

MAY 1989



SECHABA

official organ of the african
national congress south africa



MAY | **SOUTH AFRICAN**
WORKERS UNITE | **DAY**

A decorative graphic at the bottom of the page consisting of four interlocking gears arranged in a horizontal row. Each gear has a central hub and several teeth, and they are all rendered in a dark color against the lighter background.

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Graphic design by Hylton Alcock

LISTEN TO RADIO FREEDOM

Voice of the African National Congress
And Umkhonto We Sizwe, the People's Army

Radio Lusaka

Daily 7.00 pm:
Wednesday 10.15-10.45 pm:
Thursday 9.30-10.00 pm:
Friday 10.15-10.45 pm:
Short wave 31mb 9505 KHz
Sunday 8.00-8.45 am:
Short wave 25mb 11880 KHz

Radio Luanda

Monday-Saturday 7.30 pm:
Sunday 8.30 pm:
Short wave 31mb 9535 KHz
and 25 mb

Radio Madagascar

Monday-Saturday 7.00-9.00 pm:
Sunday 7.00-8.00 pm:
Short wave 49mb 6135 KHz

Radio Ethiopia

Daily, 9.30-10.00 pm:
Short wave 31mb 9595 KHz

Radio Tanzania

Monday Wednesday Friday 8.15 pm:
Tuesday Thursday Saturday 6.15 am:
Short wave 31mb 9750 KHz

The above are South African times

EDITORIAL

RACIST REARGUARD ACTION

The agreement for South African withdrawal from Namibia, and for free elections leading to independence, was won in hard and bitter struggle. Now it is still under threat.

Long before the ceasefire, the racists of Pretoria were behaving as if the agreement did not exist. They showed clearly that they had no intention of leaving Namibia. They made no secret of their preparations to take a hand in the elections — launching a propaganda drive against SWAPO; proposing a minimum voting age of 21 to keep young SWAPO supporters away from the polls; setting up residential requirements; granting voting rights to South Africans and members of UNITA. When the brutal Koevoet was disbanded, its members were not demobilised, but incorporated into the South West Africa Police, where they made up about half the personnel, and the officer in charge of this force stated frankly that it was preparing to police the elections.

Even more blatant was Pretoria's unconcealed intention to go on maintaining its instrument of rule and repression, the South West Africa Territorial Force, after independence. SWATF was not disbanded in time for the ceasefire; its members were allowed to keep their personal weapons, and sent on leave with pay. The commanding officer told the press that the "demilitarisation" of the force was "a temporary phase" for the period of the elections, and that "after the election the new constitution will provide for a defence force which will incorporate the SWATF as we know it today."

When the day of the ceasefire had come and gone, Namibia was still illegally occupied, and the birth of the new country was drowned in blood.

When defeated and surrounded at Cuito Cuanavale, the racist forces had been quick to call for a ceasefire in Angola, and when it suited them they were just as quick

to break the ceasefire in Namibia. Eight hours after the ceasefire came into effect, they used artillery weapons at Okahenge to open fire on soldiers of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia. There seems to have been no attempt to take prisoners. They opened fire.

The very presence of South African forces in that place and at that time and with the equipment they carried was in violation of the agreement — if they were soldiers, they should by then have been confined to base; if they were police, they should have been carrying only small arms.

This was not the end of it. Civilians were attacked at Engela, Okadila, Okalongo, Ohalushu, Onanghulo, Onhongo. Some were attacked with pangas. Some were killed. Two were killed, apparently for wearing SWAPO T-shirts. As late as April 9th, the press reported South African forces still roaming loose, hunting for SWAPO.

The United Nations forces that should have been keeping the two sides apart, raising the peace flag, conducting combatants to base, were not where they were needed. Most of them were inexperienced in bush warfare. They were in any case too few to monitor the whole of Northern Namibia; some had not yet arrived in the country, and on arrival some still lacked their equipment. Because of this shortage of UN troops, the UN representative in Namibia had gained permission to deploy a South African battalion to help in the 'peaceful transition' — a disastrous mistake.

The United Nations has a special responsibility in Namibia, and it is urgent that it should have the support of the whole world in carrying out the function it has undertaken. It is plain now that independent Namibia will never be safe while apartheid South Africa exists. It is also very plain that the apartheid regime has no respect for agreements arrived at as a result of 'negotiations.'

INTERVIEW WITH ALFRED NZO

THE SOVIET UNION SUPPORTS OUR STRUGGLE



ANC Secretary General Alfred Nzo

After the recent visit to the USSR of a top-level ANC delegation, the Secretary-General of the ANC, Comrade Alfred Nzo, spoke to *Sechaba* about the relationship between the Soviet Union and the ANC.

During the present period, there's been a lot of discussion by academics in the Soviet Union about what they perceive to be the course of development leading to a solution of the situation in South Africa. Some of this discussion appears in the international media, and the reportage tends to suggest that Soviet policy is undergoing a change, insofar as its relations with the African National Congress are concerned.

There has, for instance, been a suggestion that the Soviet Union is putting pressure on the ANC to abandon the armed struggle, and that it has decided that henceforth it's not going to give the African National Congress any form of assistance that would help its strategy in that direction. Those speculations have gone to the extent of even suggesting that the Soviet Union is about to establish relations with the regime in South Africa — and of course those who talk like that will always refer to the fact that

the Soviet Union has had discussions with official circles in South Africa, especially during the process of negotiations for the independence of Namibia.

Now, the African National Congress has continued to have contact and discussions with official circles in the Soviet Union, and the last such official contact was during a visit to Moscow of a delegation composed of a number of National Executive Committee members of the ANC, and led by the President himself, Comrade Oliver Tambo.

From the discussion, at least according to the assessment of the ANC delegation, the ANC was convinced that the Soviet Union was not about to change its policy of supporting the struggle in South Africa, in all its forms, on the basis of the strategy and tactics worked out by the African National Congress. This assurance was given again to the ANC delegation, simply to re-emphasise that the Soviet Union stands solidly behind the struggle of our people.

Safeguarding the Decolonisation of Namibia

During the course of discussions, the Soviet Union was invited to become an observer, a participant, at the discussions on the independence of Namibia — three-part discussions between Angola and Cuba on one side and South Africa on the other, mediated by the United States. Of course, Soviet official circles quite rightly say that, in that capacity, they have to meet and discuss the items on the agenda with all delegations present, including the South African delegation. In that way, therefore, they have had contact with official circles of the South African White minority ruling clique in our country.

The contact the Soviet Union had with the South Africans was by way of assisting in the discussions that have been going on. And it should be emphasised that the interest the Soviet delegation has always had in all those discussions was to ensure that the proper decolonisation of Namibia takes place and that the revolutionary struggle of the people of Namibia wins the battle, not only in the field, but at the negotiating table as well. The process of negotiation being part of the struggle, victory here, too, must be ensured. And that was the main aim of the Soviet Union.

After the December 22nd agreement was signed by the parties concerned in the United States, one of the provisions was to set up a monitoring team to ensure that the agreement is carried out. The Soviet Union — together with the United States — was invited to become part of this team, whose chief members were Angola, Cuba and South Africa.

This team meets at periodic intervals. For instance, a meeting was held in Angola, and the next one in Cuba, and the third will be held in Pretoria. At all these meetings, the Soviet Union is expected to participate, together with the United States and the three main parties in the monitoring team. This means that officials of the Soviet Government will visit Pretoria, together with representatives of Cuba and Angola. Of course, when this happens, the speculators are going to say that the presence of Soviet representatives in Pretoria confirms

that the Soviet Union is about to establish diplomatic relations with Pretoria. But the Soviet Union will be carrying out a function that is of interest to the international community, to ensure that the process that has been set in motion for the independence of Namibia is safeguarded.

Academic Opinion And Foreign Policy

Now, coming back to the debate among Soviet academics: this period of *perestroika* and *glasnost* in the Soviet Union is one in which there has been much more openness in discussing issues, and some diversity of opinion in evaluating and thinking out certain questions relating not only to the development of Soviet society itself but also to international questions. For instance, the importance that the Soviet Union has attached to the solution of regional conflicts and its participation in discussions leading to their solution have led many people to think that the views expressed by individual academics are views that have become official policy of the Soviet Union.

For instance some academics have expressed views suggesting that the peaceful settlement of disputes in Southern Africa necessitates that the ANC must abandon its armed struggle. Some suggest that for the Soviet Union to have more influence on developments in Southern Africa it would be better if the Soviet Union got involved officially with governments such as that in South Africa.

Of course we have taken issue with some of these academics on the views they express in relation to developments of our strategy, but again it must be emphasised here that the individual views of academics are not in any way an expression of official Soviet policy, which remains the same as always.

There are also questions of contact that has been taking place between the Soviet Union and various academic circles in South Africa. These contacts have been initiated by the African National Congress, in order that we might discuss openly with our compatriots how we see the develop-

ment of a future in South Africa — a future for everybody.

It is still correct for us to call for the total isolation of apartheid South Africa, but it is an indication of the success of this policy that it has caused certain sectors in South Africa to change their approach. These sectors now seek a way out of the situation, and they ought to be welcomed and accommodated.

Culture and the Boycott

Now, take for instance the simple question of culture: should there or should there not be contact with any cultural groups from South Africa?

Of course, the easy answer would be no, there should be no contact whatever; but that would be to ignore the developing positive trend in the developing people's culture at home, the emerging cultural struggle inside the country, that is becoming a very important component of the general onslaught of the people.

During this period of extreme repression, it is still possible for progressive cultural groups to bring people together to depict their own oppression, seeking to broaden understanding even to the international scene. To picket these groups would go contrary to what we are fighting for.

Let's turn this the other way round. Is it going to help Soviet writers and so on to have contact with people from South Africa, with circles from South Africa? Is it not breaking the boycott?

The academic and other circles from South Africa are not official circles, by the way. When the ANC meets circles from home it is not in any way meeting official circles, but is trying to encourage a trend developing within the country — in the social base of apartheid itself. Here, there emerges the possibility of extending the anti-apartheid front inside the country, an anti-apartheid front which is going to involve more and more of those circles that have hitherto been known to be supporting the apartheid regime, but which are now beginning to see their way clear towards getting away from that position, and are seeking to involve themselves in the

general onslaught by the people against what they themselves have come to recognise as a problem in our country.

Now, it seems to us that when they meet genuine friends of the struggle of our people, even their vision begins to broaden out, and therefore even they are gravitating towards an anti-apartheid front, internally and externally. That can never be said, by any stroke of imagination, to be working against the interests of the struggle of the people of South Africa.

