

# CASA SUPPLEMENT



*Veterans of South African Jazz — the Pioneers and Peter Radise greet CASA*

**ASA**

**TOWARDS A DEMOCRATIC  
CULTURE**

# Culture IN ANOTHER South Africa

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**The following is the keynote address delivered by BARBARA MASEKELA at the opening of CASA in Amsterdam. Comrade Barbara is the Secretary for Arts and Culture.**

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In this year of the 75th anniversary we salute you in the name of the ANC and congratulate you for all the risks, sacrifices and varied contributions you have made toward the 'Advance to People's Power' in our beloved country. This, a conference and festival for anti-apartheid cultural workers, comes five years after two historical cultural festivals, 'Culture and Resistance' organised by the MEDU Cultural Ensemble in Gaborone in July 1982, and the 'Cultural Voice of Resistance' — Dutch and South African Artists Against Apartheid, December 1982.

Among cultural activists who were the key participants in these festivals were some who are no longer with us — Thami Mnyele, our magnificent people's artist whose life is a monument and example of the best we can attain, cut down by the murderous SADF commandos in Botswana 1985, James Madlope Phillips, Johnny Dyani and Kingforce Silgee, to mention but a few. We remember them now for their illustrious contribution and take a minute's silence in their honour and for their spirit, which can never be vanquished.

This festival opening is an occasion for tribute paying for the meritorious work done to achieve our common ideals. It necessarily also is a time for humble assessment of the objectives we have set ourselves to eradicate the apartheid monster which feeds so greedily on diversion, division and manipulation. This effort is a powerful reminder of our own potential as cultural activists and solidarity workers hand in hand. We must express our deep appreciation for this chance of reunion and discussion with our Dutch counterparts and the all too brief but enormous opportunity to embrace our brothers and sisters, our compatriots

who come from the frontline of the politico-cultural resistance, who in their daily confrontation with apartheid, are still decorated with the scars and stars of courage, determination and sacrifice displayed daily by all our people in struggle. Comrades, your example is an inspiration to us and your patriotic performance strengthens our own dedication to our joint just cause and all the tasks we have set ourselves to create a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa.

We can never be exiled from our homeland because daily your songs, your poems, your plays, your paintings and films — magnificent manifestations — keep our attention riveted on our inevitable freedom. Through your excellent work the reality of ANC presence is now even acknowledged by our enemies.

We would rather that the scene of this festival had been closer to the battlefield and indeed, for some of us here, it may have been cause for concern that we must meet here in the Netherlands from whence the ships of colonialism sailed to exploit our people 335 years ago. Notwithstanding, this meeting confirms our conviction of the oneness of the human race and that colonialism is not of the Dutch people in general, that resistance against apartheid is not of black South Africans only. Rather, that colonialism and the support of apartheid is designed by specific groups that sought and still seek to gain from exploitation, oppression and other forms of barbarity. Thus, we are here because our friends and supporters in the Netherlands, in common with the majority of humankind, have taken a principled stand against apartheid and have constituted themselves into a significant component of the pillar of international

solidarity. Nonetheless, the major thrust is on the shoulders of the South African people, who value the complementary efforts of international solidarity.

Our gathering here, to share in and have discourse on the burgeoning alternative culture in the making of South Africa, is also an acknowledgement of the integral contribution made and still to be rendered by cultural workers in the bitter struggle ahead. It constitutes part of the seeding that will bring about 'another' South Africa.

The theme of CASA Festival underlines the dichotomy of apartheid South Africa, which in its dying fits, is vainly struggling to throttle the birth of a democratic, united, non-racial South Africa, refusing to yield to the inevitable. But that which is already fully formed and shaped will emerge against all odds. It is the law of nature, and as one of our poets has sung, 'To every birth its blood'.

The real South Africa, struggling to be born, is represented by the fighters of freedom, the popular spirit of resistance and self-affirmation. That real South Africa is seen in the strong emergence of the Mass Democratic Movement that straddles every aspect of South African life and culture today. So that in education, the workplace, the churches, even in the enemy camp, there is today evidence of this encompassing inclusive culture of liberation. The dying social system which seeks to pull everyone into the murky bottoms of antiquity, which does not represent the best of South Africa or Africa, is an inhumanity which has been progressively rooted out. That the two South Africas are not defined by geography or skin colour is daily becoming a vindication of the ANC position that South Africa belongs to all who live in it. While the overwhelming majority of the oppressed have chosen to fight for and build a new South Africa, the spirit of resistance is also filtering into the former strongholds of white supremacy. Reality dictates that ultimately those who have enjoyed the



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privileges of white South Africa must cast their lot unequivocally with the oppressed, in word and deed. Unarguably this will hasten the demise of apartheid and the establishment of a new order.

