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EDITORIAL:

DETENTIONS, DETENTIONS, DETENTIONS

On Christmas day a morning of prayer and protest was held in Johannesburg and over 300 people gathered at St. Mary's Cathedral for the moving 40 minute service. On the same day there were demonstrations at Zoo Lake. Friends and relatives of detainees held a placard protest. These demonstrations were not only in solidarity with the detainees but were also in remembrance of mothers, fathers, husbands, wives and children who miss their beloved ones in detention.

These people are detained not because they are criminals but because they love their people and are fighting for them: they want their people to be well fed, clothed, housed, employed, decently paid, educated and to be allowed to express themselves freely on matters that affect them.

The Sunday Express (3rd January, 1982) reported that 620 people are known to have been detained in South Africa between January 9 (1981) and December 31. Of these 249 were detained in the Ciskei, 17 in the Transkei and 14 in Venda. Of the total, 95 have been released, 226 have been charged and 180 are still in detention. This leaves 297 people still unaccounted for: they could be released, charged or still in detention. Between November 30, 1979 and November 1980 there were 768 people detained. Of these 132 were charged and in November 1980, 18 trials were still proceeding. This left 636 unaccounted for — half of them were school children. During the same period 146 people were detained in the Ciskei,

41 in the Transkei and one in Venda. This was before the wave of detentions during November and December.

The problem is that some of these detainees may have been charged without news of the charges ever having been reported. The police do not have to announce when they decide to charge a detainee. News usually comes through a relative or a lawyer. But lawyers representing detainees frequently find that their clients have already appeared in court — without their having been informed. There are cases when detainees are charged and their lawyers hear about it 20 days after they have first appeared in court.

The terrifying thing about detentions is that only the police know who has been detained, who has been charged and who has been released and they don't tell anybody. They do not have to. It is no use enquiring. They may confirm that such and such a person has been detained but they are under no obligation to volunteer names of people picked up by the Security Police. The police have to confirm first that a person has been detained. Only then — and not before — can a friend, relation, lawyer or newspaper publish that; otherwise he falls foul of the Police Act.

News of many detentions never gets out. Neither does the news of release of many detainees. The police in most cases do not know what the Security Police do. If a detainee has ever been a political activist, they keep very, very quiet about

it for obvious reasons. Then one day he reappears — and they keep quiet about that, too. Louis le Grange, Minister of Police, is not helpful at all and reliable current statistics on detention are almost impossible to come by.

What is characteristic of the latest detentions? The current trend of detentions in the last two years reflects a change in emphasis of protest from the educational field to that of labour. This is not accidental since the trade unions and the workers in general have become more militant — have become the pace setters. The trade unionists and people connected with trade unions are the prime targets of the Police and Special Branch.

The repercussions and results of detentions are detrimental — to say the least — to the mental and physical health of the detainees. What about their future? There is more to it. They are now even poisoned while under detention. Sphiwo Mtimkulu, a student leader and former Port Elizabeth detainee held under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act for nearly five months is a case in point. He was held since the anti-Republic demonstrations on May 31, 1981 and released on October 20. On the day of his release he started complaining about pains in his feet and stomach. Medical tests showed he was suffering from the effects of a very rare poison, thallium — sometimes used as a rat-killer. Symptoms of thallium poisoning show up seven to eight days after ingestion of large quantities. Sphiwo was transferred from Livingstone Hospital in Port Elizabeth to Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town. He lost all his hair and has been unable to walk since two days after his release from detention. While in detention he was assaulted and given electric shocks. He was made to stand on his feet for long periods and had to dip his feet into cold and hot water in quick succession.

This is one of many cases. We know of the assault on witnesses in the case of Oscar Mpetha a 72 year old diabetic patient. Some of these witnesses suffer from tuberculosis. They have been hit, kicked, beaten, not allowed to go to the toilet and forced to give a statement.

This is the face of fascism in South Africa. Detention affects the memory of the detainees besides the fact that they are terrorised and tortured to “make statements”. These detainees have no rights at all — no reading or study material; limited and supervised visits by lawyers and relatives; inadequate daily exercise; no food parcels; no fresh clothing. They are held until the Security Police have completed their investigations and the dockets have been referred to the Attorney General. These detentions have been extremely frequent especially in Johannesburg, East London and Durban. People are detained left, right and centre



for “terrorism” and/or “furthering the aims of the banned African National Congress”.

The racist regime thinks it is suppressing the ANC but its actions tend to evoke an opposite reaction — surely the racist regime will soon find out that it is “furthering the aims of the ANC”.

ACT IN UNITY!

Below SECHABA publishes the statement by the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the ANC, January 8, 1982.

Compatriots, allies and democratic supporters of the heroic struggle of the people of South Africa,

Comrades,

The names of the founding fathers are in the minds of many of the oppressed people of our country today as we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the African National Congress. One of these, Pixley ka Izaka Seme, had declared in 1906:

“The brighter day is rising upon Africa ... Yes, the regeneration of Africa belongs to this new and powerful period. The African people ... possess a common fundamental sentiment which is everywhere manifest, crystallising itself into one common controlling idea ... The regeneration of Africa means that a new and unique civilisation is soon to be added to the world.”

In 1911, in a historic clarion call which articulated a widely felt need for a united struggle against colonial domination in Africa, Pixley Seme invited the peoples of the sub-continent to meet in conference and, forgetting and burying all past differences and divisions, to discuss and plan together for their common future.

As an expression of the “regeneration of Africa”, and in response to the call for united struggle, the most representative

political gathering of Africans ever held in the sub-continent of Africa took place on January 8, 1912. Delegates and representatives came from all over South Africa and from other countries of Southern Africa. They included workers, farmers, peasants, professionals, journalists, traders, churchmen, chiefs, members of the African royalty, poets, musicians, authors.

The venue of this momentous event was MANGAUNG (Bloemfontein). Pixley Ka I. Seme explained to the assembled delegates:

“The white people of this country have formed what is known as the Union of South Africa -- a union in which we have no voice in the making of laws and no part in their administration. We have called you ... to this conference so that we can together devise ways and means of forming our national union for the purpose of creating national unity and defending our rights and privileges”.

The ensuing debate and deliberations culminated, by a unanimous decision, in the epoch-making formation of the African National Congress. The people of Southern Africa had thus forged a new and mighty weapon of struggle, a regional political force, a national movement which grew to become part of the people's political life, experience and history: the embodiment of their deepest belief in the certainty of victory and the expression of their identity with the progressive forces

of the world in the pursuit of man's just causes.

Today, as we look back over 7 decades of uninterrupted and principled struggle by the African National Congress to free our continent and our motherland from the shackles of colonialism, racism and fascism, we rise in our millions in salute of the great patriots who gathered at Mangaung in early January, 1912. Among them were John Langalibalele Dube, Sol Plaatje, Walter Rubusana, Sam Makgatho, Alfred Mangena, Meshack Pelem, Charlotte Maxeke, Thomas Mapikela, Edward Tsewu and others. There were the royal personages, who had personally or whose forebears led the armies of resistance to the colonial occupation of Africa but also came to or were represented at Bloemfontein to forge a new weapon of struggle, among them: Solomon ka Dinizulu of the Zulu, Montsioa of the Barolong, Lewanika of the Lozi, Letsie II of the Sotho, Labotsibeni of the Swazi, Dalindyebo of the Thembu, Sekhukhuni of the Pedi and Khama of the Tswana.

The desire, the attempt, to bring to the Bloemfontein Conference all the peoples of Southern Africa, as a first step towards the unification of the African struggle, was defeated only by the fact that we were separately subjugated by three metropolitan powers — Great Britain, Germany and Portugal. Those who attended came from the British-colonised part of the region. Today, however, the colonial barriers that separated us in 1911 have crashed under the weight of the advancing African revolution. We have become one people, with one cause and one enemy — the South African fascists and their imperialist allies.

The African National Congress was conceived as a regional union of anti-colonial forces and had a distinctly continental perspective. On the occasion of its 70th anniversary the masses of the people of South Africa salute their comrades-in-arms, the peoples of Southern Africa — the founders of the ANC.

They salute the people of Africa —

who, with the decolonisation of Namibia and South Africa, will have fulfilled their historic mission to achieve the total liberation of the continent, thus consolidating a firm foundation for a victorious struggle against imperialism.

The oppressed masses and democrats of South Africa, through the ANC, salute all the world forces of change who, during the past 70 years, have fought triumphant struggles against colonialism, racism and fascism. Within 5 years of the formation of the ANC, the world's first socialist state came into being. Today a powerful world socialist system exists and the principles upon which it is founded win growing acceptance as man develops from his past to his future. The African National Congress, born of the people, a creation of Africa's history and experience, has moved with the people and with the times. It was born into the frontline, to spearhead the people's struggle. Thanks to the dedication of its



members, the great vision of its leaders and the calibre of its allies and supporters, it has remained in the frontline and is now spearheading the final assault upon the last colonial stronghold in Africa.

An integral part of a changing world, the ANC has influenced and has been influenced by the socio-economic and political transformations that have come in the course of man's struggle for a better world. It is an integral part of the world-wide forces that are in fact changing the world —eliminating its injustices, correcting its imbalances and introducing a new social, economic and political order in which friendship and peace will prevail because the causes of conflict and war will have been removed.

On this historic occasion, marking the 70th anniversary of the founding of our vanguard liberation movement, we extend our revolutionary greetings and congratulations to all our peoples on the great achievements and advances that they have thus far registered along this long and arduous march to our cherished goal of national and social liberation. That goal is already in sight! We are saying this boldly and confidently: for our forces of national liberation have never been better poised for the final onslaught to eradicate the evil system of colonial and racial oppression and exploitation.

The formation of the African National Congress, on January 8, 1912, was an expression of the future people's power won through protracted and bitter struggles against the combined Boer and British colonial enslavement. The ANC was, and remains to this day, the organised political representative and fighting force for the attainment of democratic and revolutionary change in our society.

The message that came out of the founding conference in Bloemfontein, 70 years ago, expressed the collective resolve of the peoples of Southern Africa who correctly perceived that they were suffering under the selfsame yoke of colonial tyranny and therefore shared a common destiny. That message also coincided with the aspirations of millions of colonially-subjugated Africans throughout our mother continent.

It is not accidental that history

apportioned to our region the role of a forerunner in this regard. For it is here that imperialist domination and colonial occupation had achieved the most pernicious and disastrous results, and therefore made more pressing the need to challenge foreign rule and to counterpose to it the right



of the African people to self determination and independence. Stretching from that period, the peoples of Africa have made gigantic strides, with practically the whole continent having attained political independence and now engaged in national economic reconstruction to consolidate these gains. A few pockets of racial and colonial domination remain, soon to be swept off the surface of the continent.

