter. This workers' charter will set out the role and rights of trade unions and workers in a liberated South Africa.

SACTU has made an important contribution to this campaign by submitting its own draft charter for discussion. Our mass campaign will culminate in a special congress to discuss and adopt the workers' charter.

★ Most importantly, together with the entire liberation movement, we have to intensify our mass struggles to rid ourselves of the apartheid monster for good.

THE BANTUSTAN QUESTION: A NEW APPROACH?

Significant shifts have taken place in the political situation within some bantustan machineries which warrant the attention of the ANC and other democratic forces. These changes ensure that bantustans are not the sole domain of the regime: they have become a terrain upon which apartheid is being challenged by the democratic forces.

The demonstration by 70 000 people in Bophuthatswana and the decision by the administration of Transkei to unban the ANC there are but two recent examples of the changes in these territories.

What should our political policy be towards the bantustans today? This question is important in the light of political developments in these areas. For example, General Holomisa — long before February 2nd — facilitated the burial of King Sabata, allowed some free political activity in the Transkei and moved closer to the Mass Democratic Movement. Enos Mabuza of KwaNgwane has been actively pursuing a patriotic path. In Lebowa, Noko Ramodike is currently involved in freeing the political process with apparent inclination towards the MDM.

Massive Opposition

Others, such as Bophuthatswana, remain as repressive as before. These must be subjected to massive political opposition with the aim of sweeping them aside. It is clear that, even in the current period, they still choose to side with the apartheid regime.

Yet QwaQwa, Gazankulu and KwaNdebele have shown a rudimentary willingness to be part of the force for change. In Venda and the Ciskei there is talk, **but only talk**, of a new policy direction (see box).

It has always been the political approach of the ANC to mobilise the broadest possible front of anti-apartheid forces in our country. Anti-apartheid forces are by definition varied. But the criterion for an anti-apartheid mantle is what in-

dividuals and organisations do, not merely what they declare. In respect of those within the bantustan structures, the immediate challenge they face is to create the atmosphere for free political activity in their areas. They must lift the ban on organisations and individuals; lift the state of emergency; repeal repressive legislation; stop all political trials and executions; and refrain from attacking the struggling masses.

Harare Declaration

Among the issues engaging the minds of most of the bantustan leaders is the approach to negotiations. The OAU Harare Declaration forms a good foundation for re-thinking on their part. All those genuinely patriotic forces within the bantustans should define their positions in relation to this negotiations concept.

FW de Klerk and Gerrit Viljoen have already been on a tour of most bantustans, promising them an assured place at the negotiating table. De Klerk desperately needs allies as he is forced to step into the unknown. He seeks to broaden his front, with the bantustan leaders taking his side at the negotiations table, in defence of white privilege and white domination. At the least, he hopes to fragment the black and democratic forces. We know that those patriotic forces in the bantustans who identify with the democratic cause have turned down this invitation. Others must follow suit.

Now that the ANC is unbanned, it is very important that all democratic forces in the bantustans — as elsewhere — define their political positions in support of a joint platform against apartheid together with the CDF, the MDM and the ANC. But it is crucial that these democratic forces actively engage those in the bantustan structures who are showing a glimmer of anti-apartheid feeling. This will make all of us the more powerful, closing every possible space that the defenders of white minority domination

would want to use. No forces who have either the potential or the willingness to become part of the democratic cause must be driven over to the regime.

The question of what happens to the bantustans in the current transitional period must be debated. **But there can be no compromise with our perspective of a unitary, democratic South Africa where there shall be no bantustans.** This issue will be debated and its constitutional formulation worked out in a democratically elected Constituent Assembly. In the interim, we must

pursue tactics which are aimed at advancing the unity of our people against apartheid and isolating all those apologists and puppets of apartheid.

Contradictions will arise from time to time, and these cannot be suppressed. **But what we seek to achieve is a massive and tactical political front to isolate the diehards of apartheid and consolidate democratic and patriotic forces behind the ANC. We must muster a force so powerful that we achieve our freedom quicker!**

BANTUSTAN STRUCTURES DISINTEGRATE FURTHER

Since this article was written, there have been further developments in the bantustans. Resistance rose in Venda, Gazankulu and Ciskei, directed essentially at taxation, corruption and economic mismanagement. Police repression caused further bitterness. Structures began to disintegrate in Gazankulu and Ciskei, and desperate, last-minute attempts at 'reform' did not succeed in saving the Chief Ministers.

In Gazankulu, Chief Minister Ntsanwisi eventually made some response to the people's demands concerning education, but the bantustan government was nevertheless forced to set up a judicial enquiry into the causes of the protest. At the beginning of March, Ntsanwisi fled.

In Ciskei, Chief Minister Sebe declared a state of emergency on February 2. Ten days later, he released political prisoners, but this gesture did not prevent his downfall. On March 3 he was deposed by the Ciskei military, who took over the government in a coup they said was to satisfy demands of the people.

The unbanning of the people's organisations and the release of Mandela were political victories that inspired people throughout South Africa in the month of February, and were the reason for mass celebrations in the bantustans. Organisations of the mass democratic movement played a part in community struggles against incorporation into the Ciskei, and in Gazankulu much of the protest was organised by the National Education Crisis Committee and the newly-formed Youth Congress. It is clear from all this that much can be achieved when the people of the bantustans unite in action with the people of the rest of South Africa, under the umbrella of the ANC and the MDM.

PRISONERS CONTINUE THE STRUGGLE

Freedom fighters on Robben Island turned the island into a theatre of struggle on February 27, when they all went on hunger strike.

They demanded immediate and unconditional release.

The action involved 343 prisoners. Other political prisoners had also gone on hunger strike in Johannesburg Prison, Pretoria Central Prison and other prisons. 15 others, presently being tried under 'terrorism' charges in Cape Town also participated.

The National Executive Committee of the ANC issued a statement in support of the hunger strikers, in which it said:

"This action further highlights the commitment of these patriots for a political settlement, a process in which they and all other South Africans have the right to take part...

"The African National Congress calls on the people of South Africa and the international community to support the hunger strikers. Let us in action secure the release of all political prisoners and contribute to the creation of the atmosphere for free political activity. We call on the Pretoria regime to heed the demands of these patriots and itself contribute to the creation of such an atmosphere."

After ten days, the prisoners suspended the hunger strike. The lawyers who had been handling the legal aspects of the protest action said: "The political prisoners are satisfied that their demands are presently receiving the attention of the (Justice) Minister, and they have accordingly decided to suspend the hunger strike with immediate effect."

We must now pressurise the Minister of Justice to proceed to release the prisoners without delay!



