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DAVID WEBSTER ANTI-APARTHEID ACTIVIST MURDERED MAY 1ST 1989

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EDITORIAL

14 LIVES AT STAKE

Death sentences have become a norm in South Africa. The unnatural political system, the incompetence of the system itself, and its racial and political bias, find expression in, among other things, the role of the courts, their investigations, and the way the police 'do their job,' or do not do it. The trial of the Upington 14 is a case in point.

Upington is a bone-dry town in the Northern Cape, set in a vast expanse of scrub, perched on the Orange River. Here apartheid thrives. Here 14 people were sentenced to death — the biggest group sentenced to hang for a politically-linked 'crime' in the modern history of South Africa. In Upington, there is not a single White liberal, not one White human rights activist or White social worker to be found taking up Black issues. During the trial, there was not a single local White to be seen in the courtroom, besides the police force. Apartheid in Upington is complete; the White policemen are the only Whites to be seen in the Black townships.

The vote is a crucial factor where judicial execution is nothing other than legalised genocide; the overwhelming majority of South African Whites — who form the electorate — favour the death penalty. This crisis will never be solved by abolishing the death penalty. The system of apartheid itself must be abolished.

This is urgent. The overwhelming majority of those hanged are Black, in a country where there is not a single Black judge; where the judges see Blacks as inferiors, and do not even care to know the languages of the people they sentence to death. The result is a startling reality. According to official figures, more than 1 000 people were hanged in the last decade, 537 between 1985 and mid-1988. Of the 117 hanged last year, 3 were White. The racial disparity goes further; of 81 Blacks convicted of murdering Whites, 38 were hanged; of 52 Whites convicted of murdering Whites, one was hanged. None of the 21 Whites convicted of murdering Blacks was executed.

There are many such 'discrepancies.' A White policeman who shot dead a ten-year-old Col-

oured boy in March has not been brought to trial, let alone to the gallows. What about the two White farmers who brutally assaulted and killed a Black man in April and were sentenced to a fine of R1 200 or four months' imprisonment plus six months suspended? And a judge who found three Black policemen guilty of beating a man to death for killing one municipal policeman, but gave the chief perpetrator 12 years in prison?

In Paballelo township, Upington, at the peak of the 1985 national uprising, an angry crowd caught Constable Lucas Tshenolo Sethwala, a municipal policeman and paid gunman of the state. He had killed a pregnant woman and shot and badly wounded a ten-year-old boy. His gun was broken over his head, killing him instantly. At the time, it was reported that 300 had participated in the killing.

The death sentences imposed on 14 people electrified the small, normally quiet, community of 15 000. What most shocked Upington and the world was the injustice. The 14 were among 25 people convicted of killing the policeman, and, of the other 11, six were sentenced to 1 200 hours of community service, the rest to six to eight years in prison. The court had found that only one of the 14 had delivered the final blows. The court did not establish that all 14 had been on the spot at the time — it was alleged that they had thrown stones at Sethwala's house.

During the three and a half years of the trial, police with guns, Alsatians and video cameras were at the court, harassing everybody, and police squads went to Paballelo, clubbing people and kicking them in the abdomen. Rev. Aubrey Beukes, the Coloured priest who ministered to

the families, said:

"Then they wonder why we turn to violence."

At this trial where the relatives were not given enough notice to attend, more than 200 people gathered, singing the people's songs, *Nkosi Sikelel'i Afrika* and *Senzeni-na?* and doing the *toyi-toyi*, the soldiers' dance, before police dogs dispersed them. The head of the defence team, Anton Lubowski, member of the SWAPO Central Committee and an advocate of the Supreme Court of South Africa, was swimming against a tide of prejudice and fabricated lies.

Evelina de Bruin, the only woman among the 14, is a mother of ten children. She is in her late fifties. A lifetime of domestic service has left her with arthritis in both legs, and a severe limp. She is sentenced to die because she was one of '300 people' who killed a policeman. This is called 'common purpose.' From Upington, she has been taken to Pretoria, 500 miles away. She said:

"I feel very sad for my children and my home. I have been taken away from them for something I didn't do."

Her husband, Gideon Madlongolwane, a man in his sixties who has worked for 36 years as a

labourer, is being sent with his wife to the gallows. Their eldest son, James, is effectively the family head in the modest house Evelina and her husband built themselves.

All the accused refused to testify in mitigation. One of them, Albert Tywili, said defiantly:

"If I had come before a clever judge he wouldn't have found me guilty ... Congratulations on your brilliant judgment."

Mr Bekebeke, who is supposed to have delivered the blows that killed the policeman, said:

"In a country like South Africa, I wonder how justice can really be applied. I certainly haven't found it. My Lord ... I hope you will live long enough to see the day of a free South Africa. May the Lord bless you, my Lord."

It was left to the Rev. Beukes to tell the international community:

"There's one thing I'd like to ask the world. Please don't wait too long to react. Step in now. Don't let them languish on death row."

"WE NEED SANCTIONS MORE THAN EVER"

On May 24th, Associated Press issued the following statement as a corrective to a statement sent out the day before:

Subscribers who used the story slugged Nigeria-ANC, sent May 23rd under a Lagos dateline, are asked to use the following story:

The AP misinterpreted a comment by Tambo in a statement before his departure from the Nigerian capital, in which he expressed concern about "the campaign which seeks to lift pressure on South Africa; to lift sanctions and certainly not to impose any further sanctions." In referring to those who oppose sanctions, Tambo was not refer-

ring to the ANC's own position.

Speaking to reporters Wednesday in Nairobi, Kenya, Tambo said:

"If anything, we need sanctions more than ever."

The ANC and other opponents of apartheid have called for sanctions covering trade, diplomatic, sport and cultural ties as a way to force the South African government to end apartheid.

INTERVIEWS

Mendi Msimang

SOMAFCO A DECADE OF ACHIEVEMENT

This year we have the tenth anniversary of the execution of Comrade Solomon Mahlangu, and the tenth anniversary of the founding of SOMAFCO — the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College. To mark the anniversary, *Sechaba* spoke to Comrade Mendi Msimang and Comrade Hintsia Tshume, both of whom have been closely associated with SOMAFCO from the beginning.

How does SOMAFCO fit in with the educational policy of the African National Congress?

Comrade Mendi: The 1976 student revolt resulted in a number of our young people leaving South Africa, seeking new avenues for their education. At first, the African National Congress made arrangements for them with adjacent institutions in Africa and with our allies in the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic and so on. But in time it became very clear that our standard of education left much to be desired. Something had to be done. It seemed that the best way would first be to ground these children in the policies of the African National Congress, in an effort to orient them, and it became clear that the other aspect of it was to look at their educational background. The National Executive then took the decision of establishing an institution where these students would be given the necessary background.

Visits were mounted to Tanzania and Mozambique to look for land. The two countries agreed, and Tanzania then offered us land in Morogoro.

The next thing that occupied the minds of the leadership was what type of school this was going to be. Therefore, a group of people were specifically detailed to begin to produce a form of education policy, which was subsequently looked into by the National Executive, and as a result of that education policy document the National Executive decided to establish a department of education. That was the beginning of the education at Mazimbu.

The education policy that was devised was that the type of education that the ANC had to provide should be a full and rounded one, with emphasis on the natural sciences, to compensate for the weakness of Bantu Education. In order for us to produce



cadres of the ANC, the students had to be steeped in the policies and programmes of the ANC. For these students, education was going to be a task, more than an academic exercise.

The ANC needed to produce a cadre that would man the administrative structures of the movement, and also be able to be productive in the sphere of agriculture and so on, within our communities; because Mazimbu was ultimately going to be our settlement, a settlement of the ANC, as well as the high school of the ANC.

The idea is that we should be self-sufficient in all our undertakings. SOMAFCO is to produce a cadre that would be adaptable. In order to produce this type of cadre, vocational training has been made part and parcel of the curriculum. It is compulsory for every student at SOMAFCO to be exposed to one of the skills; in fact, the programme starts in the sixth year of primary school and continues till Form Four.

It is not only in agriculture that we are productive. We now have a firm producing furniture, which is sold on the open market in Tanzania, with the concurrence of the Tanzanian

Government, all in an effort to generate funds to sustain the community at Mazimbu. We have a tailoring department, or tailoring unit; they produce clothes. We have a shoe and leather unit, we have a photographic section, and so on. A number of small-scale industries are carried on at SOMAFSCO, all in an effort to produce this rounded cadre of the movement, and to achieve a measure of self-sufficiency.

The political and cultural content of life at SOMAFSCO is organised in various ways. The history of the ANC is on the curriculum. There is also a programme whereby our students are taught to listen to the news, gather it, analyse it, discuss it together at an assembly in the evening. There is political life organised by the political committee there.

Culturally, we encourage the students to participate in all cultural activities, in various cultural expressions of our people throughout the country (because all the people in our country have representatives at Mazimbu) thereby trying to take from our country what we think would be best suited for a free and democratic South Africa.

SOMAFSCO has its place in the council meetings of the ANC Education Department. But quite apart from that, SOMAFSCO is given a task — to look into the curriculum on a continuous basis. In this way, it is able to guide the policy-makers as to the necessary elements that must go into each subject that is taught.

Hintsa Tshume



Comrade Hintsa: The education policy of the African National Congress is embedded in the Freedom Charter, where we say all the doors of learning and culture shall be opened and technical education shall be sponsored by the government. That was in 1955. Then, in 1978, we evolved the policy which is supplementary to that in the Freedom Charter, that we should prepare our people to be versatile, in the sense that, when they go to our institutions, they must have the ability to apply their knowledge and understanding of skills and general education in everyday life.

Establishing SOMAFSCO was an attempt to satisfy the thirst for education, this social demand of South Africans in exile, under the umbrella of the ANC. Prior to 1977, we had a trickle of students who came from home, who had undergone their secondary education. We could put those into schools in Tanzania, in Nigeria and so on, and in the socialist countries. It was easy to find places for them all over the world.