Our struggle, as part and parcel of the revolutionary process that is sweeping across the continent, draws inspiration and support from the victories already scored by Africa. Our victory over what was at the beginning, and now remains, entrenched imperialist domination and white minority rule, will constitute the apex of Africa's advance to genuine political and economic emancipation.

It is equally true that the revolutionary transformations that we have witnessed on the continent of Africa are also a component part of the broader global

struggle waged by progressive mankind against the dark forces of imperialist domination over the world and of the exploitation of man by man. At the time of the founding of the ANC, a handful of imperialist powers dominated the rest of the world politically and economically. Africa had been carved up among the grabbing imperialist forces in pursuit of strategic raw materials, profit, and spheres of influence. Millions upon millions of people in the colonial and semicolonial world had been reduced to objects of unbridled exploitation and producers of fat profits for foreign masters.

Today that picture has changed. It has changed radically and irreversibly. The sphere of imperialist domination has shrunk tremendously and continues to do so as the forces of liberation and social progress grow in size and combativeness. As a consequence, the balance of forces, both continentally and internationally, has decisively shifted in favour of the forces of independence, democracy and peace. The mainstay of this world revolutionary process are the socialist countries, fully committed to the cause of national liberation, the democratic forces in the capitalist camp, and the national liberation movement. We too, therefore, are part and parcel of this revolutionary stream that is changing our planet for a better and happier world to live in.

Given this background, therefore, the 70th anniversary of the African National Congress finds all of us better placed than we have been before to carry our historic mission to destroy the apartheid monster and realise the goal of total liberation of the African continent. It is our historic obligation, as it is that of Africa, united under the Organisation of African Unity, to fight to achieve this goal, and in doing so, to contribute to the efforts towards ensuring that the continent as a whole enjoys peace and attends to the urgent task of winning economic liberation and raising the living standards of its people.

We are better placed to move forward because our people are engaged in mass

organised action at a level and with a tenacity unsurpassed over the last seven decades. We are better placed to break new ground in our assault on the enemy because these risen masses recognise clearly, from practical experience, that the revolutionary struggle in which they are engaged has one leader and one perspective — the African National Congress and the Freedom Charter respectively. We are better placed to move in on the enemy because today we have a popular army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, capable of speaking to the enemy in the language he understands best.

The early decades following the 1912 founding conference were times of probing by our movement to meet the changing context of the struggle in which new economic and political forces for change were still in their infancy. Our people had been finally robbed of their land and all political rights. In growing numbers they were pushed into the mines and plantations to produce wealth for South Africa's ruling class. It was from this black labouring section of our population that the new forces of resistance came up. The past 70 years have witnessed unending efforts by the working people to combine and use their collective strength to defeat the oppressor. In the process, confrontations, skirmishes, economic strikes, boycotts, anti-pass campaigns, defiance campaigns and other forms of struggle, took place all over the country. All these served as a practical school for drilling and training our revolutionary forces. Gradually they have grown in strength and experience and now pose a real threat to the system of apartheid. They form the backbone of our striking power.

Already by the late 1940's our young militants, thrown up by the growing and intensifying struggle, began to chart new and more effective methods of struggle for the new stage. This prepared the ground for the massive confrontations of the 1950's — the campaign for the defiance of unjust laws, general political strikes, more anti-pass campaigns and the Congress of the People

that adopted our historic document — the Freedom Charter. By that period the African National Congress had become a mass movement involving all sections of the oppressed in active struggle. Faced with and frightened by the rising revolutionary tide, the enemy declared our movement illegal and detained many of our leaders and activists.

For us it was a time for reassessment, for the drawing up of a new strategy and new tactics to meet the changing conditions.

The administrative terror which the enemy unleashed against the popular upsurge: the bannings, banishments, beatings, and torture in police cells; hangings and shootings — none of these have succeeded in neutralising the people's militancy. Instead they have reinforced our determination to pursue the cause of liberation.

Under the leadership of the ANC and its allies, as well as other patriotic revolutionary forces inside the country, organised political confrontation has grown immeasurably over the recent past. The underground forces of our movement are entrenched deeper and are multiplying among the people more than at any stage since the outlawing of our organisation. The enemy is engulfed in a crisis of deep proportions and is frantically looking for new ways out of this political quagmire.

In the current period, our people have begun to reply to the enemy violence with revolutionary violence. Today our armed cadres are dealing blow after blow at the enemy in widespread areas throughout South Africa. The growing sophistication of these blows, their frequency and their high level of organisation have inspired our people and reinforced their conviction that our cause shall triumph. The racist regime itself can no longer deny that they face a future in which growing mass political upsurge will be more and more complemented by increasing armed action by the people. We have reached a stage where the people have opted for and are joining the armed struggle as one of the

most effective ways to dislodge the racist rulers from power.

Inside our own borders the balance of forces is gradually tilting in our favour. The voice of the mass democratic movement, headed by the ANC and its allies is winning the hearts and minds of growing numbers from amongst all the oppressed, pushing into growing isolation the diehard racists and fascists. This movement is not only an opponent of the apartheid regime, but has actually emerged as an alternative power, enjoying the actual and active allegiance of the overwhelming majority of our people. Increasing numbers from the white-oppressor group are steadily joining the stream for political and social change.

Through our sacrifices, and in the face of brutal enemy repression and persecution, we have stubbornly and persistently defended our great creation, the African National Congress, against frantic and desperate efforts by the enemy to blot it out. We have defended it because we knew that without it our collective strength would cease to exist: without it the prospects of our capturing power would fade into the distant future. Twenty years after the oppressor regime declared it illegal, the ANC today, on its 70th anniversary, is openly acclaimed as the leader of our people, thanks to the imposition by the masses of a new popular concept of legality which the enemy guns cannot shoot out of existence, and which his courts cannot imprison. By "lifting" the ban in this manner we have asserted ourselves as the alternative power of our land — the only legitimate power, because we are the people, the democratic majority, whose will must triumph in the end.

In sharp contrast to the racists who have sought to divide our country and people into racial and ethnic compartments, we have upheld the ideal of one country, one people and one democratic and non-racial destiny for all who live in it, black and white.

The people's determination not to

deviate from these ideals remains steadfast and finds expression in the universal commitment we have made to remain loyal to the perspectives contained in the Freedom Charter. As there can be no compromise between democratic rule and racist tyranny, so must it be that the Freedom Charter, the alternative political, economic and constitutional platform of popular power in our country, will emerge triumphant.

After 70 years of unrelenting struggle, and building on the historic and irreversible gains recorded during these decades, we have reached a stage when the process of consolidating bases of popular power among the people has begun. To promote this process, we have decided to mobilise our people for the oncoming period under the watchwords "unity in Action". Our strength lies in unity, and our future advances, in action. Without unity we are weak, and without action we remain oppressed. To move forward we must attack, act in unity and unite in action. The gains recorded during 70 years of struggle have, thanks to the great contribution made by the successive generations of our people, given us the possibility to achieve such unity in practice.

The motto of unity was inscribed on our battle standards on the very day of the creation of the African National Congress. As Seme had declared while organising the first congress, "we are one people". For their part the delegates resolved to bring together the oppressed into common action as one political people.

We have therefore striven for seven decades to build one common nationhood with one destiny. Our shared experience of collective sacrifices in the struggle for a common goal have knit us together as one solid block of liberation. The comradeship that we have formed in the trenches of freedom, transcending the barriers that the enemy sought to create, is a guarantee and a precondition for our victory. But we need still to build on this achievement. All of us - workers, peasants, students,

priests, chiefs, traders, teachers, civil servants, poets, writers, men, women and youth, black and white - must take our common destiny in our own hands.

On this, our 70th anniversary, we call upon our people, and on our allies and supporters to make 1982 a year of Unity in Action with the intensification of our assault on all fronts.

We call upon our working people, the backbone of our liberation movement to mobilise as never before at the point of production to build a powerful democratic



trade union movement for the advancement of the interests of the workers and for their activation into the struggle for the victory of the national democratic revolution.

We call upon our people in the bantustans to mobilise, and to isolate and destroy the

Pretoria puppets. Let us all fight for a democratic and unified South Africa.

We call upon our youth and students to maintain and heighten their spirit of resistance. You have already demonstrated that you are a detachment of greatest courage and heroism. Now, more than ever before, our struggle demands that you act with supreme dedication and vigour under the banner of our fighting movement.

We call upon our womenfolk to raise the cry for vengeance against those who are murdering, maiming and torturing our sons and daughters for their participation in our struggle. You have already demonstrated that you do choose between dying in defence of apartheid or joining the noble cause of national liberation.

We call upon the millions of the oppressed to stand shoulder to shoulder at this crucial hour in our history. The enemy manoeuvres to sow division in our ranks must be defeated. Our destiny is one!

We call upon those amongst our people who have been clad in police and army uniforms to rethink their role. You have it within your grasp to choose between dying in defence of apartheid or joining the noble cause of national liberation.

We call upon those in the white community who stand ready to live a life of real equality and non-racialism to make common cause with our struggle for genuine liberation.

On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the African National Congress, itself a product of the trials and tribulations of Africa's children, we salute the OAU and the brother peoples of our continent. To all of them we say the need for us to continue acting in unity in the struggle to destroy the apartheid regime, the enemy of all Africa, increases with the intensification of the struggle. It is the hope of the millions of your brothers and sisters held prisoner by the Pretoria regime that this year you will, together with them, take new initiatives further to advance our united action.

We salute in particular the brother people of Namibia, their leader, SWAPO and the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN). It is to us a matter of proud record that as early as 1919, and again in 1946, the ANC sent delegations to Versailles and the United Nations respectively, to fight against the territory of Namibia being mandated to racist South Africa.

Today, the heroic struggle in which the Namibian people are engaged is itself a mighty contribution to our own liberation, an expression of a united offensive in which we who suffer under a common enemy are engaged. We pledge to our fellow combatants of Namibia that we shall intensify the offensive on our front so that both our peoples can secure their emancipation.

We salute the heroic people of Angola who have resolutely sacrificed to sustain and advance the struggle of the Namibian people, in the process suffering aggression upon aggression by the fascist regime of South Africa.

We salute also other comrades-in-arms engaged in struggles to liberate themselves, including those of Western Sahara led by the Polisario Front, of Palestine led by the PLO, of El Salvador led by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front, of East Timor led by Fretilin, of Puerto Rico, Guatamala and elsewhere.

All these struggles together with our own belong to one democratic and anti imperialist mainstream. Any advances they make contribute to the furtherance of our own struggle; any advances we make strengthen the hand of these sister movements which like us, confront the forces of imperialism, headed by the United States of America.