Diplomatic Isolation

What we have said is that South Africa must be isolated diplomatically. And we continue to say that. We have not in any way encouraged anybody to establish diplomatic relations with official circles in South Africa. We continue to condemn that, inasmuch as we continue to condemn those forces that are the allies of the regime, for continuing to have official diplomatic relations with South Africa. That must be condemned and discouraged altogether. The Organisation for African Unity, for instance, has never deviated from condemning the establishment of diplomatic relations with South Africa.

Rather than isolating certain circles there in South Africa, talks with them help to strengthen the anti-apartheid struggle inside the country. The ANC must go out and talk to these circles and say, "If you say apartheid is bad, then come over to us," and that is what we have been saying to them. But we are not establishing diplomatic relations with South Africa. And neither are we saying that those of our friends who discuss with these people to encourage them to get into the anti-apartheid front, that they are in that way establishing diplomatic relations with South Africa. Certainly they are not.

Support For Our Strategy

The Soviet Union supports us fully, without any reservation. They say we must decide what to do in the situation, and they are going to support us. For the moment, we're

saying that our strategy has as its central element armed struggle for the destruction of the apartheid regime, and they support that. They fully support that. Official Soviet policy supports us. If tomorrow we go back to them and say, "No, we think now that it is no longer necessary to lay emphasis on armed struggle, they'll say, "Fine, if you think so, we'll support what you are saying." That's what the Soviets are saying. But, for the moment, as we say that armed struggle is a central factor in our strategy, they

support us fully, and are ready to give us all manner of assistance that we require, as they have done in the past.

We have a semi-diplomatic mission in Moscow. Only a government can have full diplomatic status. A semi-diplomatic mission shows high status, a high degree of recognition. Politically, diplomatically and otherwise, they support us. When we go to the Soviet Union on official delegations, we find no diversity of opinion on this; only complete agreement.

STATEMENT BY THE SOVIET AFRO-ASIAN SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE

The Soviet public views with a deep concern the campaign recently mounted in the Western, especially British, mass media and directed at discrediting the traditional support of the Soviet Union for the liberation movement in South Africa. In the process of this campaign, use is made of crude distortions of statements of Soviet scientists and public figures. The interpretation of facts and events is given in such a manner as to fit them into a previously formulated scheme of an alleged withdrawal of Soviet support for the liberation struggle.

What is the aim of the organisers of this campaign? First, it is to drive a wedge into the traditionally friendly relations between the USSR and the ANC, which were reconfirmed during the recent visit to the USSR of the ANC president, O R Tambo. Second, it is to demoralise the democratic forces in South Africa, which consistently regard the USSR as a reliable supporter of the freedom struggle. Third, it is to justify the continued co-operation of Britain and other Western countries with the Pretoria regime, and their opposition to comprehensive mandatory sanctions against South Africa.

The Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee resolutely reiterates its unfailing solidarity with the South African liberation movement, led by the ANC, and its recognition of the liberation movement's right to choose the necessary means, including the armed struggle, to attain the eradication of apartheid.

Stressing our special commitment to traditional ties with the African National Congress, we once again confirm our readiness to develop relations with all forces in South Africa which are against the shameful apartheid regime. It is from this position that one should regard the recent visit to the USSR of the UDF leaders. It is from this position that one should regard the forthcoming visit to the USSR of the delegation of the Institute for a Democratic Alternative for South Africa.

We are convinced that the ANC and the growing alliance of the democratic forces inside the country can achieve the elimination of apartheid and implementation of the ideals of freedom and democracy, formulated in the historic Freedom Charter — the ideals of a united, democratic, non-racial South Africa.

Presidium, Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, Moscow, March 28th 1989

ANC STATEMENTS

CONFERENCE OF CHIEF REPRESENTATIVES AND REGIONAL TREASURERS

A conference of ANC chief representatives and regional treasurers was held in Gran, Norway, from March 15th to 31st 1989. It was also attended by the Secretary-General of the ANC, Alfred Nzo, the Treasurer-General, Thomas Nkobi, and other members of the National Executive Committee of the ANC. The total number of delegates participating was 88.

The conference was held in Norway at the invitation and with the support of the International Department of the Norwegian Labour Movement, as well as the Norwegian Government.

The conference was convened to review the situation in South Africa and the rest of Southern Africa. It assessed the implications of this situation for the international diplomatic and political work of the ANC. It also discussed ways and means of obtaining increased political, financial and humanitarian assistance to meet the additional demands arising out of this situation.

His Excellency the Foreign Minister of Norway, Mr Thorvals Stoltenberg, opened the conference. He pledged the continued support of the Government of Norway for the ANC, for the struggle to end apartheid and for the transformation of South Africa into a united, democratic and non-racial country.

Mrs Vasla Vatlaesan, Secretary of the Solidarity Fund of the Labour Movement (AIS) and Mr Jorn Rusa, Chairman of the Norwegian Council on Southern Africa (FSA), also addressed the conference and conveyed greetings and messages of solidarity from their organisations and the Norwegian public. The participants also attended a service of solidarity at the Church of St Nicholas, conducted by the Rev. Trond Bakkevig, General Secretary of the Foreign Relations Committee of the

Norwegian Church Council.

The conference noted that the people of South Africa continue to suffer under the racist system of apartheid. This system is facing a permanent and deepening political and economic crisis, which has been brought about by the struggle inside and outside South Africa.

No Climate for 'Dialogue'

The conference noted that the recent election of F W De Klerk as leader of the ruling Nationalist Party will not result in any significant change in policy. His recent utterances, in which he spoke about 'dialogue,' can have no substance without the creation of a climate conducive to such dialogue.

The reality is that Nelson Mandela and others continue to be incarcerated, and indeed the number of political prisoners and detainees is increasing. The ANC remains banned, and the list of proscribed organisations grew by at least 34 during the past year. To ensure the entrenchment of the system, as well as its own survival, the apartheid regime continues to resort to brutal repression as exemplified by the national state of emergency which has been in force since 1986.

The conference concluded that the situation in South Africa remains unchanged in its main elements. This imposes a continuing obligation on the ANC, the democratic movement and our people as a whole, to continue and intensify the struggle. Accordingly, we must accelerate both the mass political offensive and our armed actions.

Our success in achieving these objectives is guaranteed by the firm determina-

tion of the majority of our people to resist repression, and advance towards the goal of liberation, regardless of the sacrifices they have to make. The ongoing hunger strike of political detainees is a demonstration of this mood of militant defiance. The workers' summit convened in Johannesburg on March 4th and 5th not only reflected this mood but also added enormously to the growing unity of the anti-apartheid forces within the country.

The conference noted the strategic importance to the whole region of Southern Africa of the agreements concerning Angola and Namibia. It welcomes the prospect of peace for the people of Angola and independence for Namibia. However, the conference reiterated that there is a continuing danger that the regime and its surrogates will attempt to undermine and sabotage these processes. An important objective of the strategy of the regime is to marginalise or destroy SWAPO, the recognised leader of the Namibian people. All this calls for maximum vigilance and unity by the international community to compel Pretoria to honour its commitments.

Policies of Pretoria Unchanged

The conference noted that the regime has not abandoned its efforts to impose itself on the countries of Southern Africa as a regional power, through economic and military destabilisation. In this regard, the conference condemned Pretoria's continuing support for the MNR and UNITA, and its persistent attacks on and sabotage against Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

The conference noted that, despite the absence of any change in its policies within South Africa and in the region, the Pretoria regime has launched an offensive to gain legitimacy, and break out of its isolation. It therefore condemned the visit of Pretoria's Foreign Minister, Roelof Botha, to the United Kingdom, which was part of this process. It further concluded that the reports inspired by the regime about the imminent release of Nelson Mandela are designed to undermine the campaign for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners and to improve the image of the

regime, so that it can gain greater international acceptability.

The conference noted that, as the crisis of the apartheid system deepens, the Pretoria regime is heightening its offensive against the ANC. This takes many forms, including the physical elimination of our members and representatives, the spreading of disinformation about our organisation, and attempts to foment divisions and conflict in our ranks.

The conference noted that the Front Line States, the OAU, the Non-Aligned Movement and the majority of the member states of the United Nations continue to stand firm in their opposition to apartheid and their support for our struggle. In this context, conference rejected recent reports that the Soviet Union had changed its policy towards apartheid, the ANC, and our struggle as a whole.

Our Urgent Tasks

The various attempts of Pretoria to regain the strategic initiative have failed. The balance of forces continues to favour further advances towards the elimination of the apartheid system. Within the country, the ANC, the democratic movement and the millions of our struggling people remain the decisive force for meaningful change. Together they have an urgent responsibility to step up the struggle for the earliest realisation of the objective of a democratic South Africa.

This requires, among other things, further strengthening of the structures of the ANC inside the country; greater mobilisation of the people, and the unity of all anti-apartheid forces; the intensification of the armed struggle, and the total isolation of the apartheid regime.

These, and other, urgent tasks call for the generation of significantly larger resources. We need to extend more assistance to the victims of apartheid repression inside the country, as well as those who have been forced to flee the country.

To expand our international work, we have to increase the number of our diplomatic missions and provide them with the necessary human and material re-

quirements. This will improve our capacity to keep the world community informed about the situation under apartheid, counter the information blackout, and further familiarise the international community with the aims, objectives, programmes and policies of the ANC and the democratic movement of our country.

The conference noted that all world forces opposed to apartheid have an obligation to assist us to meet the demand for increased financial and material resources. This is a necessary condition for the successful advance of the world community towards the goal of the final elimination of the apartheid crime against humanity.

New Initiatives

Accordingly, the conference elaborated new programmes aimed at obtaining these resources and improving our organisational capacity to carry out our manifold tasks. Conference also agreed on the need to intensify the campaign for sanctions, and paid special attention to such specific issues as the arms embargo, financial sanctions, and the possibility for further action in such areas as Japan, the USA and the European Community.

The conference paid tribute to our late colleague and former head of our Department of International Affairs, Johnny Makatini, for his outstanding contribution

to the struggle. It warmly welcomed the appointment of Thabo Mbeki as the new head of the Department of International Affairs.

Conference was also informed of further decisions of the National Executive Committee to strengthen the existing missions and to open new ones. New offices will be opened in, among other capitals, Washington, Madrid, Tunis, Tripoli, Kampala, Caracas, Accra and Managua.