Then came the Soweto uprising in 1976. Then we had a flood of young people who were not yet fully equipped in

secondary education. The ANC realised it was high time we had a secondary school to prepare our people for further education: at university, in technical colleges, as well as attainment of vocational skills.

SOMAFSCO was founded in 1979 with the specific purpose of bridging the gap between the academic and the manual skills. It was perceived as a college which will produce a human being who will never disregard or look down upon manual labour; a person who says, "I am capable of performing academic work and also capable of exercising practical skills."

What has been built up over these ten years at SOMAFSCO and at Dakawa? There have been successes and achievements. Can you tell us about a few of them?

Comrade Mendi: We have begun to produce a level of conscious cadre, who today is manning some of our missions, missions of the ANC, throughout the world. That's an achievement. We have produced teachers for SOMAFSCO. We have a significant contingent of highly qualified engineers, who were recruited from Mazimbu and went on for further education abroad. These are part of the gains we have made at SOMAFSCO.

In agriculture, Mazimbu is now self-sufficient; for instance, in grain, part of which is sent to the Tanzanian Government, to the Ministry of Agriculture, with whom we barter for other items, such as coffee.

Through the health centres at Mazimbu, we create an atmosphere of friendship between our community and the surrounding host people in Morogoro. I think those are some of the achievements one could list for Mazimbu.

Comrade Hintsa: Since 1979 I have seen a number of students who have qualified, who have come back from education and training abroad. SOMAFSCO prepares people up to O Level. But now we have seen people coming back who have degrees in medicine, in architecture, and in public administration. All the group that left in 1979 has come back to us, and about 80 to 100 have got masters' degrees in various fields.

We started by admitting everyone who came from home directly into the high school at SOMAFSCO. It did not work, because many of these people needed to catch up, for one reason or another. Then, when the ANC decided we should have an admission centre at Dakawa, the ANC Development Centre, it was clear we should admit everybody who is aspiring to join SOMAFSCO at secondary level.

There is remedial teaching, particularly in English, mathematics, basic sciences and history, which we call the history of our struggle, also the development of societies. There came a point where we had to tell ourselves there was a need for remedial teaching in these subjects.

Dakawa is a development centre, not necessarily an

educational centre, but there are three or four aspects of education there.

One is the reception centre, which we call the Education Orientation Centre. There we have got a student orientation centre for the remedial teaching of new arrivals. Then we've got a vocational training centre, which absorbs the people who are not *per se* academic. Then we've got small industry, with some educational components — the printing of cotton prints, carpentry, and also the construction of the ANC Development Centre itself.

Some projects, like the printing of cloth, are meant for adults. We have also got a component for adult education, basically to teach the three Rs, so that while adults are working they're also continuing with their education.

At SOMAFSCO we've got another education programme which has expanded into Dakawa. We've got a Distance Education Project, where people are given lectures, and exercises which are corrected by tutors from the African National Congress and moderated by the Commonwealth Southern African Extension Unit, which is manned by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

In other words, Dakawa is a complex. In practice, we've got the vocational training centre, the construction of the Development Centre, the adult education. We've also got the skill-based imparting of education.

SOMAFSCO was planned in the first instance as a secondary school. The ANC then realised

that we need to have day care for the age range six months plus to three years, where children of workers on our projects are looked after. Then it also came out that we need to cater for the range three to six or seven, though some of us would like to have it from three to six. These kids are in what we call our nursery, where the basic skills are taught. At seven they go to primary school. At 14 or 15 they then go to secondary school, up to O Levels.

At Dakawa, we've got a day care centre for children from nine months to three years; then a nursery for those from three to six years or so, who then go to SOMAFSCO to join the primary school. The ANC is trying to cater for all levels up to O Levels.

You have had successes, but you must have had some problems as well, that have been solved, or partly solved. Can you tell us about them?

Comrade Mendi: Some of the problems were because we were starting from scratch. We did not have teachers; we did not have qualified engineers. We depended very much on assistance provided by the solidarity organisations, and therefore we had a very big element of expatriate teachers. The turnover affected the progress of the students quite a great deal. It was not until the teacher training programme was devised that this question of expatriate teachers began to be resolved.

And getting expatriates, not

only from one country but from different countries, caused other social problems for us. It destabilised the political tranquillity of Mazimbu as an ANC settlement. Mazimbu began to reflect itself as some form of international settlement, a refugee camp in other words. That had very severe effects on the life of our people at SOMAFSCO.

Comrade Hintsa: The delivery of medicines is not perfect. We are also affected by poor transport. Another problem we have in SOMAFSCO is malaria — that is a big problem.

What contact is there between SOMAFSCO and the people of Tanzania? Between SOMAFSCO and the international community?

Comrade Hintsa: This is very complex. At SOMAFSCO we've got the ANC-Holland Hospital, which caters for people who are non-ANC, non-South African. The majority of the people treated there are Tanzanian. They come for treatment from all over, and the hospital is staffed by our doctors, our nurses, and also by solidarity people. That's one contact. The Dakawa clinic also attracts clientele from round about. This doesn't cause a problem for the African National Congress, no; because these people have given us facilities in their country.

In the academic field, the contact is between the ANC Department of Education and the Minister of Education in Dar es Salaam. Then our

students have exchanges of visits with local secondary schools: debates, football matches and visits to holiday camps. They also go to places like Mbeya, Moshi and Arusha, and Dar es Salaam as well, to give cultural performances. This is specifically based on an understanding with some secondary schools. I don't want to say that this is sufficient contact between local people and SOMAFSCO. One would have liked to see twinning of SOMAFSCO with some of the secondary schools in the republic of Tanzania. The question of visiting, playing football — it's significant, but not that significant.

There are contacts with the Tanzanian Ministry of Education through UNESCO. There are about eight Tanzanian teachers assisting us, recruited through the Ministry of Education in Tanzania. And then we have a biennial inspection. The majority of our inspectors are from Tanzania, through the Ministry of Education.

The aid we get from the international community is significant. UNESCO supported us in the founding of SOMAFSCO, and the UNDP joined — the UNDP is the treasury of UN agencies. The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) gives something, and Finland, particularly for vocational training. UNIDO, the United Nations Industrial and Development Organisation is also involved. Holland is involved, and this is marked by the ANC-Holland Solidarity Hospital.

There are other groups; NORAD is involved.

The socialist countries have played a very important role in the founding of SOMAFSCO — the German Democratic Republic, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria. We have a programme with the GDR, which involves their sending us five assistant teachers in science subjects — mathematics, physics, chemistry, zoology, biology.

There is material aid in the form of building materials. There are also six kitchens; six units, and each one has a kitchen. The money to equip them comes from the international community.

On this occasion, what message have you for the international community?

Comrade Mendi: SOMAFSCO as an experiment for a future educational system in our country needs every encouragement and support, because it is a growing experiment. It still has to overcome a great many difficulties. It is now faced with questions of expansion, with our people having moved from Angola. More and more financial commitment is going to be required for SOMAFSCO to absorb the growing population coming from other Front Line States like Zambia.

Quite apart from that, SOMAFSCO needs to take its own place alongside the mass democratic effort that is being made at home, so that, together with our people at home, we can devise a fully representative

educational system for the future that we are at present fighting for.

SOMAFCO stands as testament to our respect for and appreciation of international endeavour in its support of our people.

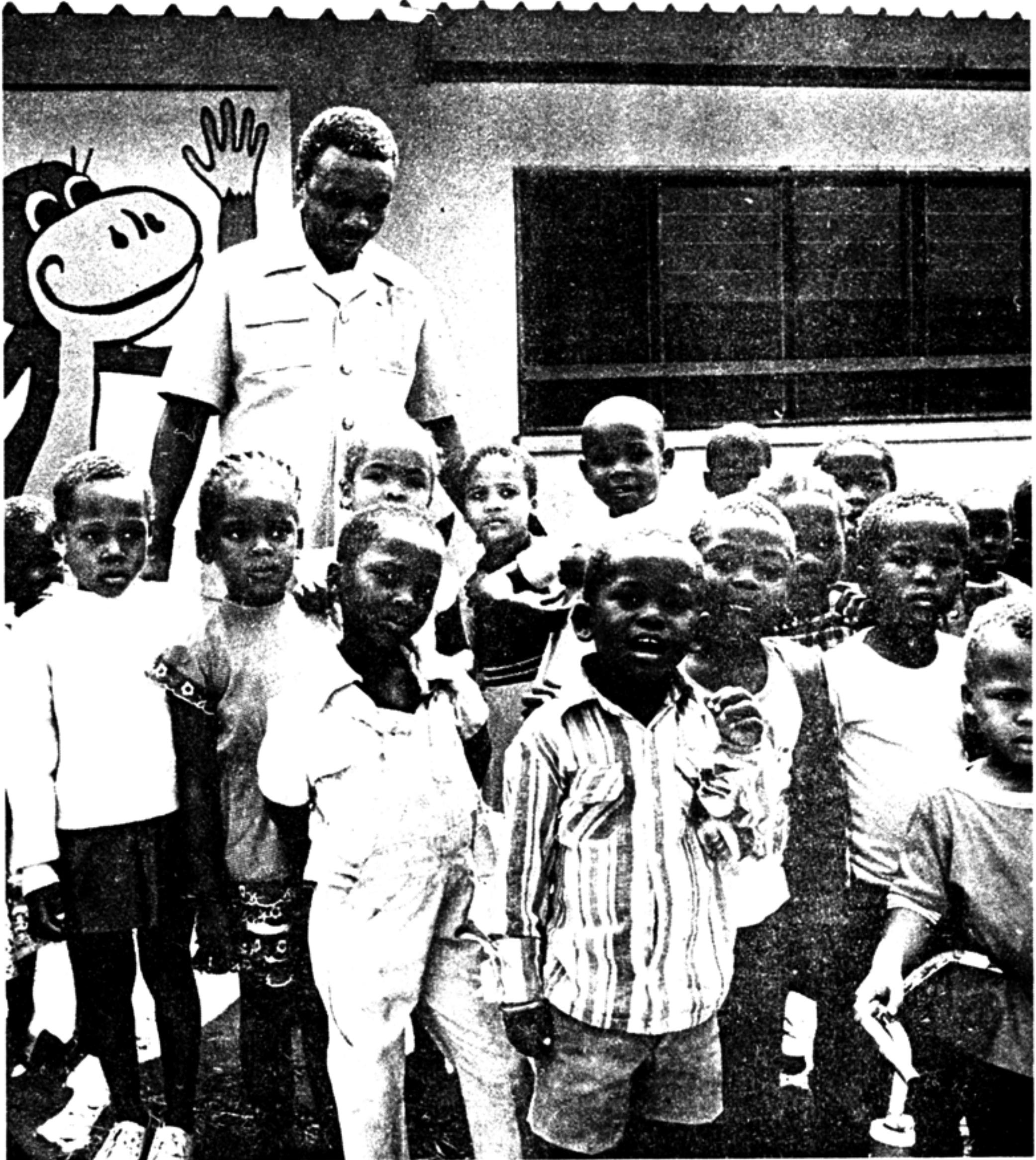
Solomon Kalushi Mahlangu, a hero of our revolution,

represented the younger generation who had moved to the forefront of the revolution, and he wrote his own epitaph when he said:

"My blood will nourish the tree which will bear the fruits of freedom."