Demonstration in Cape Town supporting the hunger strikers

NELSON MANDELA IN ZAMBIA



Winnie and Nelson greet ANC members



Listening to the ANC choir



ANC dancers welcome him



Nelson Mandela pictured with President Kérékou, President Mousmi, Egyptian envoy Tawo Ya and Joseph Garba of Nigeria



Meets Angika

NELSON MANDELA IN ZAMBIA



Winnie and Nelson greet ANC members



Listening to the ANC choir



ANC dancers welcome him



Nelson Mandela pictured with President Kérékou, President Masisi, Egyptian exiles behind Nelson Mandela, Togo's Faure and Joseph Garba of Nigeria



Meets Africa

NEGOTIATIONS AND ITS ETHICAL DIMENSION

By Reverend John Lamola

In the struggle for a democratic, non-racial and united South Africa, one thing can be said about the church — it has played a very important role. That also goes for the other religious groups — Muslims, Hindus etc. In this article we publish the ANC position on the role of the religious community in the current phase of the struggle. This is particularly important, as we feel that the political positions of the religious community, which spiritually guides millions of our people, should be consonant with those of their spiritual followers.

The position enunciated below was presented by the Reverend John Lamola to a World Council of Churches Emergency Consultation on South Africa, which was held in Harare on February 16th-17th.

Strategies and tactics of a revolution change as the historical conditions they were formulated upon change. But principles of struggle, for which revolutionaries do not feign to pay the supreme sacrifice, do not just easily change.

The right approach of our contribution will be to highlight and emphasise the principles of the South African struggle as led by the ANC. Because these, by and large, have a higher level of sacrosanctity than the periodically formulated tactics and strategies which the movement has to draw from time to time. In this respect we recommend that the OAU Adhoc Committee on Southern Africa Harare Declaration of August 1989 be thoroughly studied, because in it is classically encapsulated the guiding principles which the ANC is going to follow throughout the coming months.

In a statement released on February 12th 1990, Comrade Alfred Nzo, the ANC Secretary-General, when announcing plans for the visit of Comrade Nelson Mandela to Lusaka for consultation with the NEC, lest this incidence raise expectations of a dramatic retraction from the positions pronounced since Comrade Mandela's release, Comrade Nzo said:

"We must warn in advance that those within the international community who are expecting us to abandon our struggle in favour of

what they perceived as the only cause our struggle should pursue from now henceforth — the cause of negotiations — will obviously meet with disappointment."

The issue of negotiations, as far as the ANC is concerned, is not to be isolated from the mainstream struggle to destroy apartheid. It is but another terrain of a number of interrelated terrains of our struggle, namely the activities of the ANC underground inside South Africa, mass protest action, mobilisation of the international community against the apartheid regime, and the armed struggle. Negotiations do not replace any of these, and must, until otherwise decided in the course of negotiations, go simultaneously with all of these other areas of struggle. On the question of the incosanguinity of armed struggle and the course of negotiations, the Harare Declaration, putting forward the ANC position, states:

"Discussions should take place between the liberation movement and the South African regime to achieve the suspension of hostilities on both sides by agreeing to a mutually binding cease-fire."

There is no way that the ANC can disarm itself unilaterally. Our military formation is a crucial pillar of our offensive and self-defence against

the violence of apartheid. We are where we are with De Klerk today, principally because we as the oppressed have an army, which, as the regime secretly knows, cannot be taken for granted.

In the light of Mr F W de Klerk's recent moves, we particularly draw to the attention of the religious community, both in South Africa and internationally, that our struggle has now entered a new terrain. This is the battle for the occupation of the moral highground.

For more than a decade we have established, beyond all disputations, the heretical nature of the apartheid ideology, the intrinsic quality of its evil, and the moral illegitimacy of the apartheid political institutions. The converse of all this has been an affirmation of the morality of the liberation struggle, particularly as led by the ANC.

The ideals of peace and freedom have been our battle cry all along.

Now, all of a sudden, De Klerk turns and attempts to portray his reluctant shifts from apartheid bigotry as acts of sincere nobility, which have nothing to do with the fact that he is in fact responding to the ANC's pressure of struggle. He even goes further to attempt to depict the ANC as a hardline, unreasonable organisation which is not willing to engage in a peaceful settlement of the violent conflict our land is embroiled in. It is as if words like 'peaceful settlement' and 'negotiations' have been coined by De Klerk, and were initially introduced into South African political debate by the National Party. The truth is, that until at least 1960, the year of its banning, and the subsequent adoption of the armed struggle as an added component of our struggle, the ANC had put forward the demand for a peaceful and democratic transfer of power to the people of South Africa on a non-racial basis. In the archives of the South African government, there is a letter dated December 31st 1960, which was written by Nelson Mandela as the secretary conveying the resolutions of the All-In Africa Conference which was held in Pietermaritzburg, calling on the Verwoerd government to facilitate the convening of a National Convention where a new constitution for the country would be drafted. This overture for peace met with the

traditional Nationalist Party's snub of demands of the black people.

The concept of negotiations in the form of its current use, at least, entered the language of South African politics from October 1987, when the ANC produced a statement outlining the possibilities of a negotiated settlement of the South African conflict.

De Klerk must not be allowed to steal our language and to nefariously use it, as he does, to perpetuate racist privilege in South Africa, and for the blackmail of the liberation movement. He must publicly acknowledge the initiatives of the ANC, and proceed with moral sincerity and not with the current pandering of world public opinion.

The struggle for the moral astuteness of our tactics and strategies continues.

Ours is a principled struggle with a definite goal. The goal is the seizure of power from its violent clasp by a racist minority and its democratic transfer to the whole people of South Africa. This is the only way authentic peace can be achieved in South Africa. The principle of the maintenance of a disciplined confrontation of evil is more important than ever before in our struggle. The apartheid regime must be approached and be dealt with as a battered enemy who has finally realised that it is no longer in its interest to continue the battle. Every move of De Klerk is a retreat by the racist regime and the advance of our revolutionary assault. And we must consolidate these advances, defend them and press on.

We have forced the apartheid intellectual establishment, which includes the NGK (Dutch Reformed Church), to acknowledge the moral bankruptcy of apartheid as a social system and the scientific fallaciousness of all its defences. This area we have won, and it is within this sphere of our victory that De Klerk is operating. The next line of battle which we opened was the question of the legal and moral legitimacy of the Pretoria regime. This question, if we at all have taken our theological pronouncements seriously, is more pertinent to the currently unfolding situation than any other.

According to De Klerk's transitional plan (the Five Year Plan) the currently ruling racist

National Party must be left in place and act as the government of the day, as the main player as well as the referee of the direction of change the country must take. They want to draw the rules, and to provide the current apartheid parliamentary structure as the basic platform for a negotiated settlement. De Klerk has even been nearly successful in being seen in some quarters as the likes of a Gorbachev who is engaged in a **democratisation** of South Africa. For instance, the *Sunday Times* (Johannesburg) of February 4th 1990 headlined its reproduction of De Klerk's famous February 2nd speech as "Pretoria-stroika," in allusion to Mr Gorbachev's perestroika programme.