Conference expressed its profound appreciation for the assistance extended to the ANC by the Government of Norway, the Solidarity Fund of the Labour Movement and the people of Norway, which enabled us to meet to consider some of the urgent issues confronting us. Conference also expressed its thanks to Inger Helene and Ole Anton Klophus, and the rest of the staff of the Granavold Guest House, for their warm hospitality which contributed to making our conference a success.

On the occasion of March 21st, the 29th anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre, now observed as the International Day of Solidarity with the People of South Africa, we reiterate our call to the peoples of the world to isolate the murderous apartheid regime, extend all-round support to the ANC and the struggling people of our country, and in other ways contribute to the creation of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa.

**Forward to Mass Action
For People's Power!**

JOINT COMMUNIQUE ANC—AASO OF USSR

During its official visit to the USSR in March 1989, the African National Congress delegation, headed by its Secretary-General,

A Nzo, met with a delegation of the Soviet Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee, led by its chairman, M Kapitsa.

The delegations agreed that the principal

source of problems faced by South Africa and the region is the apartheid regime. The apartheid system is sinking into an all-round crisis, with the legitimacy crisis being one of its most burning issues. This crisis entails an aggravated political situation and economic stagnation. Parties agreed that apartheid cannot be reformed — it must be destroyed.

The ruling group's verbal juggling is helpless to camouflage its intention to keep itself in power, and the racist laws in force, at any cost. The regime intensifies reprisals, even against conspicuously non-violent organisations. The shameful verdict at the Delmas trial of the UDF leaders is a recent illustration. The racists instigate the Natal conflict, where peace should be restored for all the oppressed people fighting their common enemy — apartheid.

The two sides agreed that the breakthrough in attaining a settlement in southwestern Africa, namely, the proclaimed cessation of South Africa's aggression against Angola and commencement of the process leading to Namibia's independence, are a major victory scored by national liberation forces over forces of colonialism and reaction. This is a result of the Namibian people's courageous struggle led by SWAPO, and the heroic resistance of the Angolan people, supported by the Cuban internationalist forces and the rest of progressive humanity. The SAASC and the ANC call upon all honest people in the world to give as much aid as they can to the Namibian people to enable them to elect their constituent assembly in an atmosphere of peace and freedom, and under the United Nations' effective supervision and control.

The SAASC and the ANC point out that at present the South African government exerts vigorous efforts to break out of international isolation by publicising its forced withdrawal from Angola and the forthcoming independence of Namibia, but inside South Africa the regime continues its policy of repression.

The SAASC and the ANC express support for the measures designed by the world community of nations and by international public opinion to bring pressure to bear on the Pretoria regime, including

economic sanctions, the cultural, academic and sporting boycott of the regime, and the other measures aimed at keeping the apartheid government in continued isolation. The SAASC and the ANC expressed their unreserved support for the mass democratic movement in South Africa, in its struggle against the system of racism and apartheid.

The SAASC and the ANC reiterated their preference for settling the country's problems by political means. At the same time, they pointed out that the South African people is fully entitled to choose its own ways and means of struggle, including armed struggle, in line with United Nations General Assembly resolution N43/50 of December 5th 1988.

The two sides confirmed their irrevocable demand that Nelson Mandela and all other political prisoners in South Africa be released, and that captured combatants of Umkhonto We Sizwe be granted prisoner-of-war status in accordance with the Geneva Conventions of August 12th 1949 and the supplementary protocol No 1 of 1977.

The two sides agreed that South Africa's problems can only be settled through building a united, democratic, non-racial South Africa, on the basis of one person, one vote. Both sides believe that the *sine qua non* for a serious political dialogue in South Africa is the release of all political prisoners and detainees, the lifting of the state of emergency, the unbanning of the ANC and other democratic organisations, the free return of political exiles, and clearing the way for the people to express their will and to conduct political activities.

The SAASC assured the ANC that it was resolved to continue to give all possible moral, political and practical support to the South African national liberation and democratic movement, in its noble struggle for the liberation of the South African people.

Both sides expressed their profound conviction that the system of racism and apartheid will collapse as a result of the struggle waged by masses of people inside the country and the pressure applied by the world community in support of the just struggle of the South African people.

ANC INTERNATIONAL

The ANC and the International Community

A few centuries ago, (writes **Toine Eggenhuizen**) 60 Norwegian peasants stopped an invading army unit of 500 soldiers in the mountainous region of Gran, two hours' drive from Oslo. This battle, the Thaba Bosiu of Norway, was a major contribution to maintaining Norwegian independence. Gran, therefore, formed an appropriate setting for a major ANC meeting to review the situation in South Africa, and to discuss ways and means of mobilising greater political, financial and humanitarian assistance.

Present were the Secretary-General of the ANC, the Treasurer-General, the Secretary for International Affairs, members of the NEC, representatives of departments, Chief Representatives, Regional Treasurers and officers of the Treasurer-General's office.

The meeting took place in a guest house run by a descendant of one of the heroic 60 peasants.

Norwegian television did not miss its chance to have the first interview with the newly appointed ANC Secretary for International Affairs, Comrade Thabo Mbeki. He told the interviewer:

"The central question is the exclusive exercise of political power by a White minority. That cannot be reformed. Either you have everybody participating in governing the country, or you have a minority. There cannot be anything in between. You cannot reform apartheid. You can remove elements in legislation ... If he (FW de Klerk) does not address this issue of political power, then apartheid continues."

The real threat to the Pretoria regime, he said, is not from the right wing, who want to maintain apartheid. The overwhelming majority of the people of South Africa want

an end to apartheid. The pressure for change from within the country — from the ANC, from the mass democratic movement, from the millions of struggling people — remains the decisive force for meaningful change. This needs to be complemented by pressure from the international community.

According to Comrade Mbeki, one of the reasons for convening the meeting was:

"to ensure that our representations internationally intensify the campaign to isolate South Africa."

In his address on behalf of the National Executive Committee, the Secretary-General, Comrade Nzo, said:

"Having come together from different parts of our globe, it is obvious that an opportunity will not be missed to raise questions which are somewhat topical in countries in which we represent the ANC and the struggle of our people."

He said that in south-western Africa the ANC had decided to re-deploy its forces in order to pre-empt the possibility of the enemy's using our presence in Angola as a pretext for obstructing the process leading to independence for Namibia. He mentioned attempts by South Africa and its allies to draw attention to a so-called decision of the ANC to establish military bases along the border between Namibia and South Africa, with the connivance of SWAPO. The prospect for peace in Angola and independence for Namibia is in danger of being undermined by Pretoria and its surrogates, in order to marginalise SWAPO. This calls for the greatest possible vigilance and unity on the part of the international community, to compel Pretoria to honour its commitments.

Comrade Nzo stressed the need to consolidate and expand international support for our struggle, and quoted from a statement by South African church leaders:

"We now hope the international community — and especially South Africa's trading partners — will wake up to the fact that this illegitimate government is threatening their interests as well as the lives and security of Black and White South Africans. It has shown quite clearly that it has nothing to offer but instability and bloodshed. It must be isolated to force it off the awful path it has chosen."

The Treasurer-General, Comrade T T Nkobi, said in his address:

"Ours is a just war of liberation. We know our enemy well. We have lived for decades in the prison that is apartheid. The Pretoria regime has survived for so long by brute force, fed and sustained by international connivance and support."



Comrade Kumar Sanjay

He said it is necessary for the forces opposed to apartheid to assist us to meet the demand for increased financial and material resources.

It is interesting to note that the announcement that Comrade Mbeki had been appointed head of the Department of International Affairs was hailed by Western journalists as a victory for the 'moderate wing' (whatever that is) of the ANC. I have racked my brains, memory and notes, and still cannot figure out how the facts were construed in this way. As Comrade Mbeki said in his TV interview:

"The leadership of the ANC is united in strategy, tactics and policy."

ANC Representation In the Netherlands

The policy of the ANC at present — confirmed at the meeting in Norway — is to extend our contacts throughout the world. A new office had been established less than a month before, in Amsterdam in the Netherlands. The Chief Representative is Kumar Sanjay.

In 1987, during the CASA festival, the local council of Amsterdam declared the city an anti-apartheid zone. In keeping with that decision, and as a result of the work of the Anti-Apartheid Beweging of the Netherlands, an invitation was later extended to the ANC to open an information bureau.

On February 14th, the ANC office in Amsterdam was formally opened by the Mayor of the city. The ambassadors of Cuba, India, Nicaragua and the USSR were present, as well as representatives of local solidarity organisations. Comrade Francis Meli of the National Executive Committee of the ANC made a short speech.

Comrade Sanjay says:

"The opening of our office here represents a blow struck for freedom by the freedom-loving people of the Netherlands."



Cosatu and Nactu delegates sing freedom songs at the historic Workers' Summit

SACTU MAY DAY STATEMENT FORWARD TO WORKERS' UNITY

To mark the occasion of May Day, Sechaba asked Comrade Ronnie Press of the National Executive Committee of SACTU, and member of the African National Congress, to comment on developments in the workers' struggle in South Africa.

The problem for the trade union movement in South Africa at the present moment is the renewed attacks on it by the South African regime and the fact that the employers are going along with the regime's attacks on the trade unions. At one time one hoped

that the employers would see that attacking the trade union movement is counter-productive, but now they seem to go along with the apartheid state. This raises tremendous problems for the workers because of the physical harassment, the blowing up of

offices, the murder of workers on strike and the arbitrary arrest and detention of workers' leaders like Donsie Khumalo and others.

We find that the government has brought in legislation through the Labour Relations Amendment Act (LRA) which means that the unions can be forced to pay back to the employer the money lost as a result of the strike. Solidarity strikes are going to be illegal, boycott strikes and supporters' strikes are going to be illegal, and there are a number of other things all of which in fact are very similar to the laws in Great Britain brought in by Margaret Thatcher.

Historic Workers' Summit

In the face of this renewed onslaught, it was necessary to reply with increased unity of the working people and their trade unions. So the idea of the Workers' Summit was brought forward by COSATU. COSATU said this would be a workers' summit, not a summit where officials would sit around and discuss but where delegates from the trade unions, workers themselves, would discuss how to fight this Act — a workers' summit was organised. At the beginning negotiations were entered into and the National Congress of Trade Unions (NACTU), COSATU, and those trade unions which were not affiliated to any Federation agreed that a summit should be called and that it should be a Workers' Summit.