SOMAFCO is a monument

created in his name, and in the name of all the youth, the fighting youth, of South Africa.



Comrade Henry Makgothi, Deputy Secretary General of the ANC, at SOMAFCO, with some of the children

VENDA

TEN YEARS OF REPRESSION

By Thando Zuma

The Venda bantustan, situated in the northern Transvaal but separated from the Zimbabwean border by the so-called Limpopo corridor, is due to celebrate its tenth anniversary of 'independence' from Pretoria in September this year. There will no doubt be attempts to organise extravagant parties in Thohoyandou, Sibasa, and other places. For the Venda regime it will be time to sigh and say, "We have at least managed for ten years!" For the people there will certainly be nothing to celebrate.

A crisis in the bantustans has come to haunt the apartheid system. The regime cannot claim to be totally in control of the situation in these areas. The coup in the Transkei in December 1987 and the attempted one in February 1988 in Bophuthatswana; the anti-independence uprisings in Kwa-Ndebele; the state of political flux in Lebowa; the positive anti-apartheid developments in KaNgwane and the general, stagnated process of granting these areas 'independence' shows that all is not well within this aspect of apartheid. There are signs of a crisis in the policy.

So, as the Ravele regime prepares for celebrations to mark ten years of 'independence,' what actually is the situation in Venda?

Venda is a typical bantustan, a creation of the apartheid policies of the Nationalist Party. Constituted under the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951, the Bantu Homeland Constitution Act and subsequent legislation, the Territorial Authority of Venda was made a 'legislative assembly' in 1971. In 1973, Venda was given 'self-governing' status.

The estimated population is about 482 000, excluding those who reside in 'White' South Africa, estimated at about 66 000. The major

concentrations of population are Sibasa and Thohoyandou, the capital of the homeland.

Reservoir of labour

The economy of Venda follows the pattern of other bantustans. Venda is principally a rural economy within the framework of the political economy of South Africa. The bulk of the people are rural, although their main means of subsistence originates from the industrial economy of South Africa. True to the economic character of all bantustans, Venda is a labour reservoir for the 'White' South African economy.

In 1979-80, it was estimated that 500 000 people were employed in Venda itself. Of these, 43 000 were classified as agricultural workers. This is a misleading classification, because there is very little large-scale commercial farming in Venda. The conclusion to draw about this statistic is that the figure includes within it a significant percentage of disguised unemployment, that is, people who work on the land but whose income is far below the basic subsistence level, and their marginal contribution to gross

production on the land is actually below zero. By 1982 there were 87 000 migrant workers to South Africa and commuters to the nearby White towns and farms.

The dependence of Venda on migrant labour, and its location within the South African political economy, is also shown by the fact that over 70% of its gross national income comes from remittances by migrant workers. The South African economy has been experiencing a recurrent crisis, and one of the results of this has been increased numbers of unemployed. Migrant workers have been heavily affected; the number of migrant workers from Venda dropped from 87 000 in 1982 to 49 000 in 1986. This was obviously the cause of the increase of about 38 000 in the numbers of the unemployed.

Wages below subsistence level

Workers in Venda are among the most exploited in South Africa. The working class there is vulnerable to intense exploitation by capital, since the law allows no trade union organisation. Inflation in South Africa averaged 12.4% in 1988, therefore the legal average minimum wage in Venda of R110 per month (1988 figure) is far below a subsistence wage. At that rate, a single trip to the supermarket could mean that one returns with a half-empty basket.

The salaries of the Venda president and his cabinet are a far cry from these starvation wages. In 1988, Venda ministers earned R55 217, and their deputies R50 366. On top of that, they received non-taxable allowances to the tune of R24 354 and R21 037 respectively. Most of these ministers also engage in business activities of various types. The houses of the president and his cabinet, built in 1981, cost R588 000 and R88 000 respectively. This was paid from the budget of the bantustan. The class differences speak for themselves.

Electorate with no power

The political process in Venda is not very different from the general bantustan model. The

fundamental characteristic of bantustan politics is the composition of the legislative assembly, where a given number of seats is reserved for the nominated chiefs. These seats can range from a majority at one time to a minority at another. Even during periods when they may be a minority, they still hold some weight in deciding the balance of power.

When Venda became 'self-governing' in 1973, only 18 seats out of 60 were directly elected. The other 42 were reserved for nominated chiefs. Two main political parties contested the 1973 elections; the Venda Independence People's Party (VIPP) and the Venda National Party. The VIPP, led by Baldwin Mudau, entered the elections on an anti-bantustan platform. The VNP was the pro-independence party, led by Chief Patrick Mphedu.

The VIPP gained a popular vote for its platform. It won 13 out of the 18 elected seats, leaving Mphedu with only five. This was a clear expression of the people's abhorrence of 'independence.' But Mphedu moved swiftly to mobilise the unelected chiefs. He took them on a beautiful trip to the Manyeleti Game Reserve, the Black section of the Kruger National Park, and entertained them to the best of his ability. The result was that of the 42 chiefs, 37 supported Mphedu and only five had the nerve to refuse.

Over the next two years, some chiefs began to desert Mphedu and move towards the VIPP, thus reducing his majority to six. But the weak political strategy of the VIPP made it unable to capitalise on this development and secure the removal of Mphedu. The VIPP was not strongly committed to its own campaigning platform. There was a lot of vacillation, which became clear later when they accepted the system.

Students in revolt

The 1976 student uprising had its effects in Venda. A militant student movement took root, and in 1977 there was a massive student uprising around the anti-Bantu Education issue. Students boycotted classes, and marched on the legislative assembly to stone and attempt to burn it. The police moved in with their usual repressive

methods. Faced with a continued uprising, the regime quickly pushed through legislation which gave Mphephu powers to detain without trial, and ban meetings. As a result, over 100 schools were closed, hundreds of students detained and thousands sent home.

It was in this tense climate that Mphephu called the 1979 pre-independence elections. By that time, the number of elected seats had increased from 18 to 42, and despite its unclear position, the VIPP won 31 of them, apparently in a poll of just over 50%. Before the assembly met to nominate the chief minister, Mphephu used his powers as incumbent chief minister to detain some members of the VIPP in order to provoke them. The VIPP boycotted the meeting, and Mphephu emerged unopposed as the new chief minister. His base was very weak, though.

In 1979 he proceeded with his independence plans.

Unable to devise any strategy to remove Mphephu, the VIPP leadership, in an about-turn, called for the merger of the VIPP and the VNP in what they called the "national interest." Scanting blood, Mphephu refused this, and scornfully continued to preside over the crisis-ridden bantustan.

Mudau died in 1981 without having realised his dreams of enjoying power in Venda, and was succeeded by an even more ambitious opportunist, Gilbert Bakane. Bakane declared, "Venda is democratic," and finally recognised the bantustan which, in the early 1970s, the VIPP leadership had vowed to keep away from so-called independence.

In 1987, the Republic of Venda Constitution Amendment Act made Venda a *de facto* one-party bantustan.

In an amendment to Section 24(1), the Act now says, "every member of the Venda Parliament must be and remain a member of the Venda National Party." This effectively cuts away the question of the democratic and patriotic forces in Venda being in parliamentary opposition to the VNP.

It must, however, not imply that the Venda regime cannot be pressurised through struggle and by mass action to allow parliamentary opposition.

Repression

From its inception, the Venda bantustan faced opposition from the people. The experiences of students and the community during the 1977 uprising left no doubt about the repressive propensity of the Mphephu regime. The detention of students and the banning of meetings under security legislation were some of the clear and open forms of repression.

Since then, a number of events have again highlighted the brutal nature of the Venda bantustan authorities. Following a daring attack on the Sibasa police station by a unit of Umkhonto We Sizwe in 1981, the Mphephu regime unleashed a campaign of terror against the people. There were large-scale detentions and torture of detainees. One detainee died during this period. Well-known church people like Dean Farisani were singled out for special repressive actions.

Under the Venda Public Safety Act, the regime has given itself powers to declare martial law at any time it feels threatened by actions of the people. This automatically means letting loose its police and army units on the people. Any action by the people against the regime can be quickly dubbed a "civil disruption," and martial law can be used against the people. The Venda police are now notorious for their harsh actions against any form of people's protest.

When Mphephu died in April 1988, Ravele succeeded him as president. In June, the regime under Ravele declared illegal the community newspaper, *The Advertiser*. A community advice centre was summarily closed. Once again, Dean Farisani was arrested and kept in detention by the Venda regime. In an attempt to dilute the militancy of the youth, the regime has set up an indoctrination centre called the Maheni Youth Adventure Camp, the main purpose of which is to move the youth away from the democratic movement, particularly the United Democratic Front. Many sessions at this centre are also directed against the ANC and its allies.