De Klerk is not a assumed leader of South Africa, who has to preside over the 'reform' or 'dismantling' of apartheid. He himself, his very political position, is part of the system which needs to be reformed — to use their language. We have all along challenged the political legitimacy of the apartheid regime, and its inability to reform itself. All the more now, we must challenge the legitimacy of its self-abrogation of the prerogative to want to decide the logistics, agenda and the *locus executandi* of the envisaged negotiation process.

Our greatest and particular contributions as religious institutions and persons is to infuse into this debate and political wrangle the ethical dimension. We must uphold and insist on these moral principles which we believe serve the cause of liberation and peace.

The demand of the ANC and the international community as declared in the OAU Harare Declaration reads:

"The parties shall agree on the formation of an interim government to supervise the process of the drawing up and adoption of a new constitution, govern and administer the country, as well as effect the transition to a democratic order, including the holding of elections."

The only thing the South African government is required to do is to create a climate for the ANC to participate in the preparations for and in the actual negotiating process as an equal partner, and not some South African organisation which

is at the mercy of the apartheid political-legal system. In addition to what he has done since February 2nd 1990, Mr de Klerk is expected to release all political prisoners and detainees, including MK combatants, unconditionally; to demilitarise the life of our people in the townships; to repeal the state of emergency, recognising that even now a significant measure of restrictions on the media is still in place. He well knew that he could not demand the ANC to disarm its formation for the defence of the oppressed people of South Africa, the MK, while his forces are seen to be actively continuing with their carnage before the eyes of the world. Furthermore, the Internal Security Act, according to the Harare principles, must go. We still have people held under the notoriously obnoxious Section 29 of the Act. Also, all political trials must cease forthwith. In the words of the Harare Declaration, "the measures listed above should **precede** negotiations" (my own emphasis).

The ANC cannot be seen to be violating the very positions for which it has campaigned so laboriously for the international community to accept. The insistence that the South African government must first meet all these conditions is not a matter of adamant arrogance on the part of the ANC and the international community, but is a matter of political practicalities. The ANC cannot at present legitimately say that it has democratically consulted with its membership when some of the most dedicated of these, MK combatants, are languishing on Robben Island and in prisons throughout South Africa.

In the light of all this, it is evident that all our weapons of struggle, particularly the campaign for international isolation of the apartheid regime, must be reinforced, and we must defend and consolidate all our gains in this area.

Peace in South Africa is coming. But its authenticity and durability shall be determined by how it comes. Let us insist on true peace, peace with justice, *shalom*. Such a peace can only come when the apartheid regime goes to the negotiating table with the ANC, not because it is posturing away from international isolation, but because it has been significantly weakened in all formations of its power.

CONFESSIONS OF THE CONDEMNED

By Clive Leeman

South Africa's zeal for executions may finally sabotage the machinery of the apartheid state. The conveyor belt system of legal killings in Pretoria was stopped briefly just long enough to do damage to South Africa's other system of "extra-legal" killings, its political death squads.

A stay of execution was granted to Butane Nofomela, who, in dreadful fright at his impending hanging, began blurting out a tale of mutilation and murder, that gives us, for the first time, a glimpse into the dark, secret world of South Africa's police terror units.

Nofomela, a black former policeman who robbed and murdered a white farmer, saved himself from going to the gallows in Pretoria Central Prison with three other men on the morning of Friday, October 20th 1989, by confessing that, while still a policeman, he was ordered to assassinate anti-apartheid activists by senior white police officers, whom he named. He told his lawyers that he had helped to kill nine dissidents, including Griffiths Mxenge, a human rights lawyer, who was assassinated in Durban in 1981.

Mxenge was stabbed 45 times and had his throat cut. Nofomela described what happened.

"We started assaulting him with kicks and punches, until he fell to the ground. We then all stabbed him several times. He immediately died, and we carried on butchering his body."

These revelations, born of fright, have given the government and the police their own fright, rather like a seismic shock. The granite boulder of the apartheid dictatorship has rolled and shifted, its underside exposed to the light, and some of those nasty creatures of the night who feed on darkness and deal in terror, are now scurrying in fear themselves. Retired police captain Dirk Johannes Coetzee, the first officer to be named by Nofomela, was the first to flee. Another former policeman, David Tshikalange,

who corroborated Nofomela's account of the Mxenge murder, also left the country. After his flight, a persevering reporter tracked Coetzee down on the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius. At first he was not willing to talk. "I was scared to tell the truth," he said. But with his name now at the top of Nofomela's list, he himself could become a death-squad target, waiting to be picked off and squashed into silence.

So Coetzee, like Nofomela, realised that he must talk to save himself. He finally acknowledged to the persistent reporter from the Afrikaans-language *Vrye Weekblad* that he had been the leader of a death squad.

"I was in the heart of the whore ... I was the commander of a South African Police death squad; I know all the secrets of this unit," he said.

★ Coetzee was involved with the letter bomb which killed Ruth First in Maputo, Mozambique, in August, 1982. She was a journalist and teacher, an active member of the African National Congress (ANC).

★ In 1980, Coetzee was in charge of a unit which killed ANC member Patrick Makau and his young son in the neighbouring country of Swaziland.

★ In 1982, Coetzee sent a bomb via diplomatic pouch to London. It blew up the ANC offices there.

★ He and other officers used a sleeping potion developed by the police forensics laboratory to drug two ANC members and then shot them in the head, burned the bodies and tossed the ashes into a river. (Nofomela's detailed affidavits also describe assassinations by knives, guns and poison. Did that poison also come from the same

police forensics lab?)

★ At Vlakplaas, a farm outside Pretoria where captured ANC guerrillas were tortured and "turned" into government agents (policemen), those who refused to turn were shot and their bodies burned.

★ Coetzee admitted that Griffiths Mxenge was hacked to death by four policemen in his charge, Nofomela being one of them. He paid each one of them 1 000 Rand (\$350). (According to Nofomela, they weren't the only ones to benefit materially. Before destroying Mxenge's car, they removed the radio-tape player, which ended up in the police vehicle belonging to Brigadier Willem Schoon, one of their superiors.)

Coetzee says he is now experiencing remorse ... "I feel disgusted with myself." But he has lived with this dark knowledge for a long time. He says he left death-squad work in 1982 and retired from the police in 1985 "for health reasons."

The South African Police have dismissed Nofomela and Coetzee's allegations as "wild and unfounded." Both of them, they say, "have a motive to lie." Police officials imply that Coetzee bears a grudge, claiming that he was "suspended from the Force a few years ago." With breathtaking rapidity, the departmental inquiry set up by the Ministers of Law and Order and of Justice to investigate Nofomela's allegations, concluded that the South African Police were not to blame. The two investigators were hardly objective observers. One is the Attorney-General of the Orange Free State, a government employee; the other is a police lieutenant general.