We are a generation that has witnessed the birth, in the sub-region, of Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. We know of the apartheid efforts to nullify the hard-won independence and sovereignty of these states because of what they represent and because they

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*COSATU Choir — the voice of struggling workers won't be silenced*

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and must never, succumb to racial solutions. The challenge of these grim conditions of necessity dictates that we, cultural workers, are freedom fighters first, that political creativity be the mirror in which we reflect our creativity. Thus we are an integral part of the overall struggle, not artists who merely contemplate the cataclysms of our era. Our art springs directly from the experiences that have been moulding our national consciousness over the centuries to the present. Now, at the brink of dawn of our freedom, in the process of becoming, it is essential, as our President has stated when dealing with

to the giants of the present, to Mandela, Sisulu, Kathrada and our other political leaders in the resurgent mass democratic movement.

Recently we have witnessed the release, after 23 years of imprisonment, of Govan Mbeki. Last Friday Govan Mbeki was placed under strict banning orders by the racist South African regime. The banning of our leader Govan Mbeki makes a mockery of his supposed unconditional release. Clearly, the welcome accorded him on his release by the South African people has frightened the racists.

However, it is not an accident that

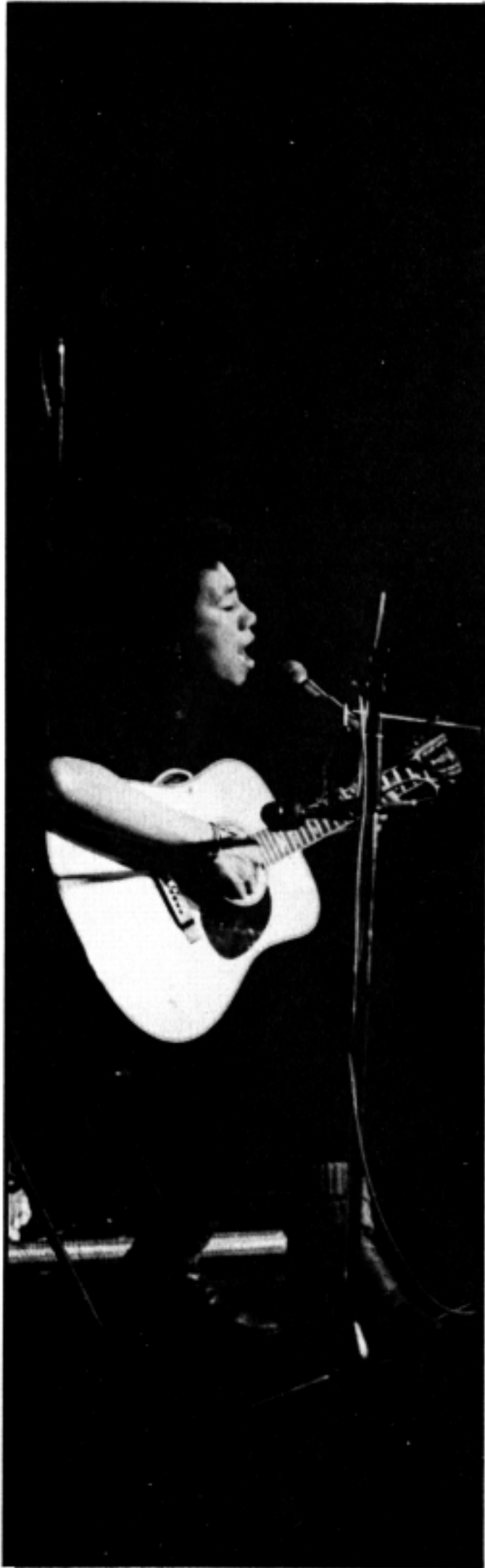


support our cause. Certainly, we are also products of an era when economic and political destabilisation, when military aggression, is commonplace. We are also familiar with the impunity with which apartheid causes mass hunger and famine, massacres and dislocation. The apartheid tactics of divide and rule, paternalism, promotion of negative traditional customs and the co-option of collaborators as a buffer system — all these are carried out in a 'constructive engagement' with those Western powers who bolster and support them. Indeed, it is a wonder and achievement that in the face of such concentrated racist sway we have not,

the role of cultural workers in his January 8th 1985 address, to: 'Let the arts be one of the many means by which we cultivate the spirit of revolt among the broad masses, enhance the striking power of our movement and inspire the millions of our people to fight for the South Africa we envisage'.