During the height of the national uprisings of 1984-86, Venda had in its cells a number of detainees, activists and non-activists. Other repressive bantustans had also kept detainees, in line with the general approach of the South

African regime. Transkei had about 368, Ciskei 116, Bophuthatswana 8 and Venda 28. By 1987, there were still a number of detainees in these bantustans, the highest numbers being in the Transkei, Ciskei and Venda.

Corruption

As in most of the bantustans, corruption is rife in Venda. The salaries and houses of the Venda establishment are just a small indication of the miserable state of affairs. It is generally known in Venda that to get a job, you have to buy this minister a video or that minister a TV. Not content with their huge salaries, these parasites go further, to rob people who earn far less than they do. Not only that — sexual harassment of women is commonplace in job procurement. There has also been a number of 'ritual murders' of people by ministers, who, in line with their idealistic conception of life, seek to strengthen their positions in society by 'muti.'

In the face of all the objective conditions that the people in this bantustan suffer under, it should have come as no surprise when the people rose up in defiance in August 1988. Indeed, the people's patience is not endless. Accumulated frustrations and anger found expression in the more than four days of the Venda general strike.

Sparked off by the murder of a teacher in Tshakuma, the general strike started when pupils at the school embarked upon an eight-week strike, demanding that the murderer be found. Students at the University of Venda followed suit with a protest march to the Venda parliament. The march was mercilessly broken up by the police, and a number of students were detained. As is common practice in this repressive bantustan, the detainees were tortured.

Massive show of united action

A mood developed amongst the people for decisive and militant action against the regime. The main suspect in the teacher's murder was nobody else but A A Tshivase, then the strong man of the Ravele regime. Tshivase was in

charge of four government departments, including those of law and order, and justice and prisons. Most people in Venda feared this man, but the general strike changed all that.

In a massive show of united action, students, workers, teachers, civil servants, taxi-drivers and some police took part in an historic four-day stayaway. The progressive clergy came out openly in support. The stayaway completely paralysed economic activities, schools and the bureaucracy. The mood of the people was high, militant. The Ravele regime was compelled by this mass action to force the resignation of Tshivase from the cabinet. But the people wanted him brought to justice for the murders he had committed.

There are many lessons to be learned from this mass upsurge in Venda, locally, in other bantustans and within the mass democratic and revolutionary movement. The primary one is that there exists in Venda a general mass indignation against the bantustan regime. This indignation can be mobilised into people's action round a common programme. Because of repression, mass opposition to the Ravele regime has not as yet been channelled through mass democratic organisation. Clearly various forms of organisation need to be devised in order to harness this political situation.

Fertile ground for organisation

One form of organisation is clearly going to be clandestine or semi-clandestine in the short to medium term. This should encompass all sectors of the people, and primarily workers, students, youth, religious people and the bantustan armed forces and police. The August uprising shows that the ground is fertile for such organisation. This form of organisation should be guided by the possibilities for future political developments, such as the reversal of the one-party system.

In the event of such reversal, the tactics to be applied should be fully discussed with the entire democratic and revolutionary movement. One tactic should be to come out with an opposition party which will draw on the lessons of the VIPP, and will be based among the masses in the area. Such an organisation could win most of the seats

in the legislative assembly. Whether it takes over the administration or not will depend on the particular state of affairs locally and nationally, and must be decided on in consultation with the mass democratic movement, with the clear objective of blocking any collaborationist forces.

Unlike the soldiers' revolt in Bophuthatswana in February, or the Holomisa coup in Transkei in 1987, the Venda situation has the potential of involving the mass of the people in removing the reactionary clique in power in the bantustan. Some form of localised insurrection is possible. The apartheid regime will work hard to reverse people's gains, and that is why the timing of particular forms of open struggle will be crucial. But the role of the mass democratic movement as a whole will be of no less significance.

It will be of primary political importance that revolutionary content be infused into all the struggles waged. The perspective must be to broaden political consciousness beyond the Venda ethnicity that Ravele and his Pretoria bosses are imposing on the people. The perspectives of the oppressed people as a whole should find expression in localised struggles, so that these can tailor into the question of destroying the entire apartheid state and creating a unitary, non-racial and democratic society.

Many challenges ahead

The ten years of independence in Venda have seen increased suffering among the people. Independence has been of no benefit to the people at all; only to the puppets of the apartheid state. There is nothing for the people to celebrate, and the mood of the people was clearly demonstrated in the general strike of August 1988. People have to work towards removing the Ravele regime.

However, there are a number of subjective weaknesses that the democratic and revolutionary movement needs to attend to. Among other things, and as part of what has been suggested above, there is need to:

★ Organise workers to demand trade union rights; for example, the right to organise and belong to a trade union.

- ★ Organise students at the university and schools.
- ★ Organise women, youth and patriotic chiefs.
- ★ Organise the police and army units to the side of the people.
- ★ Forge links with the mass democratic organisations throughout South Africa. This should not be just the initiative of the progressive forces in Venda alone, but part of the programme of the mass movement as a whole.
- ★ Engage in armed struggle as part of the general offensive, but bearing in mind local conditions — for example, actions against local tormentors of the people like Tshivase and those diehard police and soldiers.

There is a need to put forward continually the perspective of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa. Through struggle, the repressive bantustan regimes can be removed, as part of the forward march to people's power in a united South Africa.



People of Venda queue for water

WOMEN IN THE STRUGGLE FOR PEACE

By **Stephanie Kemp**

The Women in the Struggle for Peace conference in Harare on 20th-22nd April was organised by the Institute for a Democratic Alternative in South Africa and hosted by ZANU-PF Women's League. The writer of this article was one of the 25 ANC delegates.

The ANC delegation at the conference included three members of the NEC and seven Chief Representatives.

Ten to 15 of the delegates from inside South Africa were from the mass democratic movement. About 40 were invited by IDASA, and these included women from Pretoria, Stellenbosch and Rand Afrikaans Universities as well as the University of the Witwatersrand; members of the Democratic Party, two members of the Nationalist Party, and members of the Dutch Reformed Church. They included lawyers, a deputy mayor, a headmistress, university lecturers, nursing sisters, journalists, administrators, doctors and housewives. In age, they ranged from young women in their twenties to older women in their sixties.

Comrade Amai Sally Mugabe opened the conference, stressing that such an opportunity for discussion had never arisen during the struggle for Zimbabwean independence.

Comrade Gertrude Shope, NEC member and head of the ANC Women's Section, thanked ZANU-PF in particular for having made this historic meeting possible.

The Zimbabwean experience

The first day's discussion was with Zimbabwean women. These included former guerrilla combatants, seasoned women like Jane Ngwenya and Ruth Chinamano; women in the government; Whites as diverse as Judith Todd, who sided with the liberation struggle, and a Smith supporter whose 15-year-old daughter had been killed in a guerrilla attack on their farm. This last woman, like all the others,

spoke with great warmth of President Robert Mugabe's policy of reconciliation, which allowed a place in independent Zimbabwe for those who had previously been part of the enemy group.

It appeared that, though some important laws had been changed as a start to addressing the problems faced by women in Zimbabwe, discrimination against women remains a barrier difficult to overcome.

The Zimbabwean women stressed the importance of integrating the struggle for women's emancipation with the struggle for national liberation. One of the errors made after independence was in not organising the women who had supported the struggle in the rural areas.

This first day on the Zimbabwe experience was important, as many women from inside South Africa had a distorted understanding of the Zimbabwean struggle and of today's Zimbabwe itself.

It also gave all the South Africans an opportunity to adjust to being in the conference and talking together. But there was some sense of frustration that, having been brought together, we could not immediately begin to discuss the burning issues in our own country.

South Africans in closed session

The next two days were spent in closed session with only the South African delegates present.

The first discussions looked at the nature and the cause of the conflict in South Africa. One aspect that emerged was the anger that

many White women from inside the country felt at being cut off from information. They often saw the Casspirs rolling through the streets, but did not know where they were going nor why. It became clear to us that many of them did not seek information even when it was available to them, and were still trapped in their White consciousness which clouded their ability to focus clearly.

Comrade Shope spoke very movingly of the impact of the conflict on the lives of the majority, stressing that the source of the crisis in South Africa is the very nature of apartheid. For the oppressed majority, the war in South Africa is "a war for survival, a struggle to perpetuate life." She spoke of the inhumanity of apartheid:

"... Black, hungry children digging into dustbins for food, roaming streets aimlessly, sleeping in pipes and open fields. We also see them herded into cells like animals, thus moulding them into bundles of waste, to become a generation of despondent adults ... a culture of poverty has reared its head amongst the deprived. Our children need homes, not prison cells; they need food, not gunpowder."

She spoke of the effects of destabilisation and aggression against the Front Line States, and emphasised the need for vigilance and a campaign supporting Namibian independence.

In the afternoon of the same day, Comrade Ruth Mompati led a discussion on the role of women in the struggle for a democratic

South Africa. She paid tribute to Comrades Barbara Hogan and Marion Sparg, who had shown that there are White women who are ready to give their all to the struggle for freedom. She made a special appeal to White women, who:

"because of their privileged position in South African society have access to resources and opportunities which should be used to advance the cause of freedom — they do not live in townships under military occupation; they are not restricted by the state of emergency ... they have more 'legal space' in which to operate; they are far less liable to harassment by the police. The potential impact of united mass action by White women, together with, or in support of, the mass democratic movement, is enormous — let us be creative taking advantage of these possibilities."

At this point the agenda had to be altered, because the overwhelming feeling among the delegates from inside was that they wanted to hear the ANC speak. So the discussion on the role of women was rather lost.

ANC delegation answers questions

Instead, we remained in plenary, and the ANC delegation answered questions from the floor. In a very exciting session, a wide range of issues was raised, and answered by different members of our delegation with a clarity and quiet

passion that made me very proud to be a woman in the ANC, and which made an enormous impact on all the delegates and drew us together.

One of the first questions was about the ANC's attitude to 'negotiations.' Comrade Tenjiwe, our new Chief Representative in Uganda, answered this. She gave a most clear and passionate account of the history of our struggle, how we eventually adopted the policy of armed struggle, how armed struggle is one of four pillars of the struggle, which continues to be a struggle for justice and peace — for a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa.