These forces of reaction can see that the risen peoples are determined to bring to an end the epoch of imperialist domination. They have therefore decided to go on the offensive against the people. The most backward elements in world politics, therefore be they apartheid South Africa,

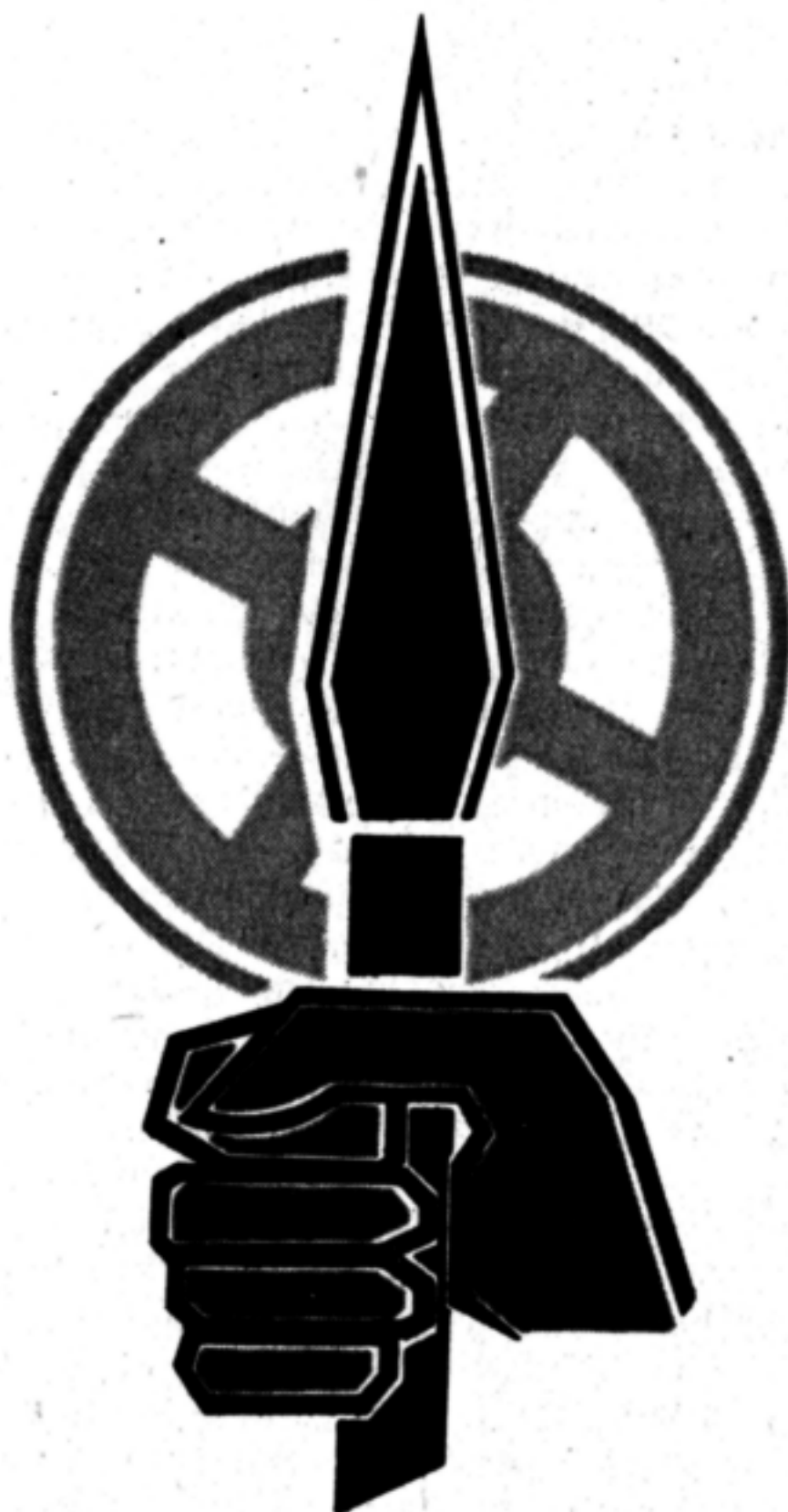
Zionist Israel or the reactionary Junta of El Salvador find encouragement to hang on to their ill-gotten power at all costs. But in 70 years the world has changed radically. The peoples of Africa, of Southern Africa and of South Africa are not alone. We too have our allies and loyal friends — countries and peoples who share the same vision as we do, who recognise that all humanity is diminished and world peace and security threatened by the continued existence of the apartheid regime.

We greet these allies and friends on the occasion of our 70th birthday. We greet the governments and peoples of the socialist community of nations, the governments and peoples of the countries organised in the non-aligned movement, the Scandinavian peoples and governments, and the anti-racist governments and peoples of the rest of Western Europe and North America in the firm belief that we are together committed to act in unity against those who are committing a crime against humanity, the apartheid regime.

The year of the 70th anniversary of the ANC has been proclaimed by that august body, the General Assembly of the United Nations, as the year of mobilisation for the implementation of sanctions against apartheid. We urge that all those who truly wish to see an end to the inhuman system of apartheid should, acting in unity, seize this opportunity to ensure that the Pretoria regime is isolated as never before. Failure to do this will condemn our people and those of Southern Africa in particular and in the end, the rest of mankind, to a terrible blood-letting that will forever remain a blot on the conscience of the entire humanity.

Today we commemorate with deserved pride the 70th anniversary of our national union. This is a historic occasion which has been made possible by the sacrifices which our people have made throughout these years and the support of the world democratic movement.

From Port Elizabeth and Bulhoek to Sharpeville and Soweto and many other



widely dispersed points in time and space between, our people have laid down their lives in the struggle for our liberty and in pursuit of the goals for which the ANC was founded. On Robben Island, in Kroonstad and Pretoria are locked away leaders of our people, both young and old, man and women, black and white, heroes and heroines to whom the liberation of the people is worth more than their own lives.

On this historic occasion we raise our banners in salute of all these martyrs and patriots and pledge to remain true to their example and steadfast in the execution of their command to seize power from our oppressors.

In their name and that of the National Executive Committee we greet the entire membership of the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe and charge that they carry the tasks facing all of us with such honesty, courage, dedication and discipline as befit all true revolutionaries. In their name, and on behalf of the National Executive Committee, we command all these revolutionaries and urge all other patriots to unite in action, to act for unity and, as one, to lead the people in united action.

In the name of the founding fathers, in the name of the martyred heroes of our people, and in the name of the leadership of the African National Congress, we call upon our people to observe 1982, the 70th

anniversary of the formation of our national union, as the Year of Unity in Action.

Let this be the year of the most powerful offensive that our country has ever seen. Let this be the year of a great leap forward to the threshold of victory.

Long live the Year of Unity in Action!

Long live our glorious people's movement, the African National Congress!

Maatla kea rona! Amandla ngawethu!

Ke nako, Mayihlome!

All power to the people!

BRITISH TRADE UNIONS AGAINST APARTHEID

The last year has seen a major upsurge of activity by British trade unionists in support of the freedom struggle in South Africa and Namibia and growing support in particular for the total isolation of South Africa. However, problems remain in securing the whole hearted and active support of British working people for the liberation struggle. In this article Chris Child, Trade Union Secretary of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, sets out the background.

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The cause of freedom in South Africa and Namibia has received valuable support from working people and their trade unions around the world. As the struggle has become more intense so that support has

become more and more vital. And perhaps nowhere is trade union support for the liberation struggle of greater potential and actual importance than in Britain.

Britain has a large and powerful trade union movement — there are some 12 million members of trade unions in Britain, and over the years the trade unions have built up their organisation and acquired a voice in national affairs that enables them to have a major influence over national consciousness and government policy.

Britain has also traditionally been South Africa's closest ally and friend, and has played a key role in building up the apartheid war machine and the apartheid economy. Britain owns more investment in South Africa than any other country and is South Africa's third biggest trading partner. Today all kinds of links bind



People queue for jobs and passes

Britain to apartheid — cultural, sporting, political, economic, military and nuclear. As the President of the African National Congress, Oliver Tambo, put it recently:

“Britain is the source of our misery in Southern Africa — and thus we have a special appeal to make to the people of Britain”.

The Anti-Apartheid Movement has sought to take that appeal to all sections of the British population — students, workers, church people, artists, sportsmen and women and the general public. But we have made particular progress, especially in the last few years, in securing support from British trade unions and their members, and the result of years of persistent work by AAM and SACTU are now paying dividends.

Objectives

Our basic objective in our work in the British trade union movement — and more widely — has been to create the conditions in which the question of apartheid, British collaboration with apartheid and what should be done (in particular to effect a change in government policy) can become major questions for the British people. We have sought to go from there to secure support for a realignment of Britain away from support for the apartheid regime to support for the forces of national liberation. To this end we have worked to inform and educate British trade unionists about the situation in the region, to secure their support for campaigns against repression in South Africa and Namibia, and for

solidarity with SACTU and the struggle of black workers, in the context of all round support (moral, political, material and other) for the liberation movements of South Africa and Namibia.

At the heart of our work, however, has been the campaign to end all forms of British collaboration with apartheid, and we have campaigned for many years for a strict, comprehensive and effective arms embargo, action to end nuclear, oil and other forms of collaboration, and, most important, for the imposition of United Nations mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa. Indeed, the AAM was established in response to the call made in 1959 by Chief Albert Lutuli, the then President of the ANC, for international support for the boycott policy.

This central “isolation” campaign is of particular relevance to British trade unionists, many of whom are themselves directly involved in the production and transport of goods the apartheid system needs or in the provision of services, technology and finances that are vital for the regime and still today many British trade union members do not simply work on items the regime needs, but themselves emigrate to work in South Africa — in one year as many as 20,000 workers went there from Britain.

So one of the major objectives of the “Isolate Apartheid South Africa — Sanctions Now” campaign which we launched in March 1981 to give new impetus to the sanctions and isolation campaign has been to secure trade union support.

SANCTIONS

1982

UNITY

IN ACTION

NOW!