Both Coetzee and David Tshikalange, the other former policeman to have corroborated Nofomela's allegations, have gone into hiding. Who are they hiding from? These men can tell so many damning stories about police actions of such utter depravity, all done in the defence of the apartheid state, that if they are not silenced soon (as Nofomela may still well be on the gallows), they could cause the granite government to totter, perhaps to fall, bringing down the whole apartheid system with it. To prevent this, the police and the army may attempt a coup

d'etat. But in the meantime, if they can, they will try to finish off their accusers. Coetzee and Tshikalange know their former colleagues in the death squads will kill them without compunction. Hence their flight.

In the case of Butane Nofomela, it's ironic that a man about to die for a non-political crime should in effect be saved because he committed political murders. More than 100 opponents of apartheid have been assassinated or "made to disappear" since 1978. But not one person has been punished for these crimes. The only political "crimes" ever investigated and tried are those against the government itself, or its supporters and collaborators. And the retribution can be savage. In March 1989, 14 men and women in Upington, Cape Province, were sentenced to die for the death of one policeman killed during a demonstration against rent increases in the black slum of Paballelo. They were condemned to death for having "common cause" with the one man who actually killed the policeman. Now they crowd the cells of Death Row alongside Butane Nofomela. Nobody has ever sat on Death Row for the killing of a Steve Biko, Griffiths Mxenge, or Ruth First. (On February 2nd, President De Klerk suspended all hangings).

On November 23rd 1988, South African President P W Botha was pressured by a clamour of outrage throughout the world into commuting the death sentences of the Sharpeville Six, who, like the Upington 14 were found to have "common cause" after the rent-protest killing of a local town councillor. They received long prison terms (18-25 years) instead. But what the world did not notice, is that Botha also reprieved four white policemen, who had murdered two alleged drug dealers. The policemen had argued that they had been told their victims were ANC members and were ordered to kill them. In other words, they had tried to save their necks by claiming to be members of a police death squad. And this scheme ultimately worked. Botha's rationalisation seems to have been that the Sharpeville political crime was balanced out by the similarly political crime of the four policemen. Why else did he reprieve them? There was certainly no world outcry in their case.

In the same way, Butane Nofomela is alive to

day because he claims to have been a death-squad assassin. He may yet be hanged for the "non-political" crime of robbing and killing a white farmer. God knows, the South African government loves to hang as many people (mostly black) as it can. 1988 was one of the worst — well over 120 people executed. With a population of 37 million, South Africa has one of the highest execution rates in the world. Nevertheless, the South African government had succeeded (before the suspensions), to a large extent, in manipulating the minds of many people in the West, particularly in the United States, into accepting that execution is justified for any act of political protest that causes the death of one or more people. A peculiarly subtle transaction takes place between the propagandists of one of the world's most violent state dictatorships and the malleable minds of those whose sentimental regard for the doctrine of non-violence makes them extremely critical of anyone committing an act of political violence.

For instance, ever since the 1986 state of emergency, censorship regulations almost totally eclipsed television and newspaper coverage of the police whipping, beating and shooting of protesters. South African racist propagandists carefully replaced these images in our minds with grisly pictures of "black-on-black" violence and the "necklacing" of informers.

On September 29th last year, Mangena Jeffrey Boesman was hanged in Pretoria for the "necklace" murder of Mellina Fass, a teacher from Sterkstroom near Grahamstown in the Eastern Cape. He was punished for the "black-on-black" killing of somebody who could have been innocent. But the recently executed Mangena Boesman was a member of the ANC, an organisation now in a state of guerrilla war against the South African government. He believed that he and his two co-accused had to kill Mellina Fass, whom they thought to be a dangerous spy, just as French Resistance fighters were required to kill informers during the Nazi occupation of France. All black policemen, local government members, and informers, are looked upon as quislings, or traitors, by the people of the occupied townships in South Africa. The black township is a kind of concentration camp,

where most of the dirty work is done by the despised "kapos", prisoners who guard, mistreat and murder their fellow inmates on the orders of the camp commandant.

When Butane Nofomela hacked Griffiths Mxenge to pieces, he was the kapo and Captain Coetzee the commandant. If the people of Kwa Mashu township, where Mxenge was murdered, had risen up against Nofomela and his kapo gang, the government would have portrayed the fighting as "black-on-black" savagery. But it would actually have been a legitimate rebellion, along the lines of a Treblinka, where the camp inmates rose up against their Nazi-controlled guards. When the resisting inmates are caught, however, punishment is savage, as in the case of Mangena Boesman, hanged last year.

Among all those hundreds of people hanged since 1978, when the first death-squad victim, Dr Rick Turner, died in Durban, not a single one was an "off-duty" death-squad police officer, even though more than 100 "extra-legal" killings have taken place. Since October of 1977, when black-consciousness leader Steve Biko was first tortured in Port Elizabeth and then murdered in Pretoria by **on-duty** policemen, not a single one of these men, all named and identified in a public inquest, has been arrested, let alone charged and sentenced. Unlike the members of the secret death-squads, they have been publicly named as Biko's killers, but left completely untouched. From the very first death of a political detainee (Bellington Mampe, September 1st 1963) to the latest assassination of an anti-apartheid activist (Anton Lubowski, shot last August in Windhoek, Namibia), not one on-duty or off-duty death-squad killer has had to face the official hangman's "necklace."

But now with the Nofomela and Coetzee confessions, they do have to face the bright light of international attention. Their noxious little nests on the dark side of the rock may no longer be as safe as they thought, although the South African government will probably do its best to push the rock back into place. The cursory official inquiry into Nofomela's allegations and the statements impugning Coetzee's motives and character, are the first signs of attempts to entrench the rock. State of emergency regulations

still ban all uncensored news about police violence (despite lifting press restrictions). Editors and journalists in South Africa are having to cope with one of the severest forms of pre-publication censorship in the world. *Vrye Weekblad* which hunted down Captain Coetzee in Mauritius in the first place, truly galls the Afrikaner Nationalist government in that this anti-apartheid newspaper, unlike the others (which are printed in English), is written in Afrikaans, the language of the government leaders themselves. First published in 1988, the *Vrye Weekblad* was forced by the Minister of Justice to pay a R30 000 (\$10 000) registration fee, the highest ever demanded. Editor Max du Preez accused the minister of conducting a vendetta against the paper.

The seismic shock of Nofomela's and Coetzee's confessions has dislodged the rock. Will more of the hit teams' lethal deeds be revealed by the light of confessional truth, or, as in El Salvador, will it have to take the assassination of an Archbishop Romero or of six prominent priests to loosen the rock some more? Public knowledge is spreading. Late last year, newspapers in London shone the bright light on the underside of the rock.