On the question of communism, Comrade Jackie Molefe spoke of our friendship with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, and Comrade Tenjiwe spoke of the alliance with the Communist Party. She then turned round to the back of the hall, where Comrade Ray Simons was just entering, and said, "Well, if you want to see a real communist, Comrade Ray has been one for 60 years!" The place erupted, as White women with cameras jumped up to photograph Ray. It says something of the atmosphere of the conference, and the impact the ANC made, that, at the closing session, when Comrade Ray went to the platform, the entire hall rose in a standing ovation for her — the only spontaneous standing ovation of the conference.

Other issues raised and answered by the ANC delegation included so-called 'soft targets', participation in the forthcoming elections, the meaning of majority rule, national liberation and

women's emancipation, sanctions, the policies of the Women's Section and its programme of activity, affirmative action, ANC constitutional guidelines especially as they relate to women, ANC economic policies, and so on.

Defending whom against whom?

Next day, discussions were about the militarisation of South Africa and destabilisation. The presentations were hard-hitting and dramatically underlined. With great courage, Comrade Jackie Jolobe described how her husband met his death in a car bomb in Gaborone. This was followed by the video, *A Chain of Tears*.

Much of the considerable discussion that followed was about the SADF. Many were horrified both by the atrocities of the SADF and by the general preparation for war in the country. Some felt unable to accept that the SADF was responsible for all we said. Many had sons either in the SADF or about to be conscripted. Some felt a great agony. Some spoke of the ostracism their sons faced if they refused to go into the SADF; some felt six years' in prison was too high a price to pay; some felt the decision had to be left to their sons, and, should they feel they had to defend South Africa, they as mothers had to support them and "iron their uniforms." The option of leaving the country to

avoid conscription was very painful for the whole family.

We put it to them that the choice for their sons was ostracism or brutalisation; that it was our children their children were trained to kill.

Comrade Frene Ginwala presented the paper, *Strategies for the Way Forward*. It was an inspired presentation, given with the clear sincerity and passion that had marked contributions from our delegation. She drew attention to the fact that there had been no consensus on the exact nature of the conflict, but there had been agreement on the need to dismantle apartheid. The conference had identified the need to break barriers imposed between us and to counter the propaganda. The right to know what was going on and to communicate with each other had to be asserted. Campaigns had to be undertaken on issues of censorship, the right to free association, the unbanning of political organisations, the ending of restrictions, the release of detainees and all political prisoners. She asked the question which hung dramatically in the air as she closed: "Whose South Africa are your sons defending, and against whom?"

Array of democratic organisations

On the final day, each delegate from inside who came from an

organisation spoke briefly about the organisation. These were mainly mass democratic movement organisations including FEDSAW, COSATU, Port Elizabeth Women's Organisation, National Medical and Dental Association, Musicians' Association of South Africa, Federation of Transvaal Women, End Conscription Campaign, Natal Organisation of Women, Call of Islam — and the Black Sash, Cape Democrats, Democratic Party, Women for Peace, Kontak.

Although there was no direct discussion of these presentations, it gave many White women some idea of what was going on outside their own narrow confines. Discussions on culture, and in particular Afrikaans culture, had emphasised the need to bring Afrikaans out of its racist isolation and to recognise Afrikaans culture as part of the national culture, to ensure it a place in a future democratic South African culture.

The impact made by our delegation at this conference cannot be stressed too much. The women from inside the country were no doubt concerned about the situation, but at the start they ranged in their attitudes to us from being sympathetic to being aloof and even hostile. At the end, the main fear of many of those returning was not the actions they might face but that no one would believe what they had experienced and no one would share their new insights.

APARTHEID THE MURDERER

Ten years after the hanging of Solomon Mahlangu, the mass judicial slaying of South Africans still goes on. South African courts are still handing out death sentences.

The purpose of the regime is to intimidate the people. Instead, more anger and hatred is created among the people, more determination to be free.

Here we give pictures of some South Africans who have recently arrived on death row. Some were cadres of Umkhonto We Sizwe; other simply happened to be at a demonstration.



10 YEARS

Executed on the
6th April, 1979

*"My blood will nourish
the tree that will bear
the fruits of freedom"*



Youth demonstration in Namibia

INTERVIEW WITH JASON ANGULA

STRUGGLE IN NAMIBIA

The SWAPO Secretary for Labour, Jason Angula, spoke to *Sechaba* in May, about the situation in Namibia.

What part are the Namibian trade unions taking in the struggle for freedom?

Maybe I should give a brief background. In 1919, when the League of Nations gave Namibia, then known as South West Africa, to South Africa as a mandate, South Africa was supposed to be under an obligation to lead the indigenous people in such a way that one day they would be able to govern themselves. What South Africa did was a deviation from that mandate, because it continued with the colonial brutality, the institutionalised violence, that had been meted out to the people during the era of German colonialism. Then, in 1964, the Odendaal Commission drew up a plan for the balkanisation of the country into a chain of bantustans.

South Africa was planning to make Namibia a fifth province of South Africa, and it was these and other problems that the Namibians were up against. People were forced to live in these bantustans, and the fertile land was taken from them and made into White zones. Namibian people were forced by poverty from their homes, forced into the White zones to seek work, in order to maintain their families.

That's where the contract labour system comes in. People were made to sign a form, where it stipulated that they must work for their employers for 12 to 18 months before going back to their families. Not even in the event of a death, or anything of the kind, could they get permission to go home during that time — they had to finish the contract first. The wages were so humiliatingly low that, when they went home, they lasted only one or two months, and in the third month they



Jason Angula

had to go back, because they'd used up the little they'd accumulated during those 18 months.

That is what gave rise to the formation of OPO, the Ovambo People's Organisation, in 1959. OPO came into being because, in 1958, people resisted being moved to Katatura, the new township scheme, and people were shot dead by the authorities.

This is how people started to feel something should be done, and OPO was formed. It was a political organisation, but primarily concerned with the contract labour system, because most of the people who came from the north were employed in the mines and the industrial sector of the country. It is here that their labour was manipulated; they were used as cheap labour in mining and industrial places. In 1960, the name was changed to SWAPO, the South West African People's Organisation.

In 1971 and 1972, there was a general strike. People laid down their tools and put their

conditions, some of which were a call to end the contract labour system, fair wages, better conditions at the workplaces, compensation, bonuses, leave pay — some of the people had never had payments like this. The regime had to give in, and things became a little better. That was when trade unions were formed, under the wings of SWAPO, which had itself started as a workers' organisation. Trade unionism developed under the careful eye of SWAPO, though the unions had their own problems and so we felt we should keep them apart from political activities.

There was a time during 1977-78, when South Africa put a clampdown on the trade unions. Trade unionists were in gaol, or fleeing the country and joining SWAPO; our offices were closed, our equipment was confiscated. For a time, until 1984 or 1985, there was no trade union activity, because the South African government had also enacted legislation that made activities virtually impossible. So, come 1986, when some of our people had been released from Robben Island, we tried to combine again, to re-activate the unions under the flag of NUNW, the National Union of Namibian Workers, a section of SWAPO itself.

So, within a short space of two years, we had more than six trade unions, and at the present moment the unions have made it known that they are going into these elections with SWAPO. They are going to align themselves with SWAPO, because they feel SWAPO is for them, and because SWAPO started off as an organisation that was against the contract labour system, which is what they have been fighting as well. So there is a very good relationship between us and the trade unions in Namibia.

What do you think of the way the media in Europe and in South Africa have been handling the question of Namibia over the past few weeks?

Let me go back a little bit. April 1st this year was set for the implementation of Resolution 435, and a formal ceasefire was to be signed between South Africa and SWAPO. SWAPO's fighting forces were not only in Angola, they were in Namibia too, because there has been a war. Three days before April 1st, the President of SWAPO, Comrade Sam Nujoma, made it clear, announced to

our combatants, that there was to be no more fighting. People were to report back to Angola, those who could. Those who couldn't should assemble themselves, try to give themselves over to the UNTAG people, who were supposed to be there from April 1st. And, come April 1st, South Africa attacked these people while they were assembling, and immediately shouted to the world that there had been clashes.

Immediately after April 1st, there was a lot of disinformation in the news — the media were saying that SWAPO soldiers had broken the ceasefire; the BBC was referring to the South African forces as "the security forces," and so on. Then newspaper correspondents in Namibia started sending despatches describing what was happening; for example, that SWAPO soldiers weren't going to the UNTAG assembly points because these points were surrounded by South African forces. After that, the news stopped. There's a near-blackout now. Why do you think this is?

I think the blackout has been brought about by the fact that as from April 1st we have also been canvassing from our side. We need people to go as independent observers to Namibia, so as to cover all the events that are happening.

We have been very much embarrassed by the way the South African press especially, and the British press, handled the whole issue. Some independent observers, especially the Association of Lawyers from America, say it cannot be true that 1 800 fighters were sent by SWAPO over the border, that they initiated fighting between them and South Africa, that kind of thing.

They tried to make their own investigation, and this was followed by SWAPO, the trade unions, the Council of Churches, students' organisations. All these wings, they made a court application after the start of the fighting. They feel that an investigation should be made in order to clear this whole mess up. So these people, some of them, had the opportunity to take pictures of the dead bodies of SWAPO fighters, shot after April 1st.

Forensic experts showed that the way these people had been shot doesn't appear as if they were entangled in a battle. First, they all had head wounds. Second, it seems as if they were shot at

close range. Third, the angle of the bullets that went through the head went down, not straight. If you're standing and I'm shooting at you, the bullet will go straight. These bullets went downwards, showing that they were made either to kneel or to sit, following their surrendering, because they had no guns, they were assembling themselves to try and look for the UNTAG people, and this is how the South Africans shot them.

I think it is from the day these things came out that all of a sudden we saw a — a visible silence from the British and South African press.