The basic aim of the Summit was to organise the fight against the LRA Act. The second was to create the basis for unity in the trade union movement with an eventual single federation in our country unifying the working people. Unfortunately, there are people within the trade union movement who seem to put their own particular agendas above the agenda of the workers. They seem to think it is so important that their own particular political and ideological points of view be preserved, that going to the Summit might endanger this.

It is obvious that the working people felt differently, because the Summit was in fact a great success. Workers' representatives from 11 NACTU unions, from all of the

COSATU unions, and from a number of other independent trade unions, 700 delegates in all, attended.

The only officials there were those who acted as recorders of the meeting and those who acted as chairpersons in order to make sure that the process went through smoothly. The workers issued a statement at the end of the Summit, laying down the various demands which they were going to put to the government, and how they were going to react if the government didn't accede to their demands that they be free to operate as proper trade unions in South Africa.

Unity In Action

The only weapon that the working people in South Africa have got is their trade union unity in struggle. Once the workers are divided, the employers and the government can create havoc. They can make strikes and demands for negotiations meaningless if the workers do not speak with a united voice. Therefore, unity in the Summit was of primary importance. But this unity shouldn't be just in the Summit. It must come first of all amongst all the working people of our country. And this means all the working people, not just those adhering to a particular brand of opposition to apartheid; not Black nationalist, not just those who believe in Black Consciousness or any other ideology.

The working class movement, the trade union movement, is a movement of all kinds of different political points of view. They are united in opposition to apartheid, united in their desire for a non-racial new South Africa where all the people can live in peace and harmony. Now this unity is being built at the grassroots, and the Workers' Summit was a great step in this direction. Unity was increased by the fact that a number of unions attended the Summit irrespective of the fact that they had differences with COSATU or the fact that they were affiliated to NACTU, which decided at the last minute not to come to the Summit. The fact that a whole number of unions not affiliated to any federation came to the Summit shows this tremendous desire for

unity in the trade union movement, and augurs well for the future.

Take, for instance, the textile and garment industry. Firstly, it is not specifically the clothing industry. It is a bigger unity than that, because COSATU has a policy of organising within industrial sectors.

One Industry One Union

The clothing industry embodies not only clothing but also the textile, leather and allied industries. Again we see that the unity that is being forged is a unity of all those people who are involved in a combination of sectors. For instance, the Garment and Allied Workers' Union (GAWU) had been having discussions with the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers' Union of South Africa (ACTWUSA) for a considerable time. They both believe in COSATU; ACTWUSA is actually in COSATU and GAWU is an affiliated association. So there is no reason why they should not come together. And of course the workers themselves have long ago come to the conclusion that there should be one organisation for all the workers in any one sector of industry. So the moves towards unity which we hope will come to fruition — certainly by the end of June when a unity conference is to take place — will be a great step forward.

It would form a new large industrial sector organised in COSATU which would probably come to more than 100 000 workers. In SACTU, as a part of the revolutionary alliance led by the African National Congress, the liberation movement we might say, we look forward to this and wish the workers well. We say to the workers and the officials and the organisers in their industries, "Comrades, the future of the working people lies in your hands and that future is only attainable through unity. Put unity above all little differences; all problems which will arise in any organisation, put them aside and form one major union. This is the policy of COSATU, this is the policy of SACTU, this is the policy of the liberation movement, Unity in Action."

A point which is important to remember about the Summit is that as Barayi, the COSATU President, said, the Workers'

Summit is historic because it does not grow out of today. It grew out of a long history of workers' struggle for unity.

We remember the time when there was one federation for all the workers in South Africa, the time of the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU). The White workers stood aside, but for the Black workers there was that one federation. Again, at the time of the Council of Non-European Trade Unions (CNETU), there was one federation for the Black workers. But really the historic time was when SACTU formed a federation for all the workers of our country Black, White, Coloured and Indian.

COSATU is an equally historic organisation of the present day, which organises in all areas and this Summit was the next step along the same path. The philosophy and direction of COSATU will become those of all the workers in our country. Then again, we look forward to the time when there will be one federation for all the workers.

Newly Organised Sectors

Up to the present time, many of the working people of our country have been able to use their organised strength through their struggle, through the heads and the bodies broken by the regime or by bosses during strikes and demonstrations, through the agony of those who sit in death row today. But as yet there are still two areas where the regime and the bosses remain pig-headed and stubborn, and these are in farming and in domestic service. Their full rights must still be achieved. When the Summit met, those who were there recognised that some rights had been won, but these rights must be defended and extended.

Domestic workers are organised into a trade union. The farm workers are organising into a trade union. Now both the farming and domestic workers' unions must be reinforced, must be assisted to become a power which will force the employers to recognise them and their right to trade union negotiations, the right to strike, and the right to fight for better wages and conditions. The wages and conditions in these two particular areas are the most appalling

in the whole of South Africa.

Independent Arbitration And Industrial Courts

When workers put forward demands, they need to have a result. It is no good putting forward demands, going on strike, and then just failing to win anything. Not all strikes are won, not all strikes are lost; some strikes end in advances and some in retreats. It should be possible, even in a capitalist society, to settle strikes and go back to work under better conditions with better facilities plus a greater increase in health and safety. Sometimes arbitration can help to settle a strike, but basically a strike depends on the strength of the workers. Negotiators and arbitrators can be useful. But there is no substitute for trade union militancy and the united strength of the working people. And this must always be remembered.

The Industrial Court has sometimes ruled in favour of the workers. This was because the bosses are so arrogant, are so over-powering, that they sometimes even go against the laws which are passed in our country. We know that the laws are not in favour of our working people. But even those meagre rights which we have won, the employers in their arrogance some times take away from us. And therefore the courts on occasion have had to rule in favour of the workers. Now these courts are being hamstrung, their power is being taken away, because even the few victories which we have won are too much for the bosses and the regime to stomach.

If we can get individual employers to stand outside the courts and to put things to an arbitrator we can possibly get some satisfaction, but one must remember that the arbitrator is somebody who tries to stand between two mighty forces that oppose each other because they are fundamentally different — the employers, who want to exploit the workers, and the workers, who don't want to be exploited. The arbitrator cannot settle that quarrel, but he can settle the smaller quarrels that develop within this major battle. This major battle will go on irrespective of any ar-

bitration; but nevertheless arbitrators can be useful on occasions.

May Day Message To South African Workers

May Day is a very special day for the working people, not just of South Africa but of the whole world. It is the day when the working people march, when it is possible for them to march and have a holiday where they have attained power and influence in the countries where they live. May Day is the day of the celebration of unity, the celebration of struggle, the celebration of our martyrs who gave their lives for the working people. May Day is a very special day. It is the day when workers throughout the world demonstrate, be they in socialist countries where it is a public holiday, be they in the capitalist countries where demonstrations and marches are allowed, or be they in fascist countries where the working class is forced to celebrate quietly at home.

In all these countries, workers celebrate unity, and it is when they forget all their personal difficulties, all the differences which are fostered and sown by the capitalist forces or by the reactionaries, by the dividers of the working class. With all differences forgotten, workers come together in celebration. It is a great day of unity. So SACTU's message to the working people of South Africa is:

"Celebrate May Day in whatever way it is possible. Show the apartheid regime that the working people of South Africa, irrespective of politics, race, religion, colour or creed, irrespective of any differences, know that its desires and its needs are for the liberation of the workers from exploitation. Show the bosses and the apartheid regime that in South Africa we are part of the international working class. We are part of the African working class, we are part of the Asian working class, we are part of the European working class. We are all working together united in opposition to exploitation. This is the day to celebrate, to glory in the power of the workers, and this what we call upon the workers of South Africa to do."

THE WORKERS' SUMMIT

More than 700 workers, representing a wide range of trade unions, were present at the historic Workers' Summit Meeting in Johannesburg on March 4th and 5th 1989.

The Summit entrusted its organising committee with the task of carrying out these recommendations:

- The right to strike and the right to picket.
 - No dismissal without proper hearings.
 - Retrenchment should be negotiated with representative unions.
 - Recognition of majority unions.
 - The right to sympathy strikes.
 - Other demands that have been put forward by COSATU and NACTU in previous negotiations.
 - Isolate employers who use the provisions of the LRA against unions.
 - Give employers 30 days to respond to our demands and to declare a national dispute with employers if they refuse to make positive progress towards meeting the demands.
 - Link the LRA campaign to the living wage campaign.
 - Mobilise workers and the community around these issues nationally, regionally and locally.
- Use May Day rallies to mobilise the working class around the LRA.
- Conduct national ballots around all these demands in all industries.
 - Call for future summits that would involve all forces that are fighting for the liberation of all in South Africa.
 - Intensify our rejection of the present LRA through further protest actions.