Activity

There has, in fact, been considerable trade union support for that campaign and the whole range of AAM activities. Some examples are:

- * the British transport and agricultural workers unions have launched a campaign to secure a complete consumer boycott of South African goods and five unions with members in public services have urged their branches to press public authorities to refuse to purchase South African goods.
- * several trade unions have responded rapidly, in support of black workers sacked by British and other companies in South Africa for striking. British Leyland unions and shop stewards have made a notable contribution, both when Leyland sacked its entire workforce last year for going on strike and in the 1970s when the company refused to recognise the Metal and Allied Workers Union, with one BL plant even stopping the shipment of Land Rovers to South Africa for a period in protest.

there has been a great deal of activity in support of detained and imprisoned trade unionists in South Africa. For instance, unions representing municipal workers organised demonstrations and other activities last year to secure the release of the leaders of the Black Municipal Workers Union and there has been

massive support from national trade unions for the campaign to release Oscar Mpetha (with 35 General Secretaries demanding the British Government intervene to secure his release) and whole Executives demonstrating outside the South African embassy in London. AEUW-TASS, a strongly anti-apartheid engineering union has set up a special committee to campaign for the release of TASS member Dave Kitson, imprisoned in South Africa for his support for the ANC.

- * in the cultural field members of the National Union of Public Employees took action last year to deny rehearsal facilities to choirs which planned to sing in South Africa, while the Musicians Union (which bans its members from performing in South Africa), and the actors union, Equity, stopped the complete transmission of the Royal Wedding to South Africa last year in protest against apartheid.
- * British print unions have prevented the use by newspapers of South African newsprint, the journalists union has been pressing the publishers not to accept press adverts from South Africa and plans by the BBC staff union and postal unions to cut TV and posts and telecommunications links to South Africa were only prevented by the courts.

These are just a few examples — there are many others. Comparatively little progress has been made in securing action by those

who work for companies with the strongest South African links and activity has been uneven, but there have still been many useful and imaginative initiatives, which have had the effect of deepening the understanding of the unions' members and promoting still more activity and involvement in other AAM campaigns.

Week of Action

This was reflected last year in October when the AAM organised a Trade Union Week of Action on the theme "Isolate Apartheid". This was supported by 23 national trade unions, many of whose journals carried special articles on the position of black workers and their unions and the AAM "Isolate Apartheid" campaign. SACTU and ANC speakers addressed meetings throughout the country organised by trade unions themselves and action was taken locally against many different links with South Africa. In Birmingham, for instance, the trades council started a campaign against the recruitment of unemployed car workers by the South African Sigma company. In various towns and cities there were demonstrations outside branches of Barclays Bank, protests against companies' links with South Africa, demands that schools, local authorities works canteens and other places should not use South African goods, the distribution of massive quantities of specially produced material and much more. Together with other activity in the course of the last year, the Week of Action has resulted in a growing awareness by British trade unionists of the need to isolate apartheid South Africa and it has set a more secure basis for future action of all sorts.

Strong Links

As a result of this kind of activity and the work of the AAM over the years to secure enhanced trade union support the AAM, working closely with SACTU, now has strong links with British trade unions.

Some 35 national trade unions, together representing about 9 million working people, are themselves affiliated to the AAM and

most of these are represented on the AAM's Trade Union Committee. At non-national level, trade unions are often closely involved in the work of the AAM's 50 local committees and some 250 trades councils (local trade union co-ordinating bodies), trade union branches, areas, districts and regions are affiliated to the Movement. This is not enough, but it does signify an important degree of support for the AAM on the part of British unions. AAM now enjoys close relations with trade unionists in many different unions and all levels in the movement.

At the same time support amongst trade unions for the African National Congress is increasing notably. Trade union support for the campaign to release Nelson Mandela has been explicitly linked to support for the ANC. For instance, the ANC Chief Representative in Britain, Ruth Mompoti, was invited by the Scottish Area of the National Union of Mineworkers to address their annual gala last year to represent Nelson Mandela, whom they had invited to be present as an indication of their support for his release. Much of the impetus behind expressions of solidarity with the ANC on the part of British local authorities has come from the trade union movement. ANC, as well as SACTU speakers, now regularly address delegates to trade union conferences. At a special meeting held in London to mark the 70th anniversary of the foundation of the ANC, there were messages from a number of national trade unions, while leading trade unionists have been prominently involved in the campaigns to stop the execution of Solomon Mahlangu and James Mange, and continue to play an important role in the current campaigns to Free the Pretoria Six: Manana, Shabangu, Lubisi, Mashigo, Tsotsobe and Moise.

Policy Shift

Meanwhile, at a policy level there has been an important shift in the last year. After the annual conferences of some of Britain's biggest unions this year, resolutions were adopted supporting the imposition of mandatory sanctions against South Africa-

notably by the 2 million strong transport workers, and the railwaymen and general workers — and the Trades Union Congress itself decided to support such a policy. The resolution constituted a major extension of TUC policy and was unanimously adopted. For the first time the TUC expressed its solidarity with the Namibian people's struggle under the leadership of SWAPO, condemned the threat to peace posed by South Africa and its aggression against independent Africa, set its support for trade unions in South Africa in the context of the national liberation struggle as a whole and embraced support for the total isolation of South Africa, including mandatory UN sanctions. The resolution is worth quoting in full:

“Congress welcomes the development of independent black trade unions in South Africa.

“This is part of the process of national liberation in Southern Africa.

“Congress in particular condemns the South African intransigence over Namibia and affirms its support for SWAPO in its struggle for genuine independence.

“Congress recognises that the policies of the government of South Africa pose a growing threat to international peace and security and condemns its actions of aggression against Angola and other neighbouring states.

“Congress condemns the use by Britain of its Security Council veto power to block United Nations sanctions against South Africa. Congress pledges its support for the total isolation of the apartheid regime, including the imposition of mandatory United Nations economic sanctions against South Africa.”

The TUC resolution is of the greatest importance and it indicates growing support for the AAM's policies. Now our task is to ensure that the resolution does not remain as words on paper, but is transformed into effective trade union action against apartheid and in particular against British collaboration with the apartheid regime.

Internationalism

However, the fact that the TUC has only now adopted this policy indicates the scale of the challenge the AAM and its trade union supporters face. For very real political problems remain to be overcome. The fact of the resolution should not obscure an equally important fact, namely that the trade union movement in Britain as elsewhere contains many different forces — and they do not all support the policies now advocated by the TUC.

There is a strong and proud tradition of internationalism in the British trade union and labour movement and there is a core of concern — even guilt — over Britain's links with the evil of apartheid. British workers know that black people in South Africa are denied fundamental rights and are brutally oppressed by the white minority, and all but committed racists in their ranks express at least verbal support for freedom, democracy and non-racialism in South Africa. Most British trade unionists know too that Britain is involved in sustaining the apartheid system, although they may not be aware of the degree of that involvement, and they are aware, however vaguely, that the people of South Africa and Namibia are fighting to rid their countries of the apartheid regime.

At the same time Britain's massive stake in apartheid has given rise to powerful vested interests which oppose the policies advocated by the AAM and whose opposition is reflected in the mass media presentation of the situation in and concerning Southern Africa. The “solutions” these vested interests prescribe and the ways in which they define the problem in Southern Africa inevitably receive more attention than the AAM's campaigns and views. This in turn means that there is great ignorance in the trade union movement (and more generally) as to the realities of the situation and the policies that are required. It means that there are still influential sections of the British trade union movement which either oppose, ignore or are not fully committed to the need to isolate apartheid

and support the liberation struggle, despite the adoption of the resolution.

For instance, there is still support for the "constructive engagement" these, (that by continuing economic links with South Africa, apartheid can be reformed out of existence without recourse to international isolation and armed struggle) and the European Code of Conduct for companies with interests in South Africa. That the constructive engagement approach still receives support is partly due to opportunism by some in the British trade union movement. It is easier, to support that approach than sanctions and isolation, given Britain's massive economic stake in South Africa.

In the same way it is easier (and apparently more reasonable) to support so-called peaceful change policies than to support South African trade unions in isolation from the overall national liberation struggle. Indeed, many British trade unionists still see the problem for black people in South Africa in narrow trade union terms and perceive — or project — the problem in South Africa for black workers as to do largely with their lack of trade union rights and decent conditions and wages, a problem to be solved not by support for the overthrow of the apartheid system as a whole but by the creation of a strong trade union movement to bargain on behalf of the workers. The struggle has thus come to be understood by many British trade unionists as to do with the securing of reforms, rather than national liberation, and once again in this view there is no need for international isolation and armed struggle.

Paternalism

Running in parallel with both of these linked approaches is a paternalism which expresses itself through the presentation of trade union solidarity sometimes almost completely in terms of the provision from Western European trade unionists of assistance and training for trade unionists in South Africa. Some British trade unionists still set great store by the advice that they can give to black workers, to enable them

as one put it to "drag themselves out of the dark ages", and both close their ears to the requests that the people actually present and think that they know better than these people themselves what is in the interests of the people of South Africa. Some of the same people are still busy promoting TUCSA and contact with TUCSA unions, an activity which has helped give currency to the mistaken belief that contact can be developed with black trade unions in South Africa in the same way as it can be in Western Europe.

All this takes place at a time of continued and determined efforts to by pass SACTU and deny meaningful support to the liberation movement. It takes place at a time when despite the urgency of the situation in Southern Africa too few members of trade unions in Britain even consider the issue of apartheid as one with which they need to be concerned. It takes place at a time when many ordinary trade union members in Britain hold back from support or sanctions because they are not prepared to make the sacrifice that sanctions might involve, small though this is in comparison with that being paid daily by the struggling people of South Africa themselves.

Challenge

So the challenge of making the TUC resolution a reality is one which has to be confronted by the AAM and its supporters in the trade union movement in an environment which is not wholly friendly, even if it is not completely hostile.

There is a great deal still to do and the fact remains that despite the increase in activity and the growing support for the AAM's policies progress although significant, has been painfully slow, especially when set against the rapid developments in Southern Africa itself. The level of support which British workers give to the liberation struggle nowhere near matches the demands of the situation and British collaboration continues.

For the Anti-Apartheid Movement the basic tasks — making the question of apartheid an issue with British working

people, securing their support for SACTU and the liberation movements of South Africa and Namibia, convincing them of the need for decisive action to secure an end to British support for apartheid — remain, and the obstacles and problems set out above yet have to be overcome and resolved.

At the same time, significant progress has been made, especially in the last year,

at the level of policy and activity. We hope that in 1982, designated by the United Nations General Assembly as the International Year of Mobilisation for Sanctions against South Africa and by the African National Congress as the “Year of Unity in Action”, British workers will strengthen and consolidate their unity in action with the people of South Africa and Namibia. We are aware that there is not much time.

IMMIGRATION AND GENOCIDE

1980 was a year of rapid and extensive industrial expansion in South Africa. The Standard Bank Review of January 1981 gave two reasons for this. One was the effort to produce in South Africa various products which up till then had been imported, such as rubber and polyols. The other reason was “the dramatic 23 per cent increase in real fixed investment by the private sector in the first nine months of 1980 compared with the same period in 1979.” The stimuli to manufacturing industry led to expansion in other fields, such as building construction, electricity, steel and rolling stock.