Let me tell the story of when one of the Front Line States Observer Group flew into Namibia. That was almost the third week of April. Our people made ready to go to the airport to welcome them, and were blocked. People belonging to the other party that is to contest the elections, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, they were wearing their caps, their attire, they were canvassing — they went to the airport unhindered. As far as we are concerned, this is partiality, a clear breach of the regulations as set out in Resolution 435. And where was the UN? These things were done under their noses.

So our people were taken away from the airport, and instead came and held their public meeting on Saturday. When those who had stayed were on their way back north, they were stopped twice by road blocks. They were made to sleep at each road block — you can imagine, thousands of people, yes — and after Tsumeb, going to the north, they were shot at. Reports came here to London that two or three Mercedes cars, driven by Whites, parked, and the cars in front opened fire on these people. Luckily, no one died. About nine people were seriously wounded and had to be hospitalised.

I think the silence came about because things did not go as expected. I believe if most of our people had given themselves to the United Nations assembly points, other incidents might have occurred. And then there would have been enough coverage. But since our PLAN combatants sensibly avoided the assembly points, there's a blackout. The press is biased and partial in this whole matter. They want to see an incident where it is said that SWAPO is to blame for this or that. SWAPO isn't making incidents. That's what it

means. And there are incidents brought about by the Koevoets of South Africa; but the press is silent.

What do you have to say to us about the elections?

Resolution 435 has been so much watered down that it is South Africa itself that is holding the elections, and not the United Nations. Elections were to be held under the control and supervision of the United Nations. South Africa manipulated all this. Now the United Nations is observing, monitoring, and South Africa is holding the elections.

We are saying to Martti Ahtisaari, "What we want from you is that you go there and do the job that is expected of you. Be impartial. That's all."

I think the crux of the matter is that South Africa thought that with the DTA she could effectively prevent SWAPO from winning the elections, but after the few mass meetings we held in Namibia, South Africa came to the realisation that she cannot stop SWAPO. That's why she adopted another stance, of insisting that SWAPO have a two-thirds majority.

We are mobilising our people. Now we are waiting for the day when we are going to the ballot box.

SWAPO STATEMENT

March 15th, 1989

"The Pretoria regime's intentions are all too clear.

The regime was forced to implement Resolution 435 but they do not enter the process with any regard for the concept of fairness in the election nor for it being a vehicle for Namibia to gain genuine independence. They intend to impose on an independent Namibia a military force selected by them, trained by them and which would owe loyalty to that racist regime and not to the new government."

NEHRU AND AFRICA

by ES Reddy

The writer of this article, an Indian national, was Director of the United Nations Centre Against Apartheid from 1963 until his retirement in 1985.



Whenever Jawaharlal Nehru spoke of Africa, it was with the passion of a historian who revolted at the long martyrdom of the people of that continent, with the faith of a leader of a national liberation struggle in the ultimate triumph of all oppressed peoples, and with the commitment of an internationalist to assist other people in their efforts for emancipation. There was not the slightest trace of condescension or paternalism, but respect for the culture of the African peoples and confidence in their resurgence. Africa, to him, was not a remote continent but a neighbour across the seas.

"The sea," he said, "both separates and connects."

He espoused African freedom during India's own struggle for independence. Hardly had he become head of the Interim Government on September 1st 1946, when he began to exhort Asia and the world to help Africa.

He told the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in March 1947:

"We of Asia have a special responsibility to the people of Africa. We must help them to take their rightful place in the human family."

At the final session of the Asian-African Conference in Bandung in 1955, he pointed out:

"Everything else pales into insignificance when I think of the infinite tragedy of Africa, ever since the days when millions of Africans were carried away as galley slaves to America and elsewhere, half of them dying in the galleys. We must accept responsibility for it, all of us, even though we ourselves were not directly involved."

Even now, the tragedy of Africa is greater than that of any other continent, whether it is racial or political. It is up to Asia to help Africa to the best of her ability, because we are sister continents."

He told the Seminar on Problems of Portuguese Colonies in New Delhi on October 20th, 1961:

"My heart goes out to what is happening in Africa. I think that the agony of the African continent throughout history has been such that it has not been equalled anywhere. It is terrible, and I think the whole world owes it to the African people not to hinder them, but to help them in freedom in every way."

He saw to it that India did its utmost to promote African freedom and play a leading role on behalf

of Africa in the United Nations and other forums until newly-independent African nations could take over.

He rejoiced at the march of freedom in Africa, and the formation of the Organisation of African Unity. He said, on August 12th 1963:

"... perhaps the most exciting thing that is happening in the twentieth century is the awakening of Africa ...

It is, I think, a major event in history, and, what is more, it is going to play an ever-growing part in the coming years. We in India have naturally welcomed it."

Africa was very much in his mind as he sought to promote a 'peace zone,' shielded from the 'cold war,' and build a concert of non-aligned nations to secure the total abolition of colonialism and promote a world without arms and war.

Heritage of Indian national movement

His concern with racism and colonialism in Africa and his feeling of solidarity with the African people had its roots in his innate humanism, his experience in the Indian freedom struggle and his association with Mahatma Gandhi.

Until the 1920s, Indian interest in Africa had centred around the position of Indian settlers in Southern and East Africa. Tens of thousands of Indians had been recruited, after the abolition of African slavery in the 19th century, to work under semi-slave conditions as indentured labourers in plantations, mines and railways in South Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Africans and Indians thus shared in oppression.

By the end of the century, however, some of the Indian labourers who had completed their indenture, and the traders who followed them, had advanced economically. Concerned at competition from them, European settlers in South Africa enacted a series of measures designed to dispossess and deport the 'free' Indians. The Satyagraha led by Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa from 1906 to 1914, for the rights and honour of Indians, fired Indian imagination, and the Nehru's first political activity was raising funds for the resisters in South Africa in 1912.

Nehru took a global view

Nehru's interest widened to encompass the entire continent of Africa, and a global view of its struggles, when he represented the Indian National Congress at the International Congress against Imperialism in Brussels in 1927, and met several African leaders. He became familiar with developments in South Africa, and warmly welcomed the agreement among the South African delegates at the conference to promote co-operation among Africans, Indians and radical Whites, in the struggle against racism.

In a memorandum, *A Foreign Policy for India*, sent to the Indian Congress later that year, he suggested that Indians in Africa:

"should co-operate with the Africans and help them as far as possible, and not claim a special position for themselves which is denied to the indigenous inhabitants of the country."

He maintained contact with several leaders of the African freedom movements, especially in London, and with the Pan-African movement of Dr Ralph Du Bois. The Pan-African Congresses began to support the Indian demand for complete independence, while the Indian national movement expressed its full sympathy for African aspirations.

Imperialist war in Ethiopia

In 1936, while passing through Rome on his way to India, Nehru rejected approaches for a meeting with the Italian dictator, Benito Mussolini, because of the Italian invasion of Abyssinia (now Ethiopia). He organised nation-wide demonstrations in India to denounce the aggression, and declared in his presidential address to the Congress that year:

"In Abyssinia, bloody and cruel war has already gone on for many months, and we have watched anew how hungry and predatory imperialism behaves in its mad search for colonial domains. We have watched also with admiration the brave fight of the Ethiopians for their

freedom against heavy odds ... Their struggle is something more than a local struggle. It is one of the first effective checks by an African people on advancing imperialism."

Ten years later, fascist measures in South Africa aroused resistance among Africans and Indians. A new generation of Indian leaders, led by Yusuf Dadoo, challenged the compromising leadership of the Indian Congress, prepared for militant resistance to racist laws, and sought unity with the African majority in a common struggle for freedom. Nehru's strong support for the militants helped promote a non-European united front and joint campaigns against racist measures.

Nehru and Mandela

Meanwhile, Africans followed with keen interest the progress and ideology of the national movement in India, the largest colony struggling against the mightiest imperial power. African intellectuals read Nehru's writings avidly. His international outlook, and his emphatic belief that national freedom must benefit the common people, appealed to the emergent African movements, in which the youth and the trade unions played a crucial role. Nowhere was this as striking as in South Africa, where one of the oldest national movements struggled against the heaviest odds. Of Nehru, Nelson Mandela was to write later:

"While at university and engrossed in student politics, I, for the first time, became familiar with the name of this famous man. In the 'forties, for the first time, I read one of his books, The Unity of India. It made an indelible impression on my mind, and ever since then, I procured, read and treasured any one of his works that became available."

Discrimination against Indians in South Africa was one of Nehru's first concerns when he became head of the Interim Government in 1946. His approach to the issue, unlike that of leaders of other governments, demonstrated most clearly his respect for African rights and interests.

Indians in South Africa had launched a passive resistance movement in June 1946 in protest

against the 'Ghetto Act.' Public feeling in India was so intense that even the Viceroy's government was obliged to impose a trade embargo against South Africa, recall its High Commissioner from South Africa, and lodge a complaint with the United Nations.

Need for unity in action

While pressing for United Nations action to remove discriminatory measures against Indians, Pandit Nehru constantly drew attention to the broader context of racism in South Africa and beyond, and exhorted Indians in Africa to co-operate with the Africans. He wrote in a policy decision on September 15th, 1946:

"While India must necessarily aim at protecting the interests and honour of her nationals abroad ... we do not seek any special privileges against the inhabitants of the countries concerned. This would apply specially to African countries where the inhabitants are relatively backward and have been exploited in the past by others, including, to some extent, even Indians. Our objective should be to help in the rapid progress of these African territories towards political and economic freedom."

On the eve of the formation of the Interim Government, he said, in a message to Indians in South Africa:

"The struggle in South Africa is ... not merely an Indian issue ... It concerns ultimately the Africans, who have suffered so much by racial discrimination and suppression ... Therefore, the Indians in South Africa should help in every way and co-operate with the Africans."

In May, 1947, he said, in a further message to Africa:

"Indians who live in Africa must always remember that they are the guests of the Africans and that they may not do anything which might interfere with the progress of the Africans towards freedom. They must help Africans to attain their goal, and must co-operate with them in every way for their mutual

advantage. We do not want any Indians to go abroad to exploit the people of any other country ...

We want to build up one world where freedom is universal, and there is equality of opportunity between races and peoples.