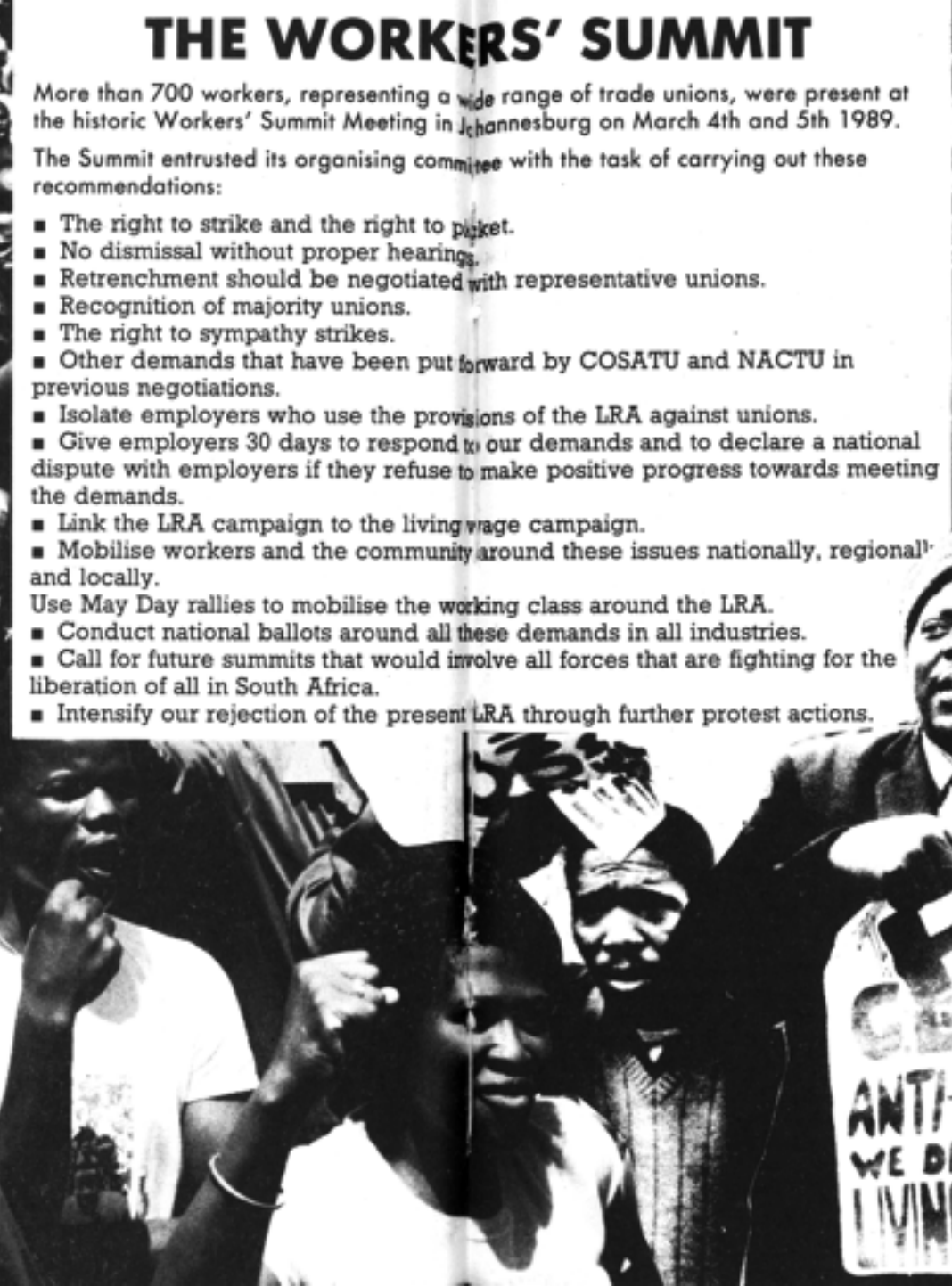


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SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA CRICKET AND THE SPORTS BOYCOTT

By Sam Ramsamy



In January this year, England finally conceded that the links its cricketers have with apartheid South Africa had to be abandoned if it is to continue harmonious exchanges with the rest of the world. As a result, the 25 countries attending the International Cricket Conference Special Meeting in London voted unanimously to impose a ban on cricketers who in future maintain links with apartheid sport.

The ban, which came into effect on April 1st, is bound to act as a deterrent to English cricketers who look to South Africa for off-season sunshine and earnings. Any cricketer who visits South Africa, as player, coach or administrator, now faces automatic suspension from representative cricket. This applies also to any exchange taking place outside South Africa with a team consisting mainly of South Africans. The ban is to last for three years if the

defaulter is under 19, and four years if he is over 19. Anyone who has been a member of a rebel touring team will be banned for five years.

Since 1980, the Black Test-playing countries within the International Cricket Conference (ICC), the world cricket governing body, have been campaigning to exclude from representative cricket anyone who takes part in sports events in South Africa.

The overwhelming majority of ICC member nations were in favour of imposing the ban, but the opposition of England had to be overcome, as England holds a veto vote at ICC meetings.

When the ICC was established in 1909, veto votes were given to the three founding members: England, Australia and South Africa. Until July 1965, the Conference was known as the Imperial Cricket Conference, and only Commonwealth countries could become members; and so, when South Africa was forced to leave the Commonwealth in 1961, it had to give up its membership of the ICC. Therefore, only England and Australia were left with the vital veto vote. South Africa tried many times to regain affiliation to the ICC, but was continuously blocked by India, Pakistan and the West Indies, the major Black Test-playing countries.

Guyana Takes A Stand

Guyana became the first country to demonstrate its anti-apartheid stance, when, in 1980, it barred a member of the England touring team scheduled to play a Test match in Georgetown. Thereafter, England became a centre of focus, and English tours of India and the West Indies were often marked by protests. The pace set by Guyana gained momentum, and soon Bangladesh and Bermuda refused to allow anyone with South African ties to play cricket in their countries.

England was the only major cricket-playing country to insist on selecting players for its national teams irrespective of their links with apartheid South Africa. The English Test and County Cricket Board (TCCB) fabricated a series of pretexts for continuing links with apartheid cricket, claiming that it was not possible to curb the flow of cricketers to South Africa. The pretexts ranged from the old-fashioned 'libertarian' principle of allowing freedom of movement to citizens, to not wanting to get involved in legal wrangles which it was bound to lose. The legal arguments regarding so-called restraint of trade legislation were exaggerated beyond all proportion.

The matter came to a head in 1988, when

England was scheduled to tour India. At least eight members of the touring squad had played in South Africa, and this was unacceptable to India. England refused to replace these cricketers, and the tour was cancelled.

Support for India

England then tried to get New Zealand to organise a triangular tournament involving Pakistan; an event designed to compensate for the loss of the Indian tour. This backfired badly because Pakistan, also known for its opposition to apartheid, refused to participate in the event. The New Zealand Government and the national anti-apartheid organisation, Halt All Racist Tours (HART) said at that time that the English tour would be an insult to India and the international anti-apartheid campaign, and that it would seriously undermine efforts by the ICC countries to impose sanctions against South African cricket. HART threatened widespread demonstrations if the tour went ahead. This forced the New Zealand cricket authorities to withdraw the invitation.

The English tour to the West Indies, scheduled for 1989-90, was also in jeopardy.

The threat of a total boycott of England teams was now very real. There were to be no more tours of the Black nations, and it would not have needed much pressure for Australia and New Zealand to fall into line. Faced with the threat of isolation, England had to succumb. At the ICC meeting on January 23rd-24th, England accepted the proposal to ban players going to South Africa after April.

The decision, backed by all ICC countries, was greeted as bad news by the supporters of the White-controlled South African Cricket Union. They felt shocked and disappointed that their long-time ally, England, had finally been forced to abandon them.

The anti-apartheid South African Cricket Board, however, welcomed the ban as a major gain in the protracted campaign against South Africa's 'cheque-book' cricket offensive.

APARTHEID HEALTH IN SOUTH AFRICA

By Jeffrey Khensani Mathebula



Hospital overcrowding forces patients to sleep on the floor

At the beginning of last year, Dr Lindsay Thompson, Australian President of the World Medical Association (WMA) paid a two-week visit to South Africa at the invitation of the Medical Association of South Africa (MASA). The WMA is largely viewed as an international body in name only, controlled by self-serving US interests, and has been written off as a lost cause by almost every African country and many other nations of the world. Many regard its South African partner, MASA, though "a voluntary body ... totally independent (and) not connected in any way with the South African Government or with the South African Medical and Dental Council or any other statutory body,"¹ as an apologist of the apartheid health system.

Dr Thomson later published a misleading report in the MASA-controlled South African Medical Journal. He praised the apartheid health system, and praised MASA because, in his opinion, "it does not concern itself in party politics but does speak out and take a strong position on

socio-political issues relating to health care." He castigated the National Medical and Dental Council (NAMDA) as "a ginger group within the profession with a centre-left political stance on most matters."²

While admitting that South Africa "continues to have political problems," Dr Thompson did not attribute the prevalence of easily preventable and curable diseases among the Black South African population to the highly unequal distribution of health resources and facilities between the various racial groups. Instead, he explained the situation by claiming that South Africa "faces the unique situation that its medical problems are those of both the First and Third World."

One Nation, Not Two

According to this, South Africa is no different from the rest of the world, where there are poor and rich nations with their

own diseases and health priorities. Therefore, that part of the South African population living in the 'First World' will have diseases of affluence, while that belonging to the 'Third World' will suffer from diseases and problems of poverty.

What this false logic fails to address itself to, or to explain, is the simple fact that in South Africa the wealth of the rich has been acquired at the expense of the poor, and here we are not dealing with separate and unconnected communities or nations but interdependent ones, and, in fact, one nation in the making.

Dr Thompson ended by saying he was, "impressed regarding the overall awareness of the medical problems, and that sincere efforts are being made to cope with these problems," and expressing his conviction "that in the educational and health sections great progress is being made, especially in regard to the Black population."

Prison Doctors and Detention

The WMA has a track record of consistently failing to condemn the apartheid health system. In fact, this was not the first time that one of its senior representatives has allowed himself to be an apologist of this system. A former chairman, Dr Lionel Wilson, is known to have secretly visited South Africa in 1984 at the invitation of MASA. At the end of his trip, he issued a statement claiming that MASA had worked "very forcefully" to improve the medical care of detainees.

In particular, both MASA and the South African Medical and Dental Council (SAMDC) have consistently failed either to condemn the torture of detainees by the South African police or to act against doctors who do not report such inhuman acts to the public. The role of both bodies in helping the apartheid regime to cover up the facts of Steve Biko's death from torture and cruel beatings at the hands of the South African police in 1977 is too well-known for us to repeat it here. While it took seven years for the SAMDC to initiate disciplinary action against the two doctors involved in the cover-up, Dr Wendy Orr, a young prison medical officer, found her duties in the district surgeons's office being reduc-

ed, her career suffering, and her life threatened with anonymous phone calls, because of the courageous stand she took at the end of 1985 in exposing the systematic torture of hundreds of detainees, including children, by the South African police. In early 1987, Dr Orr was finally forced to transfer from Port Elizabeth to Johannesburg. Dr Ivor Lang, one of the two doctors involved in the cover-up of Steve Biko's death, has now been promoted to the post of chief district surgeon in Port Elizabeth.

Murderers Protected

The security policemen who were in one way or another involved in Biko's murder have never been brought to court for trial, and as long as the apartheid regime exists there is no likelihood that this will happen. Colonel Pieter Johannes Goosen, then divisional commander of the security police in the Eastern Cape, former director of sport in the SADF and Springbok rugby player, was allowed to continue his work until August 1978. He was transferred from Port Elizabeth after a third detainee, Lungile Tabalaza, was killed in his custody during interrogation. After his transfer, Colonel Goosen was promoted to brigadier and now lives in Pretoria.

The next important security policeman involved, Major Harold Snyman, then head of the five-man interrogation team in whose hands Steve Biko died, has quietly been allowed to retire with full benefits from the police force, and now works as a life insurance salesman for SANLAM, while the others have all been promoted.