In the London daily *The Independent* on November 17th, Coetzee mentioned one of the most notorious death-squad killings to occur this year. On May 1st, David Webster, a Professor of Social Anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand, was shot dead in front of his house after returning from a morning jog. Four men in a white car were seen speeding away. Even though Captain Coetzee retired in 1985, he says that he knew about the plan to assassinate Webster before it was executed, strongly implying that he has kept in touch with the hit team network over the years. David Webster was regarded as particularly dangerous. He was doing what the network feared most — investigating and publicising the truth about their activities. The day after he died, Dr Webster was due to deliver his completed research on "extra-legal" assassinations and abductions to the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations. His report was entitled "The South African Contras."

Webster's list of unsolved killings goes back

to the Rick Turner murder in Durban eleven years before, a killing uncannily like his own. Also an anti-apartheid academic, Dr Turner was shot dead on his doorstep by an unknown gunman. Webster's list includes the names of four leaders of the United Democratic Front, who were shot and stabbed to death, and then burned, near Port Elizabeth, in 1985. In the same year, three ANC men were shot and killed by unknown assailants in the neighbouring country of Swaziland. In 1986 and 1987, ANC people were also killed in Botswana and Lesotho, other neighbouring countries.

Like Ruth First in Mozambique, apartheid opponents are obviously not safe anywhere. In early 1981, Joe Gqabi, the ANC representative in Zimbabwe, was killed by a hail of bullets in his Harare home. Captain Coetzee says he sent a bomb via diplomatic pouch to the ANC office in London in 1982. More than a year later, a letter-bomb killed Jeanette Schoon and her young daughter in Angola. They died a few months after her husband, Marius Schoon, an ANC activist, had been threatened with assassination in Botswana. Coetzee said he was ordered to shoot Schoon with a pistol in Gaborone, but the order was then rescinded. Even living as far away as Paris, France, did not help Dulcie September, the ANC representative in Paris. She was shot dead there.

South Africa-controlled Namibia will become independent on March 21st, too late for Anton Lubowski, a civil rights lawyer and independence fighter, who was shot dead in Windhoek last September. Before he died, picture-posters showing him as the centre of a shooting-range target, were sent to him in the mail. Similar death threats have been made against another human rights lawyer in Windhoek, David Smuts. Should he expect to feel safe after Namibia's independence? Those hit men will not suddenly go away. They will even be represented in the new Namibia — in last November's elections, their own party, the right-wing, white-supremacist Action Christian National won three of the 72 Constitutional Assembly seats. And they will have the complete backing of the right-wing police in South Africa, thousands of whom support the Conservative Party and belong to the

neo-Nazi Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (Afrikaner Resistance Movement).

David Webster's term "The South African Contras" highlights the fascist ideology and terrorist nature of these South African hit teams. They are no different from the Contras in Nicaragua or the death-squads in El Salvador. They even employ the "disappearing" method the Argentine military used during the dictatorship of 1974-1983. Some anti-apartheid figures just vanish. One such case is that of Stanza Bopape. Police say he escaped from custody in 1988, but his family has not heard from him since. Apparently for the police, any kind of murderous approach will do.

One of the strangest and most sinister episodes occurred over a two-month period last year in Namibia and the United States, and may have come close to touching the White House. The Reverend Frank Chikane, Secretary-General of the South African Council of Churches and outspoken critic of apartheid, became mysteriously ill while on a trip to Namibia on April 24th. He suffered nausea, sweating and shortness of breath. Within two days he had recovered, so he proceeded on an important visit to the United States, where he was due to meet President Bush. While staying with a physician friend in Wisconsin Rev. Chikane collapsed and almost died. He stopped breathing, and had to be put on a respirator. Again, he recovered within two days, but quickly fell ill twice more with same symptoms.

According to *The New York Times*, Rev. Chikane's friend, Dr Daniel J Smith, an Assistant Professor at the University of Wisconsin Medical School, studied the symptoms and the laboratory blood tests, and diagnosed his condition as a form of nerve-poisoning. Dr Smith identified the toxin as organophosphate anti-cholinesterase, commonly used as an insecticide, and applied as a powder or gas. If inhaled or absorbed through the skin, it paralysed the nervous system.

Rev. Chikane says he was using the same luggage and set of clothes and shoes on both his trips to Namibia and the USA. When he returned to South Africa, he had both his luggage and clothes tested, but nothing was found. Dr Smith points

out that many variants of the chemical compound are almost impossible to trace. However, on June 26th, back in Johannesburg, a cyanide-based insecticide was sprayed inside the college chapel where the Rev. Chikane was due to conduct the annual general meeting of the South African Council of Churches (its offices were destroyed in a bomb blast in 1988). Several members of the cleaning staff became violently ill and had to be rushed to hospital.

While in the USA, Rev. Chikane was too ill on May 18th to meet President Bush in the White House with other church leaders. You can imagine how sick he must have felt to pass up such an important meeting. If he had managed to get there, an invisible chemical may well have represented South Africa's death squads there too, poisoning the inner sanctum of the White House, just as it did that college chapel a few weeks later.

Our minds go back to that forensic police laboratory mentioned by Coetzee. Is that where this insidious poisonous substance came from? General Lothar Neethling, Head of the laboratory, has been named by Coetzee. What happened to Rev. Chikane last year is reminiscent of a crude poisoning attempt made in 1977 on the daughter of Donald Woods, Steve Biko's friend and biographer. As documented in the film *Cry Freedom*, a commemorative Steve Biko T-shirt was sent in the mail to the young girl just after Biko was murdered. It was impregnated with phosphoric acid.

The death squads are crude, merciless, implacable. Perhaps their cruellest, most callous killing, was the 1985 murder of Victoria Mxenge. She died four years after her husband, that same Griffiths Mxenge who was hacked to death by Butane Nofomela's squad in the pay of Captain Coetzee. Not content with making Victoria Mxenge a widow in 1981, her police killers decided to make her children orphans in 1985. But, utterly uncowed by her lawyer husband's assassination, this brave woman, also a lawyer, vowed to unmask her husband's killers and continued to resist apartheid. At the time she was murdered, Victoria Mxenge was representing and defending four anti-apartheid activists who had sought refuge in the British Consulate in

Durban.

Griffiths and Victoria Mxenge are dead. The Rev. Frank Chikane is still alive. The bright light of public exposure in *The New York Times* may have halted his slow death by poisoning. But even though Griffiths and Victoria Mxenge have died, their names have been brought back into the light by the confessions of Butane Nofomela and Dirk Coetzee. And the Rev. Frank Chikane, together with the Rev. Allan Boesak, and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, recently met with the new State President of South Africa, FW de Klerk, who asked their advice about peaceful change. As the man who sits on top of the rock of police oppression, protecting and nurturing those night-creatures underneath, President De Klerk would also do well to consult these three church leaders about the spiritually cleansing effects of confession, repentance, and final absolution. Like Nofumelo and Coetzee, he and his people are in mortal need of it.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The revelations on police and military hit-squads

activities have led to F W de Klerk being forced to take a position against them. Several police officers have appeared in court whilst others have gone into hiding after warrants of arrest were issued against them. Peter Casselton, who was responsible for the bombing of the ANC office in London in 1982, said that the information he has could bring the regime down. More recently, Magnus Malan was the object of a parliamentary scrutiny because of his involvement in the murderous activities of the Civil Co-operation Bureau which operated under the military. This is the body that was revealed to be responsible for the murder of Anton Lubowski. Typically, Malan defended himself by trying to smear Anton Lubowski as an agent of racist South Africa's military intelligence. The world, and indeed the South African government itself used as it is to hearing him tell blatant lies such as that Dulcie September was killed by the ANC, dismissed him with contempt.