I send my good wishes to the people of Africa and my fellow-countrymen in Africa, and I hope that in the difficult days to come they will co-operate together to realise the great ideals we have before us."

Nehru's outlook was shared by Mahatma Gandhi, who had spent 21 years of his life in South Africa, and maintained a continuing interest in the continent. Gandhiji believed, as did Nehru, that freedom of India should be a means for promoting freedom of all oppressed people. He stressed that Africa belonged to the African people and that, if any rights of Indians there conflicted with those of oppressed Africans, they should forgo those rights. When White hooligans attacked Indian passive resisters in South Africa in 1946, he declared that he would not shed a tear if all the Indian resisters were wiped out, for they would show the way to the Africans, and vindicate the honour of India.

Support at the United Nations

India's complaint to the United Nations provided no relief to the Indians in South Africa, but served to internationalise the issue of racism in South Africa, and encourage united struggle by the South African people. In 1952, when the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress jointly launched the Campaign of Defiance Against Unjust Laws, India took the lead, in co-operation with other Asian and Arab states, to seize the United Nations of the broader question of apartheid, and took all appropriate action to rally support to the African National Congress. Pandit Nehru declared that the revolt of all the oppressed people had overtaken the Indian question, and, in a letter to his chief ministers on August 26th 1952, said, "It is right it should be so."

He said in a speech in the Lok Sabha on March 28th 1960, after the Sharpeville massacre:

"The people of Indian descent in South Africa, as we well know, have had to put up with a great deal of discrimination and suffering, and we have resented that. But we must remember that the African people have to put up with something infinitely more, and that, therefore, our sympathies must go out to them even more than to our kith and kin there."

Two years later, India withdrew its request for separate consideration of its complaint to the United Nations, and threw its entire weight behind action against apartheid.

In Kenya, as in South Africa, Nehru tried to promote African-Indian unity for freedom. In 1952, when the Mau Mau rebellion and brutal mass reprisals by the authorities created a grave situation, he appealed to the Indians in Kenya to stand by the Africans in their hour of need and resist manoeuvres by the authorities to set Indians against Africans. He strongly denounced the repression, and did not hesitate to criticise Indian leaders who were timid.

"Africa has a big future"

Almost from the day he became head of the Interim Government, and even before India attained independence, Pandit Nehru ensured that India pressed in every international forum for the speedy advance of African and other colonial territories to self-government and independence. He never wavered in his confidence, shared by few other world leaders at the time, that Africa would soon be free of colonial rule. He wrote in his letter to Chief Ministers of Indian States on February 3rd, 1949:

"Whatever the immediate future may be in Africa, it is clear that the whole continent of Africa has got a big future, and changes will take place there fairly rapidly. These changes will be governed by the new political consciousness of the African people. We welcome this new consciousness, and wish to co-operate with it."

At the first session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1946, the Indian delegation carried

his instruction to give highest priority to the issues of colonialism and racism. It pressed the complaint concerning racial discrimination against Indians in South Africa, and was instrumental in defeating the manoeuvre of the South African government to annex the mandated territory of South West Africa, now Namibia. It fought doggedly to revise the trusteeship agreements proposed by the colonial powers, asserting that sovereignty belonged to the people of the territories and not to the administering powers.

This was a difficult task, as the United Nations was then dominated by the colonial powers and their friends, and even other Asian states tended to vacillate or succumb to pressures. This espousal of the cause of the peoples oppressed by colonialism and racism earned India the hostility of colonial powers, which increased with the aggravation of the 'cold war' and the rise of military alliances and blocs. This experience was to have a significant effect on the country's foreign relations.

Practical support

India's support for African freedom was not confined to public statements or debates at the United Nations and other forums, or even to diplomatic exchanges. Pandit Nehru was always responsive to requests of African leaders and organisations, for practical assistance.

He instituted scholarships for African students at the request of Kenyan organisations in 1946. The programme rapidly expanded, and, despite the acute scarcity of places in Indian educational institutions, facilities were readily provided for African students, in whose welfare and progress he took a personal interest.

In 1952, when Jomo Kenyatta was imprisoned in Kenya, he sent a senior counsel for his defence, despite the resentment of the British authorities. In 1955, when the African National Congress and the South African Indian Congress sought to send a delegation to the Asian-African Conference in Bandung, he arranged for their travel and introduced the delegation to the leaders at the Conference. In 1960, when Oliver Tambo escaped to Bechuanaland (now Botswana) to seek interna-

tional support for the struggle in South Africa, Pandit Nehru rushed him travel documents by a special plane.

In 1961, when the Congo (now Zaire) was faced with a grave crisis after the assassination of Patrice Lumumba, he sent an Indian brigade to serve with the United Nations peacekeeping force. It enabled the United Nations to expel Belgian and other mercenaries, and protect the integrity of the Congo.

The process of decolonisation of Africa was complicated by the 'cold war' and the system of military alliances which encouraged colonial powers like Portugal to undertake brutal wars. There was a constant threat of foreign military intervention, even after independence, and of a new scramble for Africa.

Non-aligned countries

Nehru was forthright in opposing foreign intervention and the intrusion of East-West conflict into Africa. The non-aligned countries played a significant role in providing diplomatic and other assistance to enable African countries to withstand external pressures. He recognised that their task of building themselves up would require the help of all countries. On October 20th 1961, at a seminar on the problems of the Portuguese colonies, he assured Africa:

"... that so far as India is concerned, all our thinking and emotions are with you, and that so far as we can help, we shall help."

Despite its own economic difficulties, India provided assistance to a number of African countries and liberation movements.

Pandit Nehru's advocacy of the policy of non-alignment, with its positive and dynamic content, had a great appeal to Africa. With the advance of African countries to independence, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries emerged as a major force in the community of nations.

Nehru's legacy

Pandit Nehru played an historic role in assisting the African people to ensure that the colonial

revolution in Asia would soon be followed by the resurgence of Africa, confounding those who hoped to keep that continent in perpetuity as their preserve. He was, in a sense, one of the architects of the united front determined to destroy the abomination of apartheid in South Africa. The decision of the African states in 1963 to join the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries *en bloc*, making Africa the one continent that is totally non-aligned, was, in a sense, the best tribute to the vision and the labours of Pandit Nehru, as it is to that of African leaders.

He has left behind a legacy of friendship between India and Africa in the process of liberation and nation-building. But for him, this was to serve not only the national interests, but the larger cause of humanity. The co-operation of India and the African nations — and, indeed, of all non-aligned and like-minded countries — to secure a world without arms, and genuine international co-operation in the interests of humanity is the abiding monument to his memory.

"His sympathy and understanding of the problems of Africa were a great source of courage to all who have been engaged in the struggle for the liberation and unity of Africa."

President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, in a broadcast on the death of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

"In the upsurge of anti-colonial and freedom struggles that swept through Asia and Africa in the post-war period, there could hardly be a liberation movement or national leader who was not influenced one way or another by the thoughts, activities and example of Pandit Nehru and the All-India Congress. If I may presume to look back on my own political education and upbringing, I find that my own ideas were influenced by the experience."

Nelson Mandela, in a letter to India from prison, August 3rd, 1980



A solidarity meeting in Johannesburg in celebration of Indian independence. Yusuf Dadoo was the speaker.

DISCUSSION ARTICLE

DO WE NEED PERESTROIKA IN THE LIBERATION MOVEMENT?

By Boy Moremi

Some people will be surprised to hear that *perestroika* is beginning to have an influence within the liberation movement. It also has influence in socialist countries and the world in general. It is a new phenomenon, which has been well accepted and embraced by mankind.

Thanks to the 27th Congress and the 19th Conference of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, we are now witnessing dynamic changes in the USSR. The command administration system, which was responsible for economic stagnation, is being gradually destroyed. An economy that cannot feed its own people is not worth praising. It is only because of *glasnost* that the history of the USSR is being reviewed, and people are now being told the truth.

The General Secretary of the CPSU, Mikhail Gorbachev, said,

"We have to build socialism on top of capitalism."

Is it possible to build socialism without a capitalist base? Is it possible to know and have an experience of bourgeois democracy when your country has not passed through that important stage of development? The Soviet poet, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, wrote in the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* in May 1988:

"Russia was the last European country to free its serfs, and it plunged into socialism directly from sovereign feudalism, almost bypassing the experience of bourgeois democracy. The bedbugs of feudalism and servility moved inside wooden trunks from village huts into communal apartments. Many bosses behaved like feudal lords, taking away not only peasants' land but their passports too — and that really smacked of serfdom. Stalin's forced collectivisation was a crude mockery of the slogans, Land to the Peasants! and All Power to the Soviets!"

On August 5th 1988, the Politbureau of the CPSU rehabilitated intellectuals and Soviet citizens who were 'enemies of the people,'

and were murdered by Stalin during the period 1930-1950. About 12 million people died at Stalin's hands. We have to guard against such mistakes.

Again, we should thank the policy of *glasnost*. It has opened our eyes and made us critical of history. It has made the Soviet people challenge wrong deeds committed by those in power; it has also influenced us, who are still fighting for our liberation, to be brave and critical of history.

We upheld and praised Stalin's achievements and accomplishments, like the defeat of fascism, and this was correct. But at the same time we did not know about the atrocities he committed against the Soviet people; worst of all, the murder of some top army personnel during the war, when the enemy was trying to capture Moscow.

I was one of the people who admired Stalin, and I believe that there are still people who do not accept the truth that is unveiled to us. Well, one does not have to blame them. The more they read Soviet literature and follow events in the Soviet Union with an open mind, the more they will understand what prevented the Soviet Union from developing faster than the capitalist countries in light industry and modern technology.

Anatoly Rybakov's book, *Children of Arbat*, articles in Soviet journals like *Moscow News*, *Agonyok* and *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, articles on Stalinism by Soviet academicians and historians, give us an insight into Stalin's terror and the effect of the command administration

system on the economy and the psychology of the people.