The Financial Mail gave as another reason the “massive strategic projects initiated by government and the public undertakings,” among which were Sasol 2 and 3, Escom’s new power stations, Armscor and the Uranium Enrichment Corporation. This increase in government spending was made possible, partly at least, by the rise in the price of gold, which had vastly augmented the South African exchequer at the time of the budget in March 1980.

This expansion led to a shortage of skilled labour which the South African press in 1981 described in such words as ‘severe’ and ‘critical’. To supply the need,

private industry and the government combined in a drive to recruit skilled labour from overseas. Preparation had already been made for this in the budget of March 1980, which had provided for an increase in the grants given to immigrants.

Throughout 1980 and 1981, a flood of advertisements appeared in the overseas press, directed towards skilled technologists with some experience in mining, in the metal, chemical, paper, wood and tanning industries, in atomic engineering, in surveillance, in computers, and even in meteorology, to mention only a few.

Inducements were offered in the form of excellent pay and working conditions. By early 1981, the minimum salary generally offered was R16,000 a year, together with free air passages for the worker and his family, and a ‘relocation allowance.’ Some firms offered a ‘resettlement allowance’ as well, though the distinction between ‘relocation’ and ‘resettlement’ was not made clear in the advertisements. Nearly all offered sports facilities, and cheap insurance. Many firms offered subsidised housing, a car or free use of a car for the first few weeks, annual bonuses or holiday allowances, free lunches. Some even offered added inducements by mentioning the low rates of income tax and value added tax

in South Africa as compared with Britain, the cheap wine and the sunshine. In January 1981, the Johannesburg Star reported that some workers who had been made redundant by the closure of a British paper mill were to emigrate to South Africa, and that South African Board Mills were going to pay their fares, put them up in a hotel for a month, and give each family R12 000 towards housing costs.

During 1981, such headlines appeared in the South Africa press as: "Britons flock to South Africa," "Jobless leave for South Africa," and "Jobless in U.K. are a boost for S.A. labour" South African industry was turning the rising rate of unemployment in Britain to its own advantage and as investors moved capital out of Britain to South Africa and other high-profit areas, there were market pressures on British skilled workers to follow it.

In 1981, when there was a threat that the British Leyland works in the Midlands of England would be closed altogether, the South African motor industry placed advertisements in the Midlands newspapers. As early as September 1980, the South African steel industry began seeking recruits from among those workers made redundant by closures in Britain, particularly in the town of Consett, whose steel works, before they closed, had been the centre of its economic life and a year later, in September 1981, Iscor was reported still to be recruiting in Britain, as well as in Sweden, Finland and Israel.

By offering jobs at the 'planning' and 'decision-making' level, with scope for 'initiative' and 'career expansion,' some firms sought to attract capable and ambitious middle-management men who felt frustrated because the closure of industry in Britain had restricted their opportunities for promotion there.

In 1980, South Africa was not the most popular choice for emigrants from the United Kingdom, for only 8,700 chose to go there, as against 45,000 applicants for Australia, 18,000 for Canada, 34,000 for the EEC countries and 10,000 for other African countries. However, 8,700 was twice the number that had gone to



Apartheid even at work

South Africa in 1979, and the number from Zimbabwe brought the total to nearly 23,000. In the same year, only 985 South Africans left the country, which therefore gained some 11,000 people.

In April 1981, only three months after it had described the 'economic boom' in South Africa, the Standard Bank Review reported that the boom was coming to an end. It described a change in the growth rate, a 'cooling off' in the domestic economy, a 'visible softening of consumer demand,' and an 'easing off of conditions in the labour market.' It said, "Companies no longer compete as aggressively for staff, as reflected by the declining number of job adverts placed." There is some indication that this was due to a reduction in investment from overseas, for later in the year both industry and the government were at pains to attract investment by holding conferences and seminars in South Africa and Europe.

From April 1981 onwards, there were certainly fewer South African job advertisements in the British press, salaries offered were lower, and conditions not nearly as attractive as they had been. Nevertheless, throughout the year, the South African press continued to print reports about the shortage of skilled labour in South Africa, and recruitment in Britain. The Financial Mail said in March, "The shortage of skilled labour is now so severe that the immigration authorities themselves have not got the staff to process would-be immigrants to South Africa." In August, immigration offices in London and Glasgow were said to be processing applications as fast as they could, and taking on extra staff to ease the strain. "Britons in search of the good life in SA" ran a headline in the Cape Times in February, and in November a labour recruiting agent told the Sunday Tribune that British people went to South Africa feeling that the 'life style' would be "more suitable for their families, with more space and opportunity."

5,781 people from the United Kingdom emigrated to South Africa in the first four months of 1981, and South African Department of the Interior officials in Britain announced that they expected

nearly 20,000 by the end of the year.

In May, there were some sounds of dissatisfaction. Employers pressed for a change in the law, complaining that young white men were reluctant to come to South Africa because of the Citizenship Amendment Act, which made them liable for military service. An unnamed spokesman for the Defence Force told the Johannesburg Sunday Times that male immigrants under 23 who chose to take South African citizenship became liable for border duty, thus signing "their own death warrants". Some immigrants complained about booklets and fact sheets from the Department of Internal Affairs which had quoted 1979 rents and food prices, and had led them to expect a far lower cost of living than they had found on their arrival. The price of a kilo of rump steak, for example, had risen from R3.37 to R6.70 in two years, and the monthly rent of a house in Bryanston near Johannesburg from R450 to R1,000.

Still the immigrants continued to arrive. Under the heading, "Israelis to the rescue," the Sunday Times reported in April that 17 Israeli welders and boilermakers had been 'imported' to fill the gap in a heavy engineering factory. There was talk of recruiting teachers and nurses. In October, the Department of Statistics announced that 23,208 immigrants had settled in the country in the first half of 1981, 8,000 more than in the same period in 1980, and that British immigrants were arriving at the rate of 1,500 a month. At the end of December 1981, Chris Heunis, Minister of Internal Affairs, told the SABC that the total for the year was more than 40,000. During the year, the municipalities of Pretoria, Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg, Cape Town and Durban recruited new staff from Britain, and of these Cape Town alone recruited 1,000. In October, H.R.W. De Wet of the Department of Internal Affairs said publicly that troubles in Poland had opened up another valuable source of skilled immigrants. The Vienna office of the Department of Internal Affairs was reported to be supplying information to Polish workers in "refugee camps" there, and at the beginning of 1982 it was reported that more than 4,000 had applied, and

that the office staff had been strengthened to cope with the demand.

Opportunities for "whites only"

All the opportunities and facilities are, of course, offered to Whites only, and all the immigrants are, of course, white. During the seventies, 350 South Korean workers were brought in for a limited period to work on the Caltex refinery in Cape Town, and again in 1981 there was a similar scheme to import skilled construction workers from Taiwan and Thailand under limited contracts which would ensure their return home. However, this last project had to be shelved, it was reported in October, as the Taiwanese and Thai governments did not wish their citizens to go to South Africa.

Black Mozambicans were kept out, even those who had fled from liberation in Mozambique. Early in 1978, the South African government had offered an 'amnesty' invitation to Mozambicans who had crossed the border and were living illegally in South Africa, but when a small number of Asiatic Portuguese responded to this invitation by reporting to the authorities, they were refused permission to apply for permanent residence, and one was even arrested. The 'amnesty' had not specified race, but there is an overriding clause in the Aliens Act, stating that applicants for permanent residence must be "likely to be readily assimilated with the European inhabitants of the Republic." The Sunday Express reported that these men numbered fewer than a score, that some were wealthy businessmen, and that one bitterly resented the fact that while some of his former white employees had been granted permanent residence, he himself had not been allowed to apply for it.

About half the immigrants into South Africa are white malcontents from Zimbabwe who, according to an article in the Financial Mail in March 1981, are regarded by the government as having a 'legal and natural right' to live there. In 1980, official statistics from the South African government gave the number of Rhodesians applying for permanent

residence permits as 14,315, of which 183 were refused. In the first seven months of 1981, they were going in at the rate of more than 1,200 a month. Nimrod Mkele, columnist in the Johannesburg Star, commented on what he called the 'influx of Rhodesian whites running away from the freedom in Zimbabwe against which they fought so hard,' and cited cases of black South Africans who had left their jobs because they could not stand the arrogance of white ex-Rhodesians placed in authority over them.

White Rhodesians are entitled to apply for citizenship after five years in South Africa. The case of a black Zimbabwean, Enoch Moya, who was not regarded as having a 'legal and natural right' to live in the country, even though he had lived and worked there for 38 years, provides a shocking contrast. He had been in South Africa since he was 22 years old, he had married there, and had six children there, yet in November 1981, at the age of 60, he was given twelve days to pack and return to Zimbabwe, where he had no family at all.

Bantustans - an aspect of this scheme

As white immigrants are welcomed to the country, with rights of citizenship and employment, black South Africans are scarcely better off than Enoch Moya, for the creation of 'independent' bantustans has affected their right to live in the land of their birth. Under Section 12 of the Black (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945, Transkeians, Bophutatswanans, Vendas and Ciskeians are as vulnerable to arbitrary deportation as Zimbabweans are. Even children of people with Section 10 rights of residence and home ownership in 'white' areas can lose their rights of residence if they are born after their parents' homeland has been declared 'independent'.

Over the years, the government has steadily pursued its policy of deporting black people to the bantustans. "Exactly how many blacks have been relocated ... is unknown," said the Rand Daily Mail in December 1981. "What official statistics there are are a jumble of overlapping dates and confusion as to whether the figures



When Blacks are on strike, Whites do the dirty work

refer to individuals or families. But one researcher estimates a total of 1,200,000 blacks were relocated from 1960 to 1979 ... Another estimate, made in 1978, put another 400,000 on to that figure -- even at that time." Over the last decade, the population of Bophuthatswana has more than trebled, and that of KwaNdebele has grown from 50,779 to 166,477. 55,000 people are said to be living in resettlement camps in the Ciskei, and at a conference on resettlement in Durban in December it was claimed that 200,000 people in Natal alone are living under threat of "deportation". A team sent to South Africa by the British television company, Granada, claimed to have been told by a minister of the South African government that by the year 2,000, 72% of all Blacks would be living in the bantustans.