As the tactics of our enemies become more refined and also more brutal, so we must call on all our reserves of strength and creativity to make the day of triumph come sooner. Our resistance today is built on the cumulative experience of our forebears from the ancient Khoi Khoi and Nama to Sekhukhune, Moshoeshoe, Makana and

Plaatjie, a writer, or Vuyisile Mini, a composer, were also political activists. It is in the tradition of our history of resistance. We have not invented revolution and we have and shall never imitate the presumptuousness of the unwashed voyagers of the colonial era who claimed to have discovered what was already there and commonplace to the owners of the land. That is why it is customary in our culture that on great days of celebration or observance the mbongi always praised the ones who charted the path before them. The performance, exhibitions, discussions at this festival are in no small way a praise song to our predecessors. They



*Bettina Schauw bringing to CASA memories of tyranny in South Africa*

are also an encouragement and spur on the long and difficult journey ahead.

At the present moment there are various organisational forms for progressive people's artists. We need to address the question whether they are reaching the people, whether they represent the majority of patriotic artists and serve to accommodate the needs of groups at various levels of consciousness. It is pertinent that in the late sixties and early seventies it was the black consciousness cultural awakening which emphasised the building of self-confidence and national spirit of the oppressed. The positive contribution of this movement had been acknowledged by the ANC. In a statement issued after the Second Session of the ANC National Executive Committee in 1973, our Secretary General pointed out that:

'The assertion of the revolutionary identity of the oppressed black peoples is not an end in itself. It can be a vital force of revolutionary action involving the masses of the people, for it is in struggle, in the actual physical confrontation that the people gain a lasting confidence in their own strength and in the inevitability of final victory — it is through action that the people acquire true psychological emancipation'.

Happily we can say with confidence now eight years later that with the workers, students and many other sectors these words have become true. Is this also a fact for the cultural sector? Of course we are aware of our own traditional attitudes towards artists as well as the apartheid regime's monopoly and control of culture that have impeded the development of an authentic peoples culture. But we are greatly encouraged by the fine work of the relatively young UDF Cultural Desk and the COSATU Cultural Structures. The formation of COSAW, Congress of South African Writers, is also a happy addition to these forces. We hail these efforts and have confidence in their strength. The work of organising cultural workers is on its way but a major part of the task still lies ahead of

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*Mzwakhe Mbuli — one of our country's noted poets — was refused permission by the regime to attend CASA and is now in detention.*

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us. To break down certain assumptions about artists we have to guard against sometimes raising our own consciousness to a fetish. We must eschew exclusivism or arrogance lest we alienate potential activists. We also need to guard against relegating to irrelevance the contribution of our white democratic compatriots. We must encourage the trend of Afrikaner cultural workers of the past and present, take cognisance of and support their efforts to identify with the national democratic struggle.

Cultural workers, being of and for the people, cannot merely assume the role of teaching or prescribing for the people. We can learn from the overall activity of the people and, on occasions when they seem slow to respond, then we must exercise patience and persuasion, because mobilisation, political education and involvement differ and it takes more time than the coercion that is the overwhelming characteristic of the enemy.

As comrade Alfred Nzo, who spoke to you last night, has pointed out: 'The speed of a column on the march is determined by the pace of the slowest and weakest soldier and not the fittest and fastest. The most advanced sections should therefore at all times seek to advance the least developed ones, keeping in the forefront the principles of the greatest and highest unity of the people and at all times fighting against all tendencies of seeking to "go it alone" through impatience and contempt for the less developed forces of the revolution'. Logically, this statement infers that the advance contingent of cultural workers — many of whom are in this hall today — should of necessity move at the pace of our people. The work of an artist is mirrored in the popular response of the masses and the latter would gain a lasting confidence in their own strength and in the inevitability of final victory.