Now that the Harms Commission into hit squads activities has been formed, the demand should be for a full and open report. Nothing should be hidden. Those who must fall must fall.



Protest at the death of Swapo official Anton Lubowski. The CCB has been implicated in his murder

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY BACKS SANCTIONS THATCHER'S PLEA REJECTED WORLDWIDE

Although welcoming the release of Nelson Mandela, world leaders have sent a clear message to the Pretoria regime that sanctions will stay until apartheid has ended. However, the British government has proved itself seriously out of step with international opinion by its decision to lift its ban on new investment in South Africa.

Britain's move is in defiance of the ANC and also the European Community. The action was immediately called a "very dangerous precedent for European political co-operation" by the Irish Foreign Minister and president of the European Community Foreign Ministers, Gerry Collins. At its recent meeting to discuss the situation, all EC members, with the exception of Britain and Portugal, agreed not to reconsider lifting sanctions until the state of emergency in South Africa had been lifted and all political prisoners released.

Secretary General of the ANC, Alfred Nzo, again re-stated the ANC's firm opposition to any lifting of sanctions: "There has been no change whatsoever. We are still very firm that sanctions must be maintained, despite what Mrs Thatcher says."

The President of the United States, George Bush, said the United States could not relax sanctions without further reforms taking place in South Africa. He added that although he did not wholly approve of sanctions, he was bound by the sanctions law passed by Congress over three years ago. "Nelson Mandela's release from prison, which we've waited for and worked toward for so long, is another important sign that South Africa may soon begin negotiating a democratic, non-racial society, and at last be on the way to ending apartheid once and for all," Bush said.

The Soviet Union welcomed Mandela's release, calling it an overdue step on the way to dismantling apartheid. "Together with all countries and peoples, we hail the release of Nelson

Mandela," Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennady Gerasimov said.

British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, lost no time in applauding F W de Klerk on his reforms. She immediately launched an international campaign for the relaxation of sanctions against South Africa, beginning with the cancellation of the voluntary ban on new investment, and with other measures to follow. She said it was time to use encouragement and not "the stick" in South Africa.

"The sanctions are very small indeed. They are gesture sanctions. When people are doing the right thing, as boldly and courageously as President de Klerk, it seems quite absurd to still use sticks to beat them with, however small those sticks may be," she said.

However, British Opposition leaders insisted that sanctions should continue.

Labour leader, Neil Kinnock, said: "To relinquish any sanctions now would simply tell President de Klerk that, in return for the most nominal changes and release of a man who should never have been in jail, he can win the whole prize." Labour's Foreign Affairs spokesman, Gerald Kaufman, told the House of Commons that South Africa would remain a prison for Nelson Mandela and the black population until apartheid and the police state were completely dismantled.

The Commonwealth Secretary General, Sonny Ramphal, welcomed Mandela's release as a "triumph for national resistance and international pressure over apartheid's custodians at home and its apologists abroad." He added that it was not yet time to demobilise the international support

for apartheid's victims. This was supported by the Development Commissioner of the European Community, Manuel Marin, who said he was completely in favour of retaining sanctions until apartheid was abolished. While welcoming Mandela's release, Irish deputy premier, Brian Lenihan, said: "The release is a start, but only a start. It would be very undesirable for any European Community member to breach the Community approach and ease sanctions on a unilateral basis."

The Executive Secretary of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, Mike Terry, said that Margaret Thatcher had a "brazen nerve" to invite Nelson Mandela to Britain: "... her government has not lifted a finger to secure his release," he said.

The Secretary General of the Organisation of African Unity, Salim Ahmed Salim, welcomed Mandela's release, but urged continued sanctions against South Africa. Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda also cautioned against the lifting of sanctions. He said that the ANC must now begin talks with President de Klerk. "The time for talking has come," he said.

The President of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano, said: "It is negotiations with the ANC and other democratic forces that will really indicate the moment at which the international community should lift sanctions." President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe has called Mrs

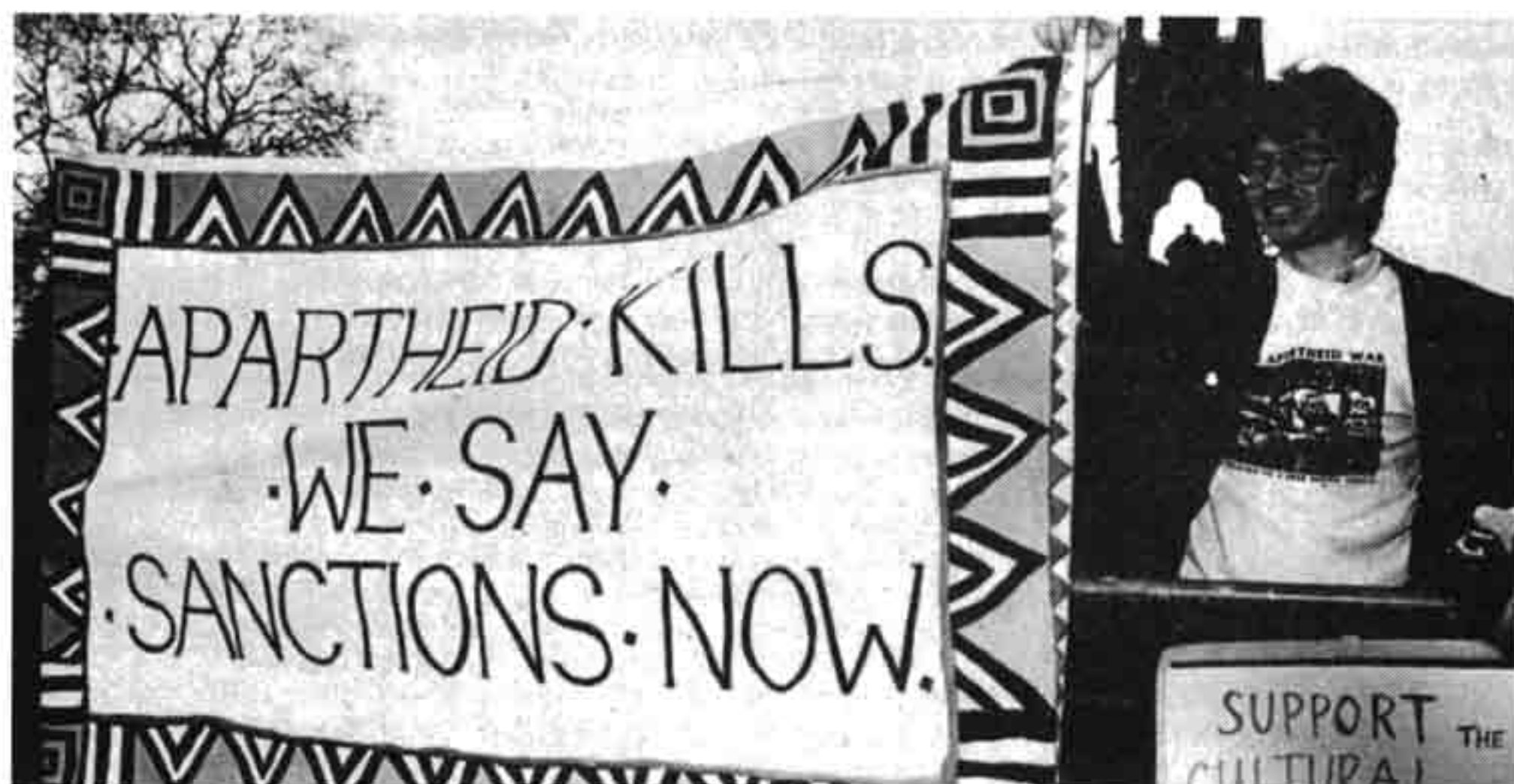
Thatcher's reaction "too hasty an embrace." He said: "We see no reason why all those who have been imposing sanctions should relax these sanctions."