Both in the bantustans and in the 'white' areas, there is massive unemployment among black South Africans. The number of unemployed has been variously estimated at from 1½ to 2½ million, in a population of 20 to 22 million. Here again, however, any figures must be unreliable, because of the difficulty of enumerating unemployed city dwellers who lie low for fear of being endorsed out, and those in the bantustans who would seek work if there were any to be had. In October 1980, 30% of the work force was found to be unemployed in Mdantsane township, an area of the Ciskei which serves the city of East London as a dormitory for commuter labour. In October 1981, Professor Jill Nattrass of the University of Natal stated that 27% of the work force of KwaZulu is unemployed, and that the number is increasing. Nor,

under the present system, does there seem to be any hope of improvement; the Director of the Department of Manpower Utilisation predicted in August 1980 that by 1987 23 people out of every hundred in South Africa would be unemployed.

Job Fragmentation

In July and August 1981, two items in the Financial Mail discussed a change in government policy to 'cross-border regional economic development' and to the 'widening of incentives to industrial development in the bantustans.' The 'incentives' are, in plain terms, cheap labour, and this was made quite clear by the Chief Executive Councillor of Kwangwane, who told a press conference in July 1981, "The homeland's prime attraction to the investor is its abundant and stable supply of labour." A month previously, a member of a mission to Europe sent by the Corporation for Economic Development told a clothing seminar that large European manufacturers had found it was possible to transport fabrics to factories in South Africa's national states, and to ship back finished products at costs lower than they could achieve at home. The cross-border development scheme is nothing more than an extension of the old system of 'border industries,' and another method of exploiting the land-hungry, enemployed and desperate people of the bantustans by offering a limited number of low-paid, unskilled jobs in labour-intensive manufacturing industry.

However, it is plain that such industry can never play more than a tiny part in the economy of South Africa, where industrial technology is continually growing more sophisticated. In her study of the work force of KwaZulu, Professor Natrass observed that mechanisation in such industries as sugar and timber was leading to increasing unemployment. The labour shortage is for skilled workers; and when the white group, for whom the top skilled jobs are reserved, came close to saturation level, the government began its drive for skilled white workers from overseas.

There has been little or no attempt to train skilled black workers, and certainly

no attempt to train black workers in those skills required in the top echelons of skilled manpower. Government policy is, and always has been designed to prevent black workers from acquiring skills.

The educational infrastructure alone, with a per capita expenditure one tenth of



that for white children, provides for little besides basic literacy; and combined with the poverty of the parents, who are often forced by necessity to remove their children from school and send them out to work, the system prevents any but a very small proportion of black children from reaching matriculation, let alone progressing beyond it. The 'job fragmentation' scheme in certain industries such as the motor industry, in which skilled work is broken up into a number of limited processes involving limited skills, enables employers to give some skilled work to black workers, without allowing the workers themselves to become skilled.

Computer operators

Indeed, there is at least one case where Africans have been denied employment

even after acquiring a shortage skill at their own expense. In May 1981, Voice, the Anglican newspaper in South Africa, conducted an enquiry into the position of more than 2,000 black computer operators in Johannesburg. They had enrolled for the computer course at one of the best colleges in Johannesburg, they had paid 'up to R900' for the course, they had passed 'with the highest averages,' and — in an industry that was short of over 2,000 operators — they were still unemployed.

There have been warning voices. "How are we to maintain and expand a modern industrial system," asked the Financial Mail in July 1981, "when our resources of ... people are in short supply, and there is massive unemployment among the unskilled?" Some of these voices came from very close to the government. Professor S.M. Swart of the School of Business at Stellenbosch University, told a labour relations seminar in the same month that there was not other choice but to turn to people who were 'not white' to wipe out the country's serious manpower shortage. Commenting on the question of whether or not Thai and Taiwanese workers should be imported, Professor Wiehahn said, "The question of getting people to come to South Africa has become a high-temperature political issue because of the large reservoir of labour in this country."

"Malnutrition" and infantile mortality

In a country where food prices are rising sharply, and in communities of people who are either unemployed or employed at starvation wages, there is no 'good life' for the children of black South African workers, none of the 'opportunity' promised to the children of white immigrants. Indeed, the appalling fact is that, far from having a 'good life' to look forward to, many of these children have very little life expectancy at all. Early in 1981, Race Relations News gave an estimate of 50,000 children due to die of malnutrition in the rural areas during the year, and estimated that another 100,000 were at risk. Infant mortality in the Eastern Transvaal was reported as being 198 for every 1,000 live births. In

the Cislei, where in some areas the concentrations of population are the highest in South Africa, half the two-year-olds were said to be malnourished, and 50% were said to die before they reached the age of five. A pediatrician reported that in Mdantsane there was a mortality rate of 107 out of 1,000 in the first year of life. There is no rump steak for these children,

The South African government's policy of birth control for blacks gives an insight into its real intentions. It provides 'family planning' clinics, and encourages African women to attend them. Yet, though South Africa has the highest rate of cervical cancer in the world, these clinics do not provide the cheap, easy test which could detect this cancer at an early stage, and allow it to be cured. Critical Health, a journal brought out by medical students at the University of the Witwatersrand, made this comment in May 1981, "however essential contraception may be for individual women, its provision as part of an overall strategy of control must be recognised ... Some blacks have for a time seen the government's clinic for family planning as a polite form of genocide."

The facts about infant mortality, malnutrition, overcrowding in the bantustans and unemployment are well known to the government of South Africa, which nevertheless continues to appeal for skilled white labour from overseas. This appeal is its response to a situation in which white minority rule and white privilege are threatened by the presence of a large, exploited, oppressed, dissatisfied and militant majority.

When the government's policy for white immigration is seen together with its re-settlement policy and the provision it makes for birth control (but not for health) among the black population, the true, sinister nature of its intention becomes clear. It is to change the balance of the population so that there is a larger proportion of whites and a smaller proportion of blacks. It is to control the growth of the black population, to exploit as many blacks as possible, and allow the others to die. The government's intention is, in fact, genocide.

Our reply: struggle, attack and counterattack

A historic Afro-Arab Solidarity Conference organised by the International Secretariat of Solidarity with Arab People with Central Cause Palestine was held in Luanda the capital of the PRA from 6th to 9th of December, 1981. There were over 200 delegates from African and Arab countries Governments, political parties and other mass organisations and also the national liberation movements: PLO, ANC and POLISARIO.

It was a very successful conference which expressed its full solidarity with the PRA in the face of the continuous acts of aggression by the terrorist regime of South Africa. Below we reproduce the speech of the ANC President, O.R. Tambo.

Comrade Chairman,

We bring to this Conference the greetings of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress and its members, its allies and the mass of the people of South Africa. We especially greet the Conference on behalf of the militants of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

We salute Comrade President Jose Eduardo dos Santos, President of the MPLA-Workers' Party, President of the People's Republic of Angola. We also salute MPLA-Workers' Party, the women, workers, peasants and the youth of Angola, especially the dynamic Angolan Pioneers.

Our presence in Luanda coincides with a sad moment in the life of the Angolan people. We wish to express the condolences of the ANC on the passing away of Mother Maria da Silva Neto, Mother of the illustrious son of Angola — the late Comrade

President Antonio Agostinho Neto, Mother of the Angolan Nation, our Mother.

Comrade Chairman, I wish to take this opportunity to greet in his absence, our brother and colleague, the great leader of the Palestinian people — President Yasser Arafat of the PLO.

Comrade Chairman, your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

During the preparation of this Conference, the International Preparatory Committee observed that the Luanda Afro-Arab Conference "will constitute a historic landmark". The African National Congress is in full accord with this assessment and will accordingly, through its delegation to the Conference and in unity with the distinguished representatives gathered here, seek to contribute as best as it can to the accomplishment of our common objectives.

We feel that we owe it to the heroic masses of the People's Republic of Angola, to the MPLA-Workers' Party and to the Government of this embattled Republic to thank them for allowing us to hold our Conference in Luanda, above all, to thank them by ensuring that we do in fact achieve the mission which we gave ourselves when we set about organising this Conference.

That sense of obligation is especially emphasised by the knowledge that even as we are speaking here, the Angolan armed forces and the people of this country are shedding their blood and laying down their lives to defend the right of Angola to be and remain a people's republic, sovereign, independent and committed to the construction of a social system which

serves the interests of the people and not those of the transnational corporations, the warmongers, the colonialists and the racists, the vampires of imperialist banditry.

In a direct sense, therefore, the sentinels who stand guard around the Conference, defending the right of progressive humanity to meet in Luanda, are the entire people of this country. The message that must go to them out of this Conference at the close of our gathering must surely be that the forces standing guard over this homeland of democratic mankind have increased a million-fold thanks to the Angolan people having given the possibility to the Arab and African peoples to meet here to plan for the defence and advancement of everything for which the Angolan people are today laying down their lives.

Our Conference could not have come at a more opportune moment. The need has never been greater than it is today for the progressive forces of the Afro-Arab world to launch a united counter-offensive to beat back the offensive that world imperialism, and especially the USA, has launched to turn our countries and peoples into vassals.

The imperialists see in our countries a rich prize which, in bounding arrogance, they are convinced belongs to them. They have argued themselves into the belief that this prize is like a ripe plum ready for them to pluck into their watering mouths. The forces of reaction, therefore, think now is the time to act — and they are acting with rare determination and pitiless savagery.

Our countries are pregnant with huge reserves of important natural resources. They have a vast potential for agricultural production. They are washed by oceans teeming with nutritious marine life and harbouring yet more natural resources. They have large human resources comprising our peoples who have a great respect for the necessity and dignity of labour. It is these human and material resources that world imperialism seeks to seize and exploit for its benefit.

The Afro-Arab world also looms large in the global military posture of the world imperialist system. The generals in the

Pentagon and in the aggressive NATO alliance believe that they can and must use our countries to gain and maintain a military stranglehold over the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean and the South Atlantic. They seek to use this military superiority both to ensure imperialist control of our countries and to encircle the world socialist system, especially the Soviet Union.

In the face of the determined opposition of the forces of reaction and contrary to the plans, schemes and strategies of these forces, the Afro-Arab world has, in our times, made an invaluable contribution to the universal struggle for the liberation of man, for the renewal of the world order in favour of independence, democracy, social progress and peace. By their efforts and their sacrifices our peoples have played and are playing a key role in banishing the age of darkness which imperialist domination had imposed on so many millions of people.

Quite clearly, the urge towards progressive change affects not only the Afro-Arab world but also other continents, including Europe itself, Asia and Latin America, where the thrust of the imperialist offensive is currently directed against such countries and peoples as Cuba, Grenada, Nicaragua and the democratic forces in El Salvador. It is in this context that international imperialism decided to go all-out in a bid to regain its positions — a policy which today has turned the combined land mass of Africa and the Middle East into a strategically central battlefield in the world-wide struggle between the two irreconcilable forces — the one, of progress and the other, of reaction.