Not weakness, but strength

Before *perestroika* we never knew about the economic failure of the USSR during the time of Brezhnev. Nobody thought or believed that there could be strikes, demonstrations and protests in the Soviet Union; that Party papers could disagree with the opinion of the General Secretary; that Boris Yeltsin could be given the floor at the Party Conference. Is this an element of weakness in the CPSU? I say no. The more people are given the opportunity to vent their grievances, the more confidence they will have in the Party. More pluralism means more democracy. This is what makes the CPSU much stronger.

Perestroika is removing the fear in the Soviet people. The system of command administration has retarded a lot of progress. It has made people indifferent to production. It has made them less creative and imaginative, since they know their ideas will be hampered by the bureaucratic structures. That is why the CPSU is now destroying bureaucratic methods of management typical of the command style of administration.

The existence of what are called comradely polemics is now recognised. Without exchange of ideas, without polemics, there will never be progress or development. These are the basic laws of dialectics.

According to Lenin,

"knowledge emerges from ignorance."

Coming to our movement, how do we react to *perestroika* — a phenomenon that has removed fear from people, made people more creative and productive, made them feel that they are not just robots who have to live on instructions, but that they have a say in what is happening in the USSR?. We all have different ideas and opinions. This, then, gives room for discussion about everything. In this world, nobody is infallible.

"We should enhance the tone of discussions of problems,"

Mikhail Gorbachev said at the Party Conference in 1988.

What should we be doing?

I believe that some of our people are moving at a snail's pace. Everybody looks for someone else to 'bell the cat.' But this is our movement, the movement that is going to overthrow the fascist regime at home and establish democracy in the country. We have to be critical of wrong things that are happening in it, we don't have to wait for somebody to bring about changes that are going to speed up the pace of liberation. More democracy must be given to people.

The unfortunate thing is that we have got used to the bureaucratic method of working, and it is very difficult to get rid of it. Some areas are not given liberty to solve their problems. Things are controlled through telephones. Then how do we expect young people to develop, to have an independent mind, to be creative? At the moment, is it possible to challenge a wrong decision? Can one have one's own opinion and be free to express oneself? I know the answer, and will leave it to the others.

It is natural that we should expect resistance from those who have been in cushy armchairs and those who are ignorant of *perestroika*; but they should not slow the pace of progress. An administration that still resists informing us about abuses of power, about cases of red tape, is not serving the interests of the people. Arrogance among those responsible must be discouraged.

Lenin said:

"The masses should know everything, and they should have an opportunity to judge and be aware of what they are accepting."

In the liberation movement, we do not expect to know everything, but there are basic and non-security matters that can be divulged to us without fear.

Learning from others' mistakes

I think it is high time the movement encouraged — ensured — free dialogue, criticism, self-criticism, self-assessment. People should not be afraid of discussion and exchange of opinion. A person who is unable to argue with you and show

you the light because of his limited knowledge is not an asset to the movement. Stalin was afraid to show his lack of knowledge; that is why he eliminated Bukharin, Kirov, Kamenev, Zinoviev and the others. We are lucky that our leadership is learned and knowledgeable. We can be in a position to avoid such mistakes.

Our country is highly developed and industrialised. If we want, we can be in a position to avoid mistakes committed in other revolutions. The thing we have to embark on is the massive upgrading of our people academically. Those who are given positions to take care of our lives should be highly trained so that they can carry out their duties properly, without intimidation.

Perestroika will help us a lot. It will make us unafraid to ask, and challenge wrong things. Now, we move ahead if we don't know what the majority of the people think. We must encourage

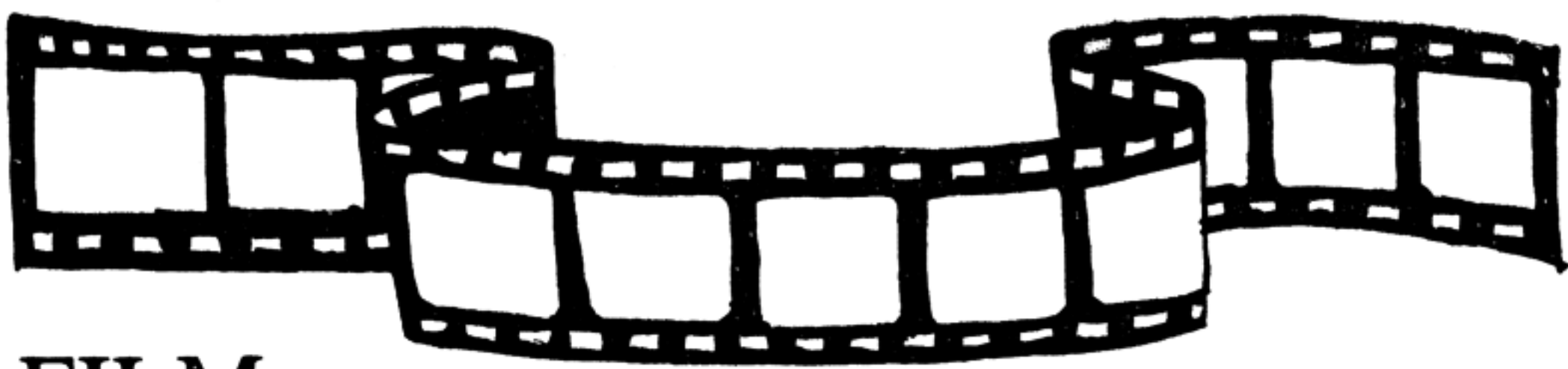
dialogue, not only in words, but in deeds. We must try our level best to get rid of the command administration system. Stagnation in the USSR has been caused by it. I don't mean there is stagnation in our movement, but we are moving at a slow pace. Pluralism must be encouraged. According to Gorbachev,

"It doesn't mean that a person who has a different opinion from yours is your enemy."

We don't have to tolerate abuse of power. If we do, it will gradually lead to oppression. I don't think we all want this.

And let *perestroika* prevail in the movement. People may think we are forgetting about the struggle inside the country, and concentrating on petty things. This is not petty at all, but is part of the development of mankind.





FILM REVIEW

***Mapantsula*, directed by Oliver Schmidt, available for non-commercial showing from International Defence and Aid, London.**

The South African situation is being brought to the attention of the world through all the organs of media. Cinema is one of the most powerful tools. In the struggle against the Pretoria regime in particular and institutionalised racism in general, we welcome any effort to expose the injustices perpetrated against the Black people of South Africa.

In the last few years, films have appeared whose thematic concerns have been the oppression of the majority of the people of South Africa by a few, films that explore the ravages of the South African social system, the tyranny that pervades all aspects of life in the country.

Mapantsula comes out of the country and, in its own way, it draws attention to the ugly aspects of life in that society. It is set in Soweto, where it was

shot; its photography is beautiful and colourful; it exudes life and excitement, and evokes nostalgia just by the sheer presence of real townships, the people, and the occasional use of vernaculars, though these tend to slide into irrelevance and incoherence, even when used by the veteran Dolly Rathebe.

The main character, Panic, scores through the streets, backyards and dark alleys, under a big hat and with a sharp dagger, the mark of gangsters of the 1950s.

It is a gangster movie in the true style, as far as the motivations of the main character are concerned. The credibility, or verisimilitude, of a gangster movie is founded on questions relating to the construction of a social reality from which action proceeds. In *Mapantsula*, action moves with speed.

In the past, most films made in South Africa, or outside of it, tended to reflect bourgeois ideological conventions, in marginalising the Blacks, distorting their culture, and being economical with historical fact, when not downright derisive.

Now, South Africa is undergoing a revolution, socially, culturally and economically. The political situation is fraught with uncertainties for those who are not directly affected. There

is also quite a number of elements shouting non-racist slogans, and others whose ideological identities are not declared. The latter category includes people whose main concern is the unfolding situation in money terms.

In the light of this, we are then compelled to examine *Mapantsula* carefully. We find no encouraging conclusions about its positive contribution to the political, social and cultural struggle as it develops in South Africa. It is simply a piece of naive integrationism, reflecting the current realisation that the old order cannot hold out any more. But it merely inserts Black heroes and heroines, drawn from the ranks of the oppressed Black people, into functional roles, just as there is a search for pliable 'natives' who can be formed into a Black middle class; there has been no fundamental change. *Mapantsula* simply substitutes Black heroes into the slots normally filled by White ones, in order to flatter the fantasies of a certain (largely male) sector of the Black audience.

The lumpen element is projected as a viable and legitimate component of the struggle against oppression; a White woman's handbag, containing a purse, is snatched by the main character, and we are expected

to empathise with him and find consolation in his nebulous exploits; he throws a brick at a window of his girl friend's employer. These actions, and his confrontation with the White woman, are celebrated as if they were a major step in the struggle; we are meant to be overjoyed and encouraged as by the bold and daring rescue of an MK cadre from a hospital in Durban not long ago. Such assumptions derive from the ingrained colonialist attitude that Blacks are simpletons — just throw a cyanide-laced bone, and they would never know the danger.

In gangster movies, the narrative is centred around the male hero, or villain, and codes of signification reflect male ideas, a world of action defined in male terms. The violence, the locales, iconography, are conventions that imply and connote the male sphere. Women occupy peripheral positions, as adjuncts to the narrative, providing unresolved sexual tension as one of the dynamics of the film-story. In *Mapantsula*, women are presented for the sake of rounding off the story, or for glamorous spectacle.

At this stage of our revolution, we can do without a dose of films that celebrate and glorify cultural decadence, or fantasies that present unrealistic solutions to genuine problems. We should be suspicious of films that glorify lumpen methods of confrontation, without discipline and organisational control.

— *Ralph Mzamo*



BLACK AND WHITE

**Black and white make a contrast.
Black stands out clearly on white,
White is sharp and visible on black.
White on white is bland to invisibility,
Black on black merges into infinity.
Black needs white, white needs black,
To write a song, or right a wrong,
To make a pointer, or point to our maker.
And if they merge into subtle shades of grey?
Or find an identity in being differently the same?
Then they will have found their place and role
in this earth,
this life,
Which needs both night and day.**

— D J Gynes

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