MASA has consistently failed to make an open condemnation of the principle and practice of detention without trial, especially that of children, who do not enjoy any special protection under the Internal Security Act and Public Safety Act, and are therefore vulnerable to both physical and mental torture from the South African police force. Instead of taking a definite stand against the practice, MASA has limited itself to ameliorating some of the harsher consequences of detention without trial.

Facts, Not Propaganda

A few years ago, Dr Antonio Martins, then president of WMA, was reported as having made the astonishing remark that "... the quality of health care available to all races (in South Africa) is completely equal."³ It is disturbing and strikingly odd that in such a short time someone so much detached from the South African situation could become an 'expert' on the health conditions of our people. What is most obvious is that all three senior representatives of the WMA are either blinded by their own prejudice or have decided for whatever reason to swallow, hook, line and sinker, the propaganda of the apartheid regime and present it as their own opinion.

The following facts will perhaps help to clarify the health situation as experienced by the largest section of the South African population, and dispel some long-standing myths abroad.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), an average of 60 years' life expectancy constitutes a minimum sign of adequate health provision. In South Africa, however, the average life expectancy of Africans is 50-55 years. As the most recent statistics issued by the University of Cape Town show, the average life expectancy of Africans in the rural areas is 44 years, compared with 57 in the urban townships.⁴

Life expectancy for White females is 74 and for males 66. In between, life expectancy for Indian women is 69; Indian men, 62; Coloured women, 62, and men 54.

Hunger and Infant Mortality

Although South Africa is self-sufficient in the production of foodstuffs, there is a shocking prevalence of malnutrition, and consequently a high infant mortality rate among the Black population, particularly Africans. According to official statistics, the infant mortality rate per 1 000 live births in 1982 was 80 for Africans, 59.2 for Coloureds, 20.7 for Indians and 13.4 for Whites.⁵

But, as is usually the case with official statistics, these figures turned out to be not

just conservative but a deliberate, gross underestimation of the real situation. For instance, in July 1982, Operation Hunger, the South African hunger relief organisation of the South African Institute of Race Relations, had established that the infant mortality rate among Black children in the rural areas, mostly the bantustans and White farms, was 240 per 1 000 births against 12 per 1 000 among Whites in the country as a whole.⁶ It is clear that in calculating the infant mortality rates of the various population groups between 1981 and 1982 the regime had conveniently decided to omit the infant mortality rate among Black children in the supposedly independent bantustan territories.

At the Second Carnegie Enquiry into Poverty and Development Conference in Cape Town in 1984, Professor John Hansen of the University of the Witwatersrand presented a research project with the finding that in 1970 alone more than 50 000 Black children had died from nutritional diseases.⁷ At the height of the drought in 1983, it was reported that at least 670 000 Black people in rural areas, mostly in the bantustans, were under threat of starvation.

Among some of the important findings of the Conference were that almost nine million Black people in the bantustans live below the poverty datum line, over one million have no income-generating job, and one-third of children under 14 years of age have stunted growth or are underweight.

Land of Plenty

Following this disclosure, Professor A Moosa of the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health at the University of Natal in Durban charged that between 30% and 70% of Black school children were underweight, and between 22% and 66% of pre-school children had stunted growth. In addition, he pointed out that, though "... South Africa produces enough food to meet 112% of the optimum daily energy requirement of everyone in the country, and enough to export essential foods such as maize to neighbouring countries ... undernutrition and the diseases associated with it are common in the Black community."⁸

As recently as January 1986, Ina Perlman, the executive director of Operation Hunger (at present responsible for feeding 900 000 people, mostly children, in the rural areas) disclosed that there is a Black child dying of malnutrition-related causes every 15 minutes in South Africa.⁹ Several other surveys have established beyond any doubt that at present there are almost nine million Black children throughout the country suffering from clinically diagnosable malnutrition.

By the end of 1986, the situation seemed not to have changed at all, as the infant mortality rate for Africans living outside the bantustans was officially reported to be 80 babies per 1 000 births (compared with 31.6 for Coloureds, 13.6 for Indians and 7 for Whites).¹⁰

Catastrophe Predicted

Between July 1986 and June 1987, a total of 3 355 Black children are reported to have undergone treatment for kwashiorkor, while the official figure for June to December 1987 is 3 387. In August 1987, Mrs Perlman warned that South Africa faced an "Ethiopia-type catastrophe," as almost 1.5 million people were on the verge of starvation. This has been largely attributed to factors related to the apartheid system, such as increased influx control, the large inflow of unemployed people from the rural areas into the urban areas and vice versa, and to the drought that hit the country several years ago, exacerbating the situation.

A recent research report¹¹ commissioned by Operation Hunger and written by Dr Frances D'Souza of Oxford University, shows that the prevalence of malnutrition among Black South African rural children is higher than in Botswana, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The study found that the rate of "chronic malnutrition" in South African rural areas is 56.5% of the population, while in Botswana it is 40.7%, Swaziland 30.3%, Zambia 34.8% and Zimbabwe 13.9%. At provincial level, the study found that 49% of African rural children in the Transvaal, 58% in the Eastern Cape and 80% in the Northern Cape are underweight.

Other researchers¹² have estimated that the infant mortality rate is some 190 babies per 1 000 in the first year of life in the Transkei, while in KwaZulu it is 210.

This means that, with the possible exception of Mozambique, where the Pretoria-sponsored MNR bandits are responsible for mass destruction and starvation, more people starve in areas run by South Africa than in those of other countries in our region.

TB A Killer

Although malnutrition and related diseases are the main killer diseases among Black children in South Africa, they are not the only ones affecting Africans. During the first half of the 1980s, a wave of easily preventable and curable diseases, some long eradicated in various parts of the world, hit the country, and thousands of Black people fell victim to them. They included diphtheria, leprosy, malaria, measles, polio, tuberculosis, viral hepatitis, tetanus, cholera and trachoma.

A total of 80 000 people, almost all Africans, were affected by these diseases in 1981 alone. This does not include people who fell victim to the same diseases in the so-called 'independent' homelands.

The disease with the highest prevalence (52 000) was reported to be tuberculosis. This, after malnutrition, was the major killer disease among Black people throughout the country and particularly the Cape Province during the five years 1977-1981. In 1983, 62 103 cases were reported and 20 deaths each day, from this disease, and some health experts began expressing the fear that South Africa was fast losing the battle against the disease. If the situation is grave enough, more alarming is the disclosure that nearly a third of the population, that is, about 10 million people, are suffering from latent TB which, at any time, can be activated by malnutrition, stress and overcrowding under poor conditions.¹³

Outside Cape Town, the rural areas, particularly in the Transkei and Ciskei bantustans, are the hardest hit by tuberculosis. This is a vivid reflection of how the migrant labour system contributes to the spread of

this disease throughout the country, for these are precisely the preferred recruiting grounds of labour for the mining industry. In 1983 alone, 2 062 deaths from TB were reported in the country, the largest number (1 254) in the Cape, followed by the Transvaal with 611.

Profit to the Few Death to Many

The lives and health of many thousands of people, mostly African, have been exposed to genocide by the mine-owners in their pursuit of super-profits under the protection of the prevailing racist legislation. The extent of this can be better understood if we consider the many hundreds who have died and the many thousands more who still face certain death and permanent disablement from industrial diseases such as silicosis and asbestosis.

For instance, between 1974 and 1977, the number of people who fell victim to these diseases was 1 947 for Africans, and 480 for Whites and Coloureds combined. A couple of years ago the South African mining industry faced a scandal of unprecedented proportions when the Technical Advice Group, a team of medical, engineering and scientific researchers based in Johannesburg, discovered that 500 000 people in the north-eastern Transvaal towns of Bewaarskloof, Mahlanjane, Mmafefe, Dalton and Kromellenboog, have over many years been exposed to blue asbestos fibres. There, children play on waste dumps near abandoned crocidolite (blue asbestos) mines; local Black entrepreneurs mix asbestos waste with cement and water to make bricks, and primary school-children study in classrooms with blue asbestos fibres protruding from roughly-hewn walls. The notorious Penge asbestos mine, at which 788 mine workers were found to have contracted asbestosis between 1973 and 1983, is also in this region.

Exposure to asbestos fibres through ingestion or inhalation of the blue dust can result in asbestosis, mesothelioma and lung cancer. While asbestosis is a slowly disabling disease, mesothelioma results in painful and certain death. Asbestos-related

diseases can take as long as between 30 and 50 years to develop, but as to mesothelioma, once its symptoms become manifest, it can reduce life expectancy to two or three years. A report by the US Department of Health and Human Services in 1980 states:

"at very short exposure periods — one day to three months — significant disease can occur,"

and this therefore reveals how easily the north-eastern Transvaal communities have probably contracted the diseases.

Other places afflicted are the asbestos mining towns of Kuruman, Prieska, Koegas and Griquatown in the north-western Cape. In 1958, when research work established that asbestos fibres were the cause of mesothelioma, it was in precisely this region that the Gencor-owned Griqualand Exploration and Finance Company (GEF-CO), the mining industry as a whole, and the racist authorities stepped in to cover up the incidence of these diseases.

The cover-up involved sponsoring medical research with funds from the state, the Chamber of Mines and the asbestos industry, with the aim of suppressing information on the findings of the report. As early as 1970, with this motive in mind, the asbestos industry had sponsored research to the tune of £25 000 to look into the individual susceptibility to asbestos and the prevalence of mesothelioma among Black workers in the asbestos mines. In this way, the mine owners were able to buy time instead of improving dust controls on the mines and keep the public in the dark, thus avoiding a greater scandal.