People's culture, born of cross-pollination among the artists and the people themselves in the democratic mainstream of socio-politico and





economic change, is a growing dynamic process which is defined by subjective and objective circumstances. It is a scientific growth in the conduct of struggle that determines and paves the way towards the assumption of people's power. For instance, Marabi, Mbaqanga, Sicathamiya, Kwela, today are universally accepted as authentic South African people's art forms, but it was not always the case. Their practitioners were at one time despised and shunned, and at other times completely 'buried' by the notorious Gallo and other institutionalised capitalist-orientated recording companies. It is precisely due to the development of the struggle, the involvement of the masses of our people, that these art forms have now been given their rightful place in our people's culture.

Given what our President has referred to as the changing balance of strength in our country and the shift of strategic initiative into our hands, there is therefore a sense in which the apartheid forces are becoming the opposition by unleashing indiscriminate violence upon the ascendant democratic movement, rather than the other way round. The advancing forces of a new social order in our country — of which you are part — as against the degenerating and collapsing machinery of apartheid,

are moving at a pace apartheid finds difficult and impossible to reverse. We must, as our President OR Tambo exhorts, 'move from a position of an indestructible force to a conquering force'.

It is a critical situation which requires vigilance on our part against complacency and arrogance. The gains made must be guaranteed and augmented. Among these gains have been the success of the cultural boycott of South Africa. Due to the emergence of alternative structures which are actively implementing the boycott inside our country, and the complementary actions from the international anti-apartheid movement, there are relatively few foreign artists at the moment coming into South Africa to perform. The few mediocre artists prepared to earn bloodstained money are still lured by the lucrative contracts offered.

There is no doubt as to the origin of this collaborative funding. However, it can no longer be concealed that a fully-fledged democratic culture is in place in South Africa — as stated by our President, 'a definable democratic culture — the people's culture — permeated with and giving expression to the deepest aspirations of our people in struggle immersed in the democratic and enduring human values'. Referring

to the cultural boycott issue, President OR Tambo, in his recent groundbreaking analysis at the Canon Collins Memorial Lecture, stated that this alternative culture is the core of cultural workers engaged in creating this people's culture, who are simultaneously engaged in developing our own institutions and structures which are aligned to the mass democratic organisations in our country'.

He therefore concluded that: 'This is our position. Those who belong to this category of dedicated fighters of a genuine and democratic culture should not be boycotted but should be encouraged and be treated as democratic counterparts within South Africa and similar institutions and organisations internationally'.

What this conference urgently needs to consider is the methods and means to realise the fullest achievement of our revolutionary cultural objectives, which are at the core of our overall struggle. Let us exhaust ourselves in the service of all our people as cultural workers with a vision of another South Africa, a united, non-sexist, non-racial South Africa. Let us work tirelessly for a new South Africa.

Victory!  
Amandla!



**The CASA conference and festival in Amsterdam in December saw progressive musicians from South Africa and from the ranks of the exiled community performing on the same stage before enthusiastic audiences. Some of the musicians such as Abdullah Ibrahim, Dudu Pukwana, Jonas Gwangwa and Basil Coetzee were already well familiar with the ways of international travel, but for most of the young South African musicians, it was their first trip abroad.**

The young Ntsikane marimba players from Cape Town's Guguletu township stunned everybody with their vibrant performances and dances. Maybe the vocal harmonies were a bit shaky at times, but the percussion and instrumentation was exceptionally good.

The marimba has become increasingly popular in the past ten years. Of course, the fact that marimbas and cowhide drums do not require electricity every time a group needs to practice makes them well suited to the township environment, where an electricity supply is often a luxury!

Ntsikane bore testimony to the exciting trend amongst the young generation of South Africans to develop the use of acoustic instruments as part of our country's ever-growing musical culture. And unlike some of the other marimba groups, Ntsikane clearly do not fall into the trap of being a 'curio shop' phenomenon cashing in on racist or tribal prejudices — their lively self-commentary between and during songs kept them in good contact with their audiences whenever they played, and explained the meanings of the songs.

From a different generation, the veteran African Jazz Pioneers from the Vaal played music which was popular before most of the Ntsikane members were even born. But there was no problem of 'generation gap' for those present in Amsterdam, as everybody jived to the swing, jitterbug and bump jive pieces belted out by the big brass section.