Indian Prime Minister V P Singh urged that all strength and pressure be directed to the complete dismantling of apartheid, while Australia's Foreign Minister Gareth Evans said that the point about sanctions was not to secure the release of Nelson Mandela, but about the abolition of apartheid.

The National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ANC has strongly condemned the position taken by the British government regarding sanctions.

In its statement of February 16th, the NEC said that the international community had imposed sanctions against South Africa with the purpose of ending the apartheid system and that therefore there was no justification for lifting these sanctions at this stage.

Britain's position would not only hinder the process leading to the speedy liquidation of apartheid, but was a betrayal of the decisions of the European Community and the United Nations General Assembly (to which the British government is party), that sanctions would not be lifted until profound and irreversible changes had taken place in keeping with the United Nations Declaration on South Africa adopted unanimously last December.



SANCTIONS HAVE TO BE MAINTAINED UNTIL APARTHEID IS ENDED

Statement by the South African delegation to the Southern Africa Coalition Lobby of Parliament

Britain committed itself last December, both at the European Heads of Government Summit in Strasbourg and the United Nations General Assembly Special Session, to maintain sanctions until "profound and irreversible changes" have taken place.

What are these profound and irreversible changes? The United Nations General Assembly Declaration on Apartheid and its Destructive Consequences in Southern Africa says: "we shall continue to do everything in our power to increase support for the legitimate struggle of the South African people, including maintaining international pressure against the system of apartheid until that system is ended and South Africa is transformed into a united, democratic and non-racial country with justice and security for all its citizens." Britain voted for this declaration.

The entire world community has thereby committed itself to maintain sanctions until:

- ★ The laws that establish apartheid are scrapped;
- ★ A new constitution has been democratically adopted by a truly representative body of the South African people.

It is quite clear that "irreversible change" goes far beyond the beginning of negotiations. There is nothing irreversible about starting negotiations.

Rather, negotiations have to be successfully concluded to be irreversible. As yet, negotiations have not even begun — most of the pre-conditions have not been met. Once negotiations do start, sanctions are an essential pressure to keep De Klerk on track to end apartheid, since delaying or aborting the process will exact a high price.

Therefore we urge the British people, including the Conservative Party, to call on Mrs Thatcher to reverse her current policy. She is rapidly creating the belief amongst South Africa's people that Britain is opposed to their liberation.

Britain stands isolated in the world, and its stand is jeopardising all future British relations with a free South Africa.

Now is the time to change this indefensible policy.

(signed)

Rev. Dr Frank Chikane
General Secretary, South African Council of Churches

Mr Popo Molefe
General Secretary, United Democratic Front

Mr Elijah Barayi
President, Congress of South African Trade Unions

London, February 27 1990

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Comrade

When the time comes for us to begin building a post-apartheid South Africa, installing a new system of education will have to be a priority. The future of our country will depend largely on the nature of the schools and universities we set up — the skills that are taught, the attitudes and expectations that are encouraged.

In her thoughtful and timely article *Language and the National Question* in the March issue of *Sechaba*, Dawn Karim drew our attention to language in education. The article will no doubt generate a debate, and my intention is to contribute some ideas to it.

The question of what language should be used for teaching has caused conflict in South Africa in the past, between parents and pupils on one side and the regime on another. It was the trigger for the demonstration of June 16 1976. It is also a crucial question, educationally, socially and politically.

According to the Freedom Charter, education should open the "treasures of mankind" to our people. We intend to offer an education that opens doors to a wider world, and it was because they wanted such an education for their children that many South African parents have preferred them to be taught in English. At the same time, the Charter commits us to nurturing the different cultures in our country; and Dawn Karim is right — language cannot be separated from culture.

Though we have many languages, we are very clear about our intention of building one nation, not several. We want a democratic South Africa that is unitary and non-racial. It is essential that the members of our society should be able to communicate with each other, and to achieve this we need a *lingua franca* (for example, English) as suggested by Comrade Karim.

The basis of education is laid in the schools. How is a *lingua franca* to be handled there?

It can be taught as a second language, with the home language as the medium of instruction.

This policy would help to preserve and encourage national cultures, but could create problems with specialised terminology outside the school. It would also involve the creation of separate schools — or at least separate language-based classes within each school — and the effect would be to separate the pupils along 'ethnic' lines. In the cities, particularly, this would be divisive. We will need to integrate our youngsters from an early stage.

Dawn Karim suggests the *lingua franca* as the medium of instruction throughout, after the first few years of primary school, while second and third languages are taught, of which the home language would probably be one. Such a policy would satisfy most of our needs, and would enrich all pupils with a deeper understanding of language, but it would have drawbacks, too. In a group of mixed linguistic backgrounds, (and most city groups will be linguistically mixed) native speakers of the language of instruction will have an advantage.

It is in the language of instruction that students grasp ideas, handle them, perceive their implications. They are learning to reason in this language, and if it is not spoken at home, the home cannot effectively reinforce the learning at school. We would have to think about compensatory education to correct the disadvantage, for the principle of equal opportunity must be the foundation of all our planning in education.