Imperialism is pursuing a multi-faceted but integrated strategy for the realisation of its goals in the Arab and African countries. At the heart of this strategy are three key objectives. The first of these aims at the strengthening of the forces of reaction in the zone comprising Africa and the Middle East, these being Zionist Israel and apartheid South Africa.

The second is the deployment in the zone of the largest possible military force and

war materials of the United States. The anti-popular Reagan Administration further seeks to drag its political and military allies inside and outside NATO into participation in its criminal adventures in our zone.

Thirdly, the enemy's strategy aims at the destabilisation and destruction of all progressive governments in our zone and their replacement with puppet regimes. The overall objective is to turn all Arab and African countries into client states, apparently sovereign but in fact helpless dependencies of the imperialist world. An important element in this third enemy objective is of course the defeat of the liberation movements fighting for the emancipation of Palestine, Western Sahara, Namibia and South Africa, namely, the PLO, the Polisario Front, SWAPO and the ANC.

The Reagan Administration is playing out a gigantic and dangerous confidence trick involving both Southern Africa and the Middle East. In Southern Africa the US Government pretends that it is keenly interested to secure as quickly as possible the genuine independence of Namibia.

To achieve this objective it argues that it must gain the confidence of the Pretoria regime. In preparation for the implementation of a programme of active all round support for this regime by the United States, Reagan startled the world by proclaiming that apartheid South Africa was an ally of the United States of long-standing and that there existed between the two countries a coincidence of strategic interests and concerns. Accordingly, and to give just one example, the United States has decided to resume cooperation with Pretoria in the enrichment of uranium to expedite apartheid South Africa's nuclear programme.

The United States is using its supposed search for a just solution of the Namibia problem as a screen to cover its real objective of strengthening its strategic alliance with the colonisers of Namibia. With the practiced skill of a crooked business speculator, the Reagan Administration offers the world the promise of an independent Namibia in the indeterminate future and demands that the international

community must in exchange tolerate and approve its immediate normalisation of relations with, and all-round reinforcement of, the apartheid regime.

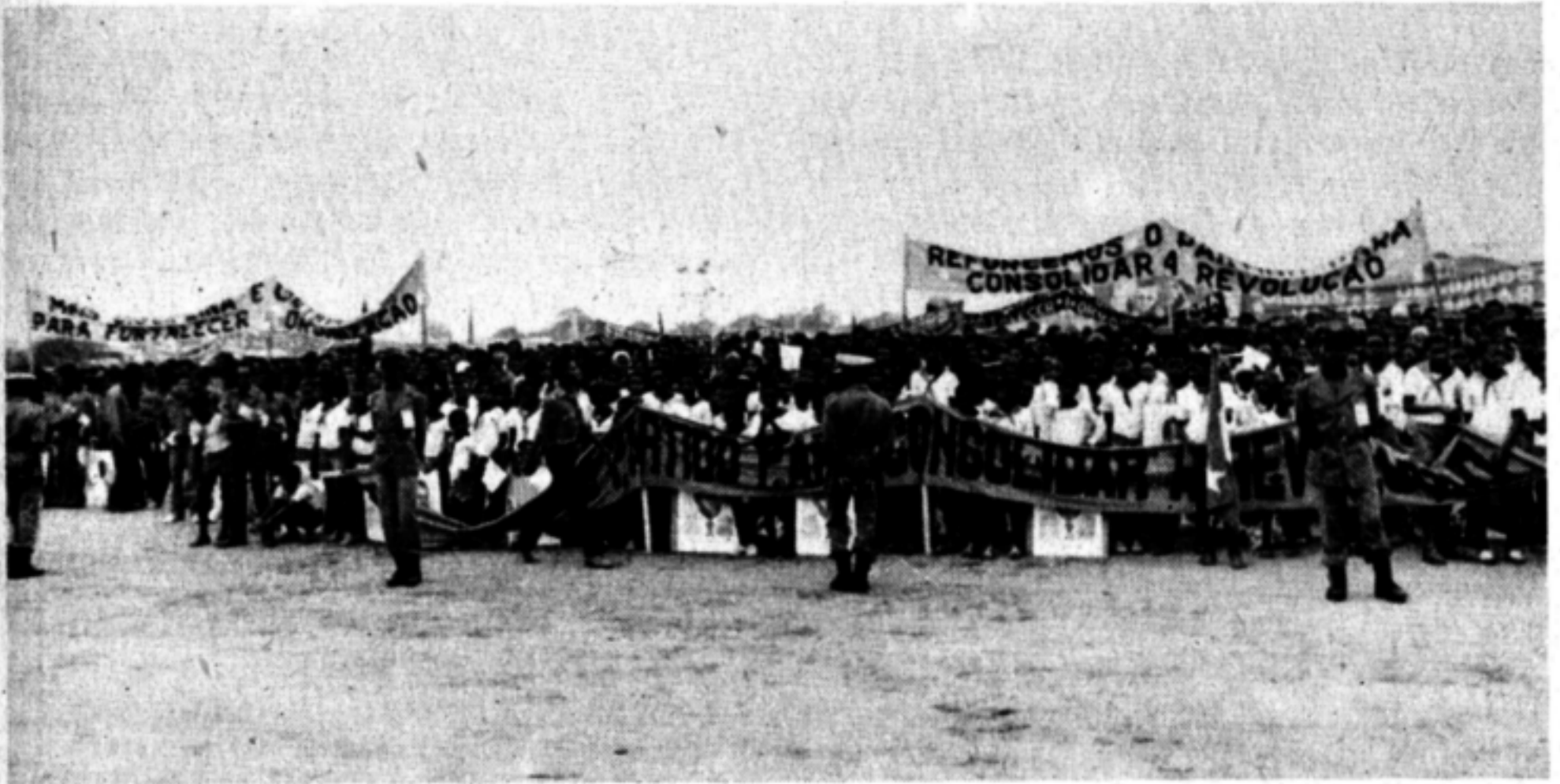
In the Middle East the Reagan regime pretends to be interested in the evacuation by Zionist Israel of occupied Arab lands and the settlement of the Palestinian question — the heart of the problems of this zone. But in fact, as was demonstrated only a few days ago with the signing of new agreements in the United States further tightening the military alliance between Tel Aviv and Washington, the Reagan Administration poses as a peace maker in order to gain better possibilities to raise the aggressive capacity of the war-monger in the Middle East, the Zionist state of Israel.

To the south of our zone, the Reagan Administration seeks to ensure that its ally, the apartheid regime, is strong and capable of fulfilling the shared objectives of the aggressive Washington-Pretoria Axis. To the north of our zone, exactly the same holds true with regard to Israel. Further to consolidate these aggressive strong points, Pretoria and Tel Aviv maintain close relations and cooperate on a wide spectrum of issues.

As is well-known, certainly to the distinguished delegates gathered at this Conference, this cooperation includes the production of nuclear weapons, military subversion, intelligence gathering, investment, trade and so on.

In between these terminal points, namely Israel and South Africa, the Reagan Administration is going all-out to strengthen its relations with all reactionary forces that it can find among the Arab and African peoples and, without openly forming military pacts as the United States did immediately after World War II and in the fifties, in fact seeks to ensure that the Afro-Arab zone is bisected by a string of military allies of the United States, stretching from Israel in the north, through the Arab world and the African continent, to South Africa in the South.

To strengthen this military agglomeration, the United States continuously circles the Afro-Arab zone



December 10 National Day Rally in Luanda

with large numbers of well-armed naval forces which are also capable of large air operations. It also has land-based forces in such areas as the island of Diego Garcia in the South and Oman in the north, while it enjoys access to military facilities elsewhere in our zone.

The United States also has the so-called rapid deployment force which only recently — to the eternal shame of those who allow this force of aggression to step on African soil — carried out military manoeuvres in Arab and African lands to perfect its operational capacity. Washington, as we all know, is currently marshalling together an international military force which, under US command, will be placed in the Sinai. This force can only serve as a dagger aimed at the heart of the Arab nation.

World imperialism knows that the most consistent and unyielding opponents of its schemes to impose its hegemony over the Arab and African peoples are the progressive states and the liberation movements of our zone. In the enemy's calculation, it cannot succeed in its aims until it has liquidated the African and Arab progressive governments and liberation movements.

Hence we see today the desperate efforts to wipe out of existence the People's Republic of Angola and similar actions

against other independent states of Southern Africa including Mozambique, Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Zambia. The imperialist enemy of the African and Arab peoples is accordingly training and deploying puppet groups such as the UNITA bandits in this country and the so-called Mozambican Resistance Movement in Mozambique to assist in carrying out the enemy's schemes. The recent criminal invasion of the Seychelles by murder squads of the Pretoria regime also had the aim to overthrow the progressive government of President Albert Rene, to instal puppets and to transform the Seychelles into a base of aggression against independent Africa.

The repudiation in practice by the Reagan Administration of UN Security Council Resolution 435 dealing with the Namibia question, as well as related efforts by the Pretoria regime, acting with the support of Washington and other imperialist countries, physically to annihilate SWAPO and the ANC, represent also part of the enemy's effort to remove the progressive forces which bar his path to the success he wishes to achieve.

To the north, the enemy is also seeking to liquidate the Palestinian people and their sole and authentic representative, the

Palestinian Liberation Organisation. The United States continues, without letting up, to encourage and aid the illegal occupation of Western Sahara by an African coloniser, and gives to this coloniser the means to pursue the illusory objective of destroying the POLISARIO Front and to ensure that, for the future, this strategic corner of Africa fits into the plans of world imperialism as a base of aggression. The recent and continuing provocations against the Arab Libyan Jamahiriya mark only a phase in an offensive which, it is clear, will intensify as the forces of reaction, led by the Reagan Administration, seek to impose their own hirelings on the Libyan people.

Our only reply to the enemy's offensive must and can only be to struggle, attack and counter-attack. The people of South Africa, recognising the urgent need to liberate themselves and to destroy the forward post of imperialist aggression on the African continent, namely apartheid South Africa, are engaged exactly in that process — struggle, attack and counter-attack.

The much-vaunted aim of the racist Pretoria regime to maintain so-called peace and stability within South Africa, a euphemism describing the desire of the apartheid regime to wipe out the South African liberation movement and turn our people into a docile and pliant herd — that aim, it has been admitted by the enemy himself, is impossible to accomplish.

It is impossible to achieve because practically, every day and everywhere, throughout, our people are in revolt. Through mass action and military combat we are bringing closer to its realisation the noble objective of the transfer of power to the people of South Africa. No amount of resistance on the part of the enemy, whatever the intensity of the violence of that resistance, can save the racist tyrants from defeat.