Startling Prevalence

Other common diseases afflicting mostly the indigenous sector of the population are measles, which saw an increase of 14 293 to 14 523 from 1981 to 1983, and cholera, leprosy, plague, polio, trachoma, typhoid, viral hepatitis and others. In 1983 alone, 6 813 cases of cholera were reported throughout the country. The table gives a startling picture of the prevalence of these common and easily preventable diseases

DISEASE NOTIFICATION BY RACE

1984:	African	Asian	Coloured	White	Total
Cholera	1 617	15	5	3	1 640
Leprosy	141	0	3	0	144
Malaria	4 134	15	7	222	4 378
Measles	12 997	389	818	474	14 678
Polio	56	1	2	2	61
Trachoma	453	0	0	0	453
Tuberculosis	41 149	594	11 567	610	53 920
Typhoid Fever	5 396	28	49	44	5 517
Viral Hepatitis	199	41	172	230	642
1985:					
Cholera	670	19	1	0	690
Leprosy	72	0	1	1	74
Malaria	9 652	5	3	286	9 946
Measles	12 186	168	650	961	13 965
Polio	53	0	7	4	64
Trachoma	19	0	0	0	19
Tuberculosis	36 370	630	11 421	620	49 041
Typhoid Fever	4 049	51	27	59	4 186
Viral Hepatitis	593	107	297	383	1 380
1986:					
Cholera	275	1	3	0	279
Leprosy	129	0	1	0	130
Malaria	6 640	8	3	188	6 839
Measles	10 414	48	1 053	1 060	12 575
Polio	35	0	5	1	41
Trachoma	108	0	1	0	109
Tuberculosis	37 342	537	12 714	720	51 313
Typhoid Fever	3 940	27	41	51	4 059
Viral Hepatitis	593	93	291	417	1 394

(Race Relations Survey 1986, SAIRR, Johannesburg)

among the various population groups.

At the end of 1984, a hitherto unrecorded "deadly form of heart disease that feeds on poverty rather than affluence" was reported to be wreaking havoc with the health of Black children. Known as rheumatic infection heart disease, it generally begins as an ordinary throat infection caused by the streptococcus bacterium and if not operated on in time is capable of killing. This disease, considered the country's biggest secret killer and threatening the lives of 24 million people, goes largely unrecorded and unpublished by the minor-

ity regime and the press. No statistics are available, but it is believed that the rate of this disease among South African Blacks is ten times the US rate.

A survey in Soweto in the same year established that seven out of every 1 000 school children were affected, with a peak rate of 19 children per 1 000 by the time they reach the seventh year in school. This situation is serious enough, and that in the rural areas is even more alarming. For instance, at a heart disease unit in Durban, 75% of the patients afflicted by the disease were from the rural areas of Natal.

All this happens in a country where the state spends proportionally more on diseases caused by affluence and nutritional excess, such as ischaemic heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, breast and colon cancer, dental caries and obesity. All these are widespread among the White population, and the White mortality rate from ischaemic heart disease is the highest in the world.

The fact that tuberculosis, followed by measles, cholera and (though unrecorded) rheumatic heart disease are the leading killer diseases among Africans in South Africa attests to the poor and miserable conditions under which this sector of the population is forced to live and work.

Access to Health Care

As if this were not enough, Blacks enjoy very little access to the basic health care and treatment services of the country. Professor A Moosa charged in his article that 98% of the state health budget is spent on curative rather than preventative services "demanded and expected by Whites, who have one of the highest standards of living in the world."

The allocation of health resources and facilities among the various population groups is starkly disproportionate. The result is a high mortality rate from accidents, both in and outside the workplace, and from common diseases.

For instance, in 1983, Dr Nak van der Merwe, then Minister of Health and Social Welfare, disclosed in response to a question in parliament that by then there were 629 hospitals in the White-designated areas of the country, with a bed distribution of 43 803 for Whites and 77 542 for Africans, Coloureds and Indians. This is in a situation where the first group is by far the smallest.

According to information provided by Professor Moosa in his article, the ratio of available hospital beds to head of population in South Africa was 1:61.3 for Whites; 1:504.8 for Asians; 1:346.1 for Coloureds and 1:337.4 for Africans. The average expenditure for each patient per day ranged from R20.54 to R41.58 in Black hospitals, and from R75.76 to R107.47 in White hospitals.

Unequal Expenditure

Expenditure per patient is still substantially lower in Black hospitals than in mainly White hospitals. R45 is spent per patient per day at Baragwanath in Soweto; R57 at Kalafong in Atteridgeville; R61 at Livingstone Hospital in Port Elizabeth, and R69 at Frere Hospital in East London. Among White or mainly White hospitals, the J G Strydom Hospital in Johannesburg spends R160; the Johannesburg Hospital R209; the H F Verwoerd Hospital in Pretoria R194; both old and new Groote Schuur Hospitals in Cape Town and Tygerberg Hospital in Stellenbosch R136.

While no wards in state-administered hospitals are integrated, the whole notion of integrated hospitals in South Africa is still largely a dangerous myth. This cannot be otherwise as long as the health system continues to be fragmented into fourteen departments, and while racist legislation such as the Group Areas Act still exists.

Baragwanath Hospital, paraded to the outside world as a showpiece of the regime, illustrates the unequal distribution of resources outside the bantustans. It has long been public knowledge that this hospital is heavily understaffed and overcrowded, with patients sleeping on the floor, while the Johannesburg Hospital for Whites, built at a cost of R150 million and requiring nearly R70 million a year to maintain, has hundreds of beds lying idle because they are reserved for Whites.

The regime's own health authorities admit that Soweto needs at least 5 000 hospital beds for its population, but by the beginning of 1987, Baragwanath had only 2 700, and the superintendent once had to complain that in one year alone, 13 333 patients had to be discharged before their treatment was over, because of lack of beds.¹⁴ Towards the end of 1988, it was reported that in Baragwanath there are often over 100 patients in a ward with only 40 beds.¹⁵

Physicians Protest

This intolerable situation had previously led a group of 101 doctors from the

Medicine Department of Baragwanath to write an open letter, published in the *South African Medical Journal* on September 5th 1987, complaining about gross overcrowding in their department, patients sleeping on the floor because of bed shortages, inadequate and low quality bathing and toilet facilities, and an overworked nursing staff. The letter was directed to both the racist authorities and the medical profession at large, in the hope that it would evoke a positive response:

*"... at least on humanitarian grounds, to bring about urgent relief to an appalling situation that is rapidly approaching a major crisis."*¹⁶

Instead of seeing the situation rectified, the signatories found themselves being victimised, as the provincial authorities demanded that they apologise, and dissociate themselves from the letter, and refused to re-employ those who failed to apologise.

In contrast to the overcrowding at Baragwanath and other Black hospitals, the J G Strydom Hospital and Johannesburg Hospital, both mainly White, have 512 and 1 513 beds respectively, only 54% and 52% of which are used regularly.

The situation at King Edward VIII Hospital in Durban is no better than that at Baragwanath. In September 1987 there were 150 patients sleeping on the floor, according to a press report, while the local White hospital had spare capacity.

Coronation Hospital, the major institution catering for Coloureds and Indians in Johannesburg, has 503 beds available and an occupancy rate of 92%. This fact seems to indicate a sound health situation, but is misleading, especially as regards the Indian population.

No Childbirth After Hours

In an emergency, Indian patients must travel 32 km from Lenasia, because the only polyclinic there is in Extension 5, a wealthy area far from the poorer areas of Extensions 2, 10 and 11, where the greatest need arises. In addition to these problems,

the clinic opens only during working hours and has no provision for childbirth after hours, nor for any specialist treatment. There is so far no adequate ambulance service either for the Indian community of Lenasia as a whole to Coronation Hospital or for its poorest section to the polyclinic. And in the meantime, the apartheid regime has failed to put into operation a newly-built hospital promised to the Indian community of Lenasia since 1969, but now standing unused.

Recently, it was announced that the construction of a second and new Groote Schuur Hospital in Cape Town had just been completed at a cost of over R200 million. According to the press, this hospital is to be desegregated. However welcome this may be, the building of such an expensive hospital in a White area, where all major hospitals are located, should be seriously questioned. For instance, in Gugulethu there is only one small polyclinic for all its residents and those of Nyanga, New Crossroads, KTC and Phillippi, while Mitchell's Plain and Bonteheuwel have no day hospital at all. Also, the question why there should be two segregated nursing colleges still needs to be answered.

Showpiece Hospitals

It is likely that the Cape Provincial Administration would like to use the desegregation of the new Groote Schuur to transfer a substantial amount of its medical aid to private hospitals, and at the same time to divert attention from the continuing segregation in other Cape hospitals.

In February 1986, the press reported that the Transvaal Provincial Administration was continuing with plans for building a mammoth White teaching hospital in Pretoria at a cost of over R275 million, but was at the same time putting off plans for a desperately needed 800-bed hospital in Soweto at the lower cost of R100 million. The Soweto hospital project has been shelved for more than 20 years now, and in September 1987, Chris Heunis, Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning,

was reported as saying it was "still on the waiting list on account of a shortage of funds." Already, the apartheid regime has used over R1.5 million for the new White training hospital to be attached to the H F Verwoerd Hospital in Pretoria.

It seems that even the puppet bantustan authorities are eager to follow in their masters' footsteps by squandering scarce financial resources on these hospital showpieces rather than addressing themselves to the health needs of the mass of the population. For instance, in Lebowa, an extravagant new hospital has just been built only three short kilometres from an adequate new hospital in nearby Gazankulu.

It is clear from all this that the construction of these monster hospitals at such a great cost, mostly in the White urban areas and where 95% of the country's doctors are practising, cannot be of much use to those who most desperately need these services in the Black townships and most parts of the rural areas. In South Africa, however, the distribution of health resources and provision of medical treatment, as well as the cause of disease, can never be explained only in terms of scientific medicine. There is a crying need for everyone concerned to acknowledge openly the social determinants of disease and the fact that the health of the different population groups in South Africa is a clear reflection of socio-political environment.

Immediate Demands

While the struggle for a democratic, non-racial and united South Africa continues, it is still imperative for the mass democratic movement to put pressure on the regime:

- to reduce its military budget and increase expenditure on the health system;
- to create a single department of health for all the country;
- to abolish the Group Areas Act and integrate all hospitals and health facilities;
- to decentralise the health service, with more powers and financial and material resources being given to the local health authorities and primary health care clinics to attend to the prevention and cure of easi-

ly preventable diseases, instead of squandering funds on curing diseases of affluence among the rich and privileged.

As long as the regime refuses to accede to these legitimate demands, it will be the duty of the international community to sever all links with those institutions, bodies and individuals whose practice and work serve to perpetuate the existing situation, or who act as apologists for it. There is no reason why university exchanges, joint technical, technological and medical research programmes should be left out.

At the same time, links should be forged and established with those few institutions, organisations, bodies and individuals whose work has the effect of rectifying the situation and ultimately contributes towards creating a democratic, non-racial and united South Africa.

At this stage, direct consultation and co-ordination with leaders of the mass democratic movement inside South Africa and the ANC is of the utmost importance in avoiding unnecessary confusion and misunderstandings.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Comrade Editor

I am prompted to respond to the article, *The People's Struggle is our Guide* by Theresa, in the January 1989 issue of *Sechaba*, which itself was a response to Comrade Ronnie Kasrils' discussion article, *The Revolutionary Army*, of September 1988.