The Charter promises a campaign to end adult illiteracy. Some people may wish to learn in their own language. Others may choose the *lingua franca*, and, if they are not yet fluent in it, they will have the double task of learning a language while learning the principles of reading and writing at the same time. We will need numbers of highly trained teachers in all languages.

These problems can be solved, and we should address them. The sooner we begin, the more assured the future of our country will be.

Claris

ATHOL FUGARD

THE WRITER UNDER APARTHEID

By Kader Asmal

This was a programme note written for a performance of *Hello and Goodbye* by the Red Kettle Theatre Company in Waterford, Ireland, in November 1989.

Nothing in South Africa is non-political. Race touches, blights and destroys every aspect of life.

Racial classification is the determining factor. A few years ago, a police officer decided the race of a foundling of three weeks on the basis of a single strand of hair. That was a life sentence. These latter-day Nuremburg laws, as thorough and systematic as anything conceived by the Nazis, will decide who the foster parents of the foundling will be, where she may live and go to school. They decide what trains, hotels, restaurants, cinemas and theatres she will enter. That hair, until 1985, decided whom she took as a lover or husband. What her political rights will be, what jobs will be open to her and what old-age pension she will get are still decided by her race. One day, these laws will decide even where she is to be buried.

These laws establish and feed the two South Africas that exist. The four and a half million Whites have the power and the status, and they take priority regardless of merit and intelligence. To them belong the splendid facilities and palaces of culture, where the 'theatre' is a social occasion with musicals and extravaganzas. There is an attempt to retain cultural contact with Europe and New York.

For the black people of South Africa, whose oppression has been long and harsh, the expression of their fear, pain, hope and determination through the arts has been a lifeline. For these 28 million, whose political rights are denied them, culture has been one of the few forms of creativity, protest and self-affirmation open to them.

Cultural traditions damaged

In this 'other' South Africa, families and communities were broken up by the demand for labour on the farms, on the mines and in the towns of white South Africa. Cultural traditions suffered. Some survived, adapted to the harsh conditions of township life and work with its all-male compounds and its soulless housing. Others were deformed by being deliberately preserved for white audiences as examples of 'native art.' European culture, imported with white supremacy, elevated the written word and the individual artist to the detriment of the more oral and communal African style, and made 'literature' virtually synonymous with 'English literature.' Church and secular education confirmed this process.

But there have always been counter-currents. Stories and poems have reflected major events and personal responses, and freedom songs have evolved in the struggle for a non-racial society. Writers took part in this struggle, directly and indirectly, and the list of those forced into exile by the middle of the sixties reads, as Anthony Sampson has described it, like "drumbeats for a casualty list."

Fugard stayed at home, for the pressures on him were different from the pressures of the ghetto on a black writer. His 30 plays reflect his personal insights and experiences. Although he has described himself as "a harmless old liberal fossil," he had to endure the revocation of his passport from 1965 to 1971 and the threat of censorship from the regime.

With its focus on a system of race classification that destroys love because it is irrational and cruel, *The Blood Knot* was a watershed in the theatre in South Africa.

Fugard lived up to his own demand that "the theatre's major importance in an oppressive society is to break the conspiracy of silence that always attends an unjust system." His greater victory was that he was able to involve black actors, and collaborate with them so that his more overtly political plays became indictments of aspects of institutionalised violence. In the magnificent *Sizwe Banzi is Dead*, he presented the pass laws as the single most oppressive aspect of apartheid, because, without a reference book, a Black over the age of 16 did not exist.

In *The Island*, he touched on the pain and humiliation of the political detainee and the triumph of the human spirit which sustained the Mandelas, the Sisulus and the Kathradas of Robben Island and Pollsmoor Prison. For those outside South Africa, it has been the craftsmanship and sincerity of his social vision as reflected in these plays that has gained critical acclaim.

Sorrow transformed to determination

Even in the bleaker plays, such as *Marigolds in August* and *Boesman and Lena*, where the landscape is sordid and the characters despairing or unloved or ugly, there is the implicit social background of evictions, harassment and no-hope of apartheid. When Lena cries out, "I want my life. Where's it?" the cry arises from the alienation and dehumanisation of apartheid, like the cry in *Sizwe Banzi is Dead* when the switch is about to take place: "Am I not a man?"

Fugard's contribution to the theatre of protest in South Africa is an historic one, and he has achieved international acclaim. But inside South Africa, in the past decade, the limitations of his approach have been criticised by the resurgent wave of cultural energy within the black community, which is more overtly political, optimistic and committed. The new theatre is part of the political impulse which has aimed to reaffirm black identity and dignity in the face of the onslaught from apartheid, and is part of the common desire for liberation. The emphasis in this theatre is on poetry, but with a shift away from an essentially white audience to a black one, analysing the black experience for the Blacks.

As Sipho Sepamla, a black playwright, put it: "They write plays about us for us." The earlier emphasis on sorrow and protest against white-inflicted injustice has been transformed in the new work, which involves black anger and determination to bring change, and is consciously part of the liberation process. The reaction of the South African regime to the black theatre, with its overt political involvement, has been savage: torture, the bannings of producers and directors, the banning of a number of cultural organisations in 1978. But these actions have not deflected the writers who are allied with liberation and the search for self-reliance.

Fugard and the cultural boycott

This has faced writers such as Athol Fugard and Nadine Gordimer with difficult choices. Fugard has opted for a more personal vision since his 1982 autobiographical *Master Harold and the Boys*. He has had to recognise that the oppression of the black writer with the appalling conditions, laws and regulations, which do not touch a white writer, is fundamentally different from the alienation of a white writer in South Africa. A sensitive man, he suffers from his awareness of the injustice of apartheid and the deep divisions it has produced; at a personal level, he has tried to overcome these divisions by collaborating with Blacks; but he has never been able to commit himself to the liberation struggle. He has stood aside from the call for a cultural boycott.

Black organisations inside South Africa continue to call on all artists not to go to South Africa, and to support their cause by isolating apartheid. Their appeal has been echoed by United Nations resolutions. Athol Fugard has not supported them, which in itself is a political act. But the cultural boycott was never intended to victimise opponents of apartheid. The theatre, poetry and writing of the democratic forces must be supported. Liberation will come in South Africa, and will free the vast human reserve of energy, passion and creativity in that society. The writer in South Africa has reached a new stage, no longer embattled and alone, but part of the process of liberation.

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THE MANDELA STONE

*The back and shoulders of Mandela
were mute
like all the prisoners'
when breaking stones.*

*At the end of the day
you had to have broken
so many buckets of small stones
that your back and shoulders
felt ready to open mouths.*

Sweat from pores made the same sound.

*Sitting cross-legged they
broke stones in the lime quarry
from morning to night.*

*In the early days
times were very hard:
you had to break up large stones
into smaller ones and make those
smaller still
until your collection
had reached the requisite size.*

*On Release Day his speech
was an unbroken stone.*

— Lauraine Palmeri