In a month's time, on the 8th of January, 1982, the people of South Africa and our friends and allies throughout the world will be observing the 70th Anniversary of the foundation of the African National Congress.

For our people, the 70th Anniversary

of the ANC will provide an occasion when they will seek to act in unity, to assert in a trial of strength the reality of the power of the people, making it increasingly difficult for the apartheid regime to continue exercising its illegitimate control over our country.

During what will prove to be a decisive phase in the struggle to liberate South Africa, depending on what we are able to do, we shall base ourselves on the collective strength and experience accumulated over seven decades and rely for our rear base on the liberated areas of Africa, Arabia and the rest of the world — themselves freed during these decades.

It is a happy coincidence that this historic moment in our march to liberation is preceded so immediately by this equally historic Afro-Arab Conference. We are



convinced that we shall come out of this Conference with a properly and seriously conceived programme of united action, this time not restricted to the narrow confines of our country and the apartheid



One of the commissions in session

issue, but embracing the great questions of our age that are a challenge to our peoples from the Cape of Good Hope to the Euphrates.

The African and Arab peoples are confronted with the same problems and the same enemy. The guns used to enslave the peoples of Palestine, Sahara, Namibia and South Africa are from the same source. The crazed assassins who go on murderous rampages in the south of the Lebanon and the south of Angola are the product of the same teacher and the same school. The corporations that plunder our resources feed the same hand.

Our destinies lie together. However difficult it may be, the Conference has the responsibility to ensure that in future when the people of Palestine are under attack, those of South Africa do not stand idly by; when the Angolan people are being massacred, those of Syria do not feel that the issue is too far and of no relevance to them; we must ensure that whenever the enemy attacks he will meet our united wrath. And what formidable united strength resides in the hands of the hundreds of millions of African and Arab

peoples represented at this historic conference!

By the very act of our coming together in this heroic city of principled revolutionary struggle, we have dealt a mighty blow against the cunning imperialist policy which has sought to divide the Arab from the African, seeking to convince us that the interests of the one are inimical to those of the other; that this was the case yesterday, that it is so today and will be tomorrow. We have today joined hands as fellow-fighters in the same forward trench in the struggle against imperialism. We must guard and nurture that unity because for our suffering peoples it contains the living hope for a future of peace, prosperity and friendship among the peoples.

We salute the distinguished delegates to the Luanda Afro-Arab Conference. We greet especially our brothers and sisters and comrades-in-arms of the PLO, FRETILIN, the POLISARIO Front and SWAPO. In the interests of one common future, we wish the conference success in its work.

A LUTA CONTINUA!

BOOK REVIEW

POLISARIO'S JUST STRUGGLE

Saxena, S.C., The Liberation War in Western Sahara, Vidya Publishers, New Delhi, 1981.

The book under review deals with Western Sahara — geography, history, diplomacy, politics and armed struggle.

Western Sahara lies along the Atlantic coast of north-western Africa directly opposite the Canary Islands. It has an area of about 266,000 square kilometres and a sea-board measuring about 1,062 kilometres. In the north and north-east it is bounded by Morocco and Algeria and in the south and east by Mauritania. The country is rich in minerals, especially phosphates and deposits of iron ore, uranium and other minerals are known to exist besides petrol. Fishing is another important economic activity. This territory is sparsely populated — about 750,000 people — but these people have already written a fine chapter in the book of history.

The direct ancestors of the present day Saharawis came from Yemen in the 16th century. They came to spread Islam but eventually settled down. In 1884 Western Sahara was colonised by Spain. France on the other hand was advancing from a different direction. The Saharawi fought back till 1936 when Spain finally took possession of the Western Sahara and the Canary Islands.

In this review we shall not touch on the debate on Western Sahara at the UN General Assembly or the Madrid Accord and its illegality. We shall pay more attention to the question of armed struggle as led by Polisario.

Polisario — its full name is Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguiet El

Hamra and Rio d'Oro — was formed in 1973. The origin of this organisation can be traced to the initiative of Saharawi students studying at Rabat and Cairo universities in the late 1960's and early 1970's. Its main aim is the liberation of both parts of Western Sahara, namely the northern part known as Saguiet El Hamra and the southern part known as Rio d'Oro.

Between 1973 and 1975 Polisario gained several successes against Spain: "Beginning with a few hundred the Polisario Front has grown into a reported size of over 15,000 guerrillas" (p.64). In 1975 Spain signed the "Madrid Accord" with Morocco and Mauritania — the two became de facto colonial powers. Polisario assessed Mauritania as the weaker of the two and therefore concentrated its attacks on it more than on Morocco. Polisario struck at the fragile economy of Mauritania attacking the Zourate iron ore mine and the Zourate-Nouadhibou rail link. These efforts were successful. On August 5, 1975 Mauritania signed an agreement with Polisario Front relinquishing its territorial claim in Western Sahara in favour of the Front. Polisario then concentrated on the stronger enemy, Morocco.

Morocco was so angered by Mauritania's surrender that she moved her 6,000 troops, then stationed in Mauritania, into the southern part of Western Sahara, Rio De Oro; proclaimed this area an integral part of the Moroccan kingdom, and raised her flag over Dakhla, the capital of the southern part. Algeria, Mauritania, Mali and Senegal were now threatened by the spectre of a "Greater Morocco".

Polisario continued to attack. Foreign

aid to Morocco in the form of money and arms could not help — the economy is practically in ruins; a million dollars per day are being spent by Morocco on this war; the exports and price of phosphate — the mainstay of her economy — have also declined considerably in recent years. As a result of the poor shape of the Moroccan economy foreign investors are reluctant to invest there: double figure inflation which has adversely affected practically every Moroccan is rampant in the Kingdom, the oil bill has risen and the country is becoming internationally isolated. There is growing war-weariness both among the army officers and soldiers and among the people at large. They are realising that the war is unwinnable for Morocco. But the problem is that there are hawks in the Moroccan army and in the Ishtiqlal Party who want the war to be escalated and carried even into the Algerian territory by bombing Polisario Front camps located there. King Hassan is actually a prisoner of these hawks. He fears being overthrown. He finds himself in a dilemma for his people are often on strike — they are unwilling to die for the so-called “national cause” in Western Sahara.

Who arms the Forces Armee Royales (FAR) of King Hassan?

The deadly and offensive weapons of the FAR are supplied by US, UK, West Germany, France and racist South Africa — the Polisario Front has published a booklet in which it shows a large number of photographs of South African manufactured armoured cars, tanks and other weapons captured by it from the Moroccan army. Saudi Arabia is also involved.

Morocco is important for the West: there are western military bases in Ceuta and Melilla which are actually Spanish enclaves within Moroccan territory; Morocco is the only Arab country which supported the Camp David Agreement and fresh in our minds is the fact that Morocco airlifted troops to Zaire to defend and save Mobuto's pro-imperialist regime during the rebellion in the Shaba province.

On the other hand Morocco needs western aid and support especially in the form of sophisticated weapons, planes and tanks and other military hardware. She

cleverly plays on the sensitivities of western countries who are “allergic to communism” (p.112) Polisario Front is portrayed as a “communist organisation” which aims at the “establishment of a communist regime along the north-west African sea board, very close to the strategic Strait of Gibraltar” (p.112). King Hassan has no difficulty in convincing the Americans that “communist presence” in north-west Africa would mean their (the communists') control over sea channels and the entire seaboard through which American tankers and warships pass.

This is nothing new to us — the South African racists use the same argument daily and this spectre of communism is meant to “alert” the ready ear of the West.



El-Quali Mustapha Sayed, first Secretary-General of Polisario Front, killed in combat

Polisario Strikes

Polisario has liberated 90% of the territory. On February 27, 1976, a new Republic the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) was born. This was as a result of a protracted and bitter struggle. Knowing Morocco's greed for phosphate deposits

and other minerals, Polisario Front guerrillas have made these mines their special target of attack and destruction. All the mining machinery at the famous Bou Craa phosphate mines have been destroyed — since 1976 no mining has taken place there. The big conveyor installed to transport mineral ores from the mines to the treatment plant and port near El Ayoun, and also power lines have been completely destroyed. Morocco is not able to misappropriate the wealth of Western Sahara.

The Bou Craa mines are owned jointly by a Moroccan government mining company and a Spanish company. The company has now closed down and the workers dismissed.

Polisario has carried armed struggle into Morocco's territory — not to occupy the territory of Morocco — but to "give the Moroccans a taste of their own medicine" (p.71). There have been fierce battles here inside Morocco — and attacks on Moroccan positions were frequent and a base at Lebouirate, near Zaag, was overrun by the Polisario Front in August 1979.

Polisario has carried armed struggle from the desert into the sea. It controls most of its territorial waters. It captured a number of trawlers of Portuguese, Spanish and South African origin that have strayed into its territorial waters. The fishermen and seamen arrested are brought to captivity in the desert. Polisario has been able to master the technique of desert warfare thanks to the morale, self-confidence and rock-like determination of the people of Saharawi. As an illustration of this let us take the example of a young woman whose husband is in the front. Asked whether she was worried or not about the safety of her husband, she replied:

"If my husband dies, I will go and take his place in the war, thus giving no respite to Morocco ... It is better to die like this than to remain slaves forever"

It is not only this woman — many teenaged girls are playing a prominent role and their brave exploits are a source of great inspiration for those who will follow them.

All this and much more is to be found in this book written by S.C. Saxena, a well-known Africanist in India. Saxena's

knowledge of the subject he tackles has been enhanced by the visit he made to Polisario camps near Tindouf (Algeria) and the liberated zones of Western Sahara in February 1980 to make an on-the-spot study of the situation before writing the book.. The book is dedicated: "To all Martyrs in the cause of Freedom All over the World".

This internationalism demonstrates the author's (shall I say India's) commitment to the cause of Africa and all oppressed people. Indeed Saxena has done more than just arguing the case for Polisario; he has exposed the ugly face of Moroccan colonialism; the imperialist interests and intrigues and, what is more, the strength and indomitable will to freedom of the Saharan people — and through them — of our strength as colonised and exploited people.

The book is written in a simple, flowing style, full of optimism and is factual although — in the opinion of this reviewer — it is not without mistakes and inadequate assessment of complicated issues in the international class conflict and global confrontation between the forces of progress and reaction. What we are saying is that Saxena has attempted to view the liberation war in western Sahara in its international context but he does not go far enough.

But this does not minimise the contribution of Saxena to our understanding of the Saharan problem. With this and other books Saxena has asserted the known but little recognised fact that scientific research in the Afro-Asian world is becoming an important autonomous factor in its own right and asserting itself in the international arena.

F.M.

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