The tone of Comrade Theresa's article is extraordinarily out of step with the general current and spirit of discussion inside the ranks of our movement. She does not see any reason for us to be critically examining our strategy and tactics, and considers this to be a sign of armchair revolutionaries contemplating our own navels. Yet, as far as I understand it, the search for a correct strategy in continuously changing objective and subjective conditions is the hallmark, not of passive, armchair politics, but of active, purposeful, revolutionary engagement. Denying the need to continuously analyse and, if necessary, re-work our approach to the struggle as it concretely unfolds leads to dogma, to sterile formulae. This negates the very impact the

resistance is having on the struggle, and is a certain recipe for never attaining our goal of popular power.

Critical, constructive analysis and discussion is a vital necessity of revolutionary struggle. This is a statement which Comrade Theresa would readily agree with in the abstract, perhaps. Yet in practice (though possibly unwittingly) she denies the need for it. This is because of the theoretical assumptions she makes about the relation of the vanguard movement to the mass popular struggle. She argues that the people's struggle, "a more or less spontaneous product of objective conditions ... exposes the nature of the struggle: its content, its general direction and its chief tasks." But this is a people's struggle devoid of its revolutionary vanguard.

Throughout her generalised overview of "people's struggle" in the first half of the eighties, there is absolutely no sense of the underground — the role the ANC, MK, SACP and SACTU played in stimulating mass popular organisation and resistance in all its forms, including street committees. And this is not because they weren't there **in fact**, as an integral and essential part of

people's struggle, but rather because Comrade Theresa considers the vanguard extraneous to mass struggle. It must "sum up, make more logical and systematic, the people's experience," without itself initiating, directing and channelling the acknowledged spontaneity of mass popular actions. The vanguard (which she mistakenly terms the national liberation movement) is a passive force, there to tidy up the edges of "people's struggle," to support rather than to lead.

This view is very different from Comrade Kasrils' understanding of the relationship of mass popular organisation with the armed struggle and the vanguard organisations of the national liberation movement. Since she abstracts Umkhonto We Sizwe (organised armed struggle) and the ANC (the organised political underground) from "people's struggle," it is not surprising that not only does she not see the need for a discussion of strategy (as "the people" will spontaneously lead "the vanguard" on all matters, including the armed struggle!), but also and inevitably she distorts the notion of the Revolutionary Army, the subject of Ronnie Kasrils' discussion article.

Far from expressing "a militarist tendency," as Comrade Theresa contends, the strategy to create the Revolutionary Army — effectively, the arming of the people in order to seize power — is the antithesis of militarism. The armed struggle has to embrace the ever-growing number of oppressed who, as part of the Political Army (those who have been politically mobilised at whatever level), are willing and able to take up arms. They must be trained into an organised, fighting force — the people who take up arms as part of their political activity and in addition to their daily work routine. They are the people, armed.

Creating the Revolutionary Army, the nucleus of which is our standing army, Umkhonto We Sizwe, suggests a way to make our armed struggle more effective, to integrate the military more fully into political resistance. In other words, to make it more appropriate to the objective conditions under which we are fighting. It is entirely in keeping with the growing clamour for arms by the masses, who want to defend themselves effectively and to attack and

defeat an enemy which maintains power through armed force. It is consistent with our understanding that, without effective armed struggle, "people's power" will be elusive — an unfulfilled and empty promise.

Indeed, if there is a lesson to be learned from the struggles of the eighties, it is that mass action, even on an unprecedented scale, sustained over years and supported by a standing guerrilla army, has not been enough to bring down White minority rule. It is necessary to continue and intensify mass resistance at every level, of course, but it is essential that the base of the army is broadened, so that the balance of mass struggle is significantly shifted in favour of armed resistance.

It most certainly is not "revolution from above," conducted on behalf of the people by military means, as Comrade Theresa argues, but revolution by the people — armed, assertive and able to defend ourselves politically and militarily!

The notion of the Revolutionary Army advances our armed strategy. Indeed, it is Comrade Kasrils' answer to the crucial question: how do we propose to seize power? — a question of considerable urgency and relevance, most of all because of the suffering of the people and their readiness to sacrifice. To rely on the spontaneity of the masses is to abdicate our responsibility as a vanguard, and to deny ourselves as a revolutionary movement and to deny a beleaguered people the means of winning liberation.

There is no room for complacency or passivity. Nor can we afford to sideline the armed struggle in theory or in practice, and if we do so it will be at our own peril. Yet this is the logic of Comrade Theresa's article.

In sharp contrast, Comrade Kasrils' discussion article — a call for us to advance and develop our organisational capacity, and a considered argument as to how it can be done — is a most welcome and stimulating contribution to an urgent matter which is, and needs to be, widely debated by us all.

Organisation is the key!

Woman Combatant
Lusaka

OBITUARY

JOHN PULE MOTSHABI



John Pule Motshabi was born on March 21st 1920 on a farm called Randjesfontein, which borders Pretoria and Johannesburg. At a tender age he was confronted by great odds, and became a victim of oppression, like any other African child. His small school beginnings saw him up to Standard Six — a major achievement for those times. While he attained this standard, he was at the same time performing the rural task of herding cattle for his grandfather.

Later, Pule, as he was called, hit the road for greener pastures in the Golden City. It was there in Johannesburg that he enhanced his education, and collected Forms One and Two as well. Eventually, despite obstacles along his path, his determination saw him qualify as an electrician.

John Pule Motshabi's interest in politics was fired by discussions — which he listened to intently — between his grandparents and their colleagues. These discussions included activities of the members of the African trade union, the Industrial and Commercial Union (ICU), their involvement in different regions, and how they solved their day-to-day problems. The ICU was so active that many people started to show appreciation by giving donations for the good work it was doing. As an act of such ap-

preciation, Pule's grandparents also donated two big beasts in support of the union.

John Pule was also encouraged by political organisations and political personalities of the time. He was influenced by those personalities who participated in the All-African Convention in Bloemfontein in 1936. The men and women at this convention were of differing outlook and character, but were bound together by their resolve to defeat the Hertzog Act and the 1913 Land Act, which deprived Africans of the right to freehold ownership of land.

It came as no surprise, then, when John Pule Motshabi joined the African National Congress in 1942, when he was in his prime, a young man of 22. He came in contact with thinkers and practical leaders like J B Marks, Moses Kotane, Jack Simons, Bram Fischer, Edwin Mofutsanyana and David Bopape. Later in 1942, he joined the Communist Party of South Africa.

When, in 1947, the ANC, the Natal Indian Congress and the Transvaal Indian Congress entered into the Xuma-Dadoo-Naicker pact of unity, Pule had become a fully-fledged activist. He became the provincial secretary of the ANC. In 1946, together with Comrades Schreiner Baduza,

Mark Ramitloa, Lucas Bokaba and Abner Kunene, he campaigned with the squatter movement in Alexandra Township, where the people were demanding land to build themselves houses to live with their families, and freedom to work wherever they wished.

He also became one of the organisers of the African mineworkers' strike in 1946, in which H M Seperepere, Elias Motsoaledi and Ruth First also took part.

When the barbarous Ghetto Act of 1946 was passed, Comrade Motshabi was on the task force to take the struggle to the citadel of power by mobilising the masses to resist. As an official of the ANC, he took part in the planning of, and actively participated in, activities of the movement, and chaired commissions.

These events, landmarks in the history of our struggle, involved names like Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Dan Tloome, T T Nkobi, John Nkadimeng — and others, some of whom are serving life sentences. During the Alexandra bus boycott in 1957, at the time of the historic Treason Trial, it became John Pule's main task to coordinate with other areas in conducting a solidarity boycott in Soweto. Political activist, organiser and fighter, he was in the centre of the whirlwind.

When the historic Rivonia crackdown took place, and some comrades were arrested while others dived underground, Comrade Pule worked hard to save many comrades who might have been arrested. This demonstrated his ability to master underground work, and his finesse in handling underground machinery; and he developed a close contact and working relationship with Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu.

In the early 1960s, Comrade Pule joined the external mission of the ANC, and continued his activity in the South African Congress of Trade Unions. His disciplined lifestyle and rigorous devotion to the politics of his country saw him working for SACTU abroad.

At the same time, he also rendered service to the Communist Party, under its new name, the South African Communist Party. One of the main tasks of Comrades John Pule, Ray Simons, Jack Simons and Flag

Boshielo was to establish a strong Central Committee that would help to consolidate activities of the party with the internal struggle. The ultimate thrust of this exercise was to harmonise the entire struggle for effective liberation. That Flag Boshielo took the decision to go inside South Africa, speaks for this.

Comrade Pule repeatedly pointed out that political consciousness was supreme, and military struggle only complementary to the political struggle. He said it was possible to win the military struggle and fail to win the political struggle, if the people did not understand the direction of the political struggle. He stressed the importance of people's leaders speaking in the languages people understood and cherished. He believed that we should be ready to speak our own languages and to encourage their use at meetings; that we should develop literary works as a priority and as a symbol of progress, prosperity and freedom for our people.

Pule liked music. Also, Like Moses Kotane, he was a footballer, and founder member of Pretoria Callies Football Club. While active in politics, he helped organise the famous Moroka Swallows Football Club, in Moroka Emergency Camp.

One of Comrade Pule's best qualities was that he was always keen to learn from others. So overwhelming was his commitment to truth that, once convinced of his stand, he would stick to it, until the cows came home, even if it appeared distasteful to his colleagues. To Pule, truth and politics were inseparable. During his oration at Pule's funeral, President Tambo underlined this fact, which he said was a rare quality.

John Pule Motshabi was buried in Lusaka on November 28th 1988.

Farewell, Comrade Pule. Your contribution and sacrifices were not in vain. Historians of the future will study the period you lived in, and the struggle of that time to bring the South African regime to its knees, win for all our people freedom, democracy, justice and peace, and establish a non-racial democracy on the basis of the Freedom Charter.

Robala ka khotso, Morwa wa Motshabi.

— Obed T Motshabi

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"One of the greatest challenges facing us in this period is the threat facing the working class in general and the trade union movement in particular... Let us ourselves create the conditions which will force the regime and the employers to recognise our right to organise and to act in defence of our interests. Of fundamental importance in this regard is the need for trade union unity and organisation of the unemployed."

— ANC January 8th Message, 1989