The Pioneers played music which was popular in the townships in the 50's and 60's — music which they have kept alive long after the SABC and music industry had commissioned it to the graveyard.

Once again, it was encouraging to see some young faces in the ranks of this veteran group, showing that this is a form of people's music which young and old value, enjoy, and will continue to play, enrich and develop.

The Cape-rooted Genuines surprised many with their modernist jazz and renditions of Cape 'goema' carnival music. And where their variety of musical styles certainly confused many at Amsterdam, this four-piece band stunned all with their intricate arrangements and superb musicianship.

The Genuines have done something interesting. Since the destruction of District Six and the resultant fragmentation of the Cape 'coloured' community, 'goema' music's only platform has been the racist 'Coon Carnival', a culturally emasculated event. While jazz music has managed to survive owing to the existence of upper-class music venues and concerts, there has been no platform for the music which lived on the streets of District Six. Now the Genuines have built on those roots, and fusing the traditional elements with modern instruments, the message is clear: *Skrik wakker, mense!* Maybe not everyone's idea of what South African music is about, but the Genuines certainly let us know that things aren't stagnant in South Africa.

Also hailing from District Six is tenor saxophonist Basil 'Mannenberg' Coetzee, who performed with his band Sabenza at Casa. Sabenza played African township jazz of the variety popularised by Abdullah Ibrahim — with whom Coetzee grew up in the District.

Sabenza performed classics such as 'Mannenberg', and also new compositions

which they have recorded for a recently-released album, the first of which Coetzee has recorded since his extensive studio work for the Dollar Brand albums. Although evidently a bit tense on stage, Sabenza were well-rehearsed and gave moving performances of their 'Cape Town Blues', 'Khayelitsha Dance' and 'Song for Winnie', a piece dedicated to Winnie Mandela. Coetzee himself performed superbly.

Breaking from the big band sound, solo artist Bettina Schauw gave a moving performance with voice and guitar. Working in the folk idiom, Schauw's ballads tell of the struggle, and our people's resolve to fight on in the face of brutal repression, such as the Trojan horse incident, which she describes.

It was interesting to note that much of the music at Casa — particularly the music currently being played inside South Africa — was instrumental. The musical orientation was towards the African Jazz, with Abdullah Ibrahim's one-night appearance, Dudu Pukwana's Zila, and the Arekopaneng members all strong proponents of this music form.

Jonas Gwangwa and the Amandla Cultural Group upped the tempo with some very well-executed mbaqanga, vocals included, and impressed many of the visitors from home who had only heard vague accounts of the ANC's cultural unit.

The musicians who performed at CASA were but a handful of those working in South Africa, who are members of progressive musical organisations such as SAMA, MAPP and MOJO, or who have chosen to align themselves, and become part of the struggle. If more funding had been available, it certainly would have been nice to have heard other performers. The regime's refusal to grant passports to some performers, such as poet Mzwakhe Mbuli was noted with concern.

Casa delegates also prepared a paper on the state of music in South Africa, examining, among other things, the way in which working relationships have developed between musicians and popular organisations. A speaker from MAPP gave an example of musicians' involvement in strike-support in Cape Town: 'The Spekenham



# wakker mense!

*Basil 'Mannenbergh' Coetzee tenor saxophonist cueing in Sabenza*



workers in conjunction with FAWU (the Food and Allied Workers' Union), Cosatu, UDF and MAPP decided to organise a major musical concert in order to raise funds for strikers and also to popularise the issues around the strike. Meetings were set up between Cosatu unionists, Fawu shop

stewards and musicians, and it was encouraging to see more musicians actively developing their perception of worker struggle,' he said.

But the speaker also cautioned organisations against being like the state, which attempts to use musicians as pawns for their

own political gains: 'Progressive organisations must guard against just calling on musicians when needed. Rather an ongoing and reciprocal relationship needs to be established, wherein the organisations can assist musicians faced with problems which have as their root cause the same exploitative system of racial capitalism.' Speakers from the floor also pointed out the need for strong musicians' structures in South Africa, so that musicians could be armed to protect their interests. SAMA, the SA Musicians Alliance was attempting to organize commercial and more established artists, but had not yet established a strong organisational base for itself. Other groups, such as MOJO (members of the original Jazz Organization) in Natal and MAPP (Musical Action for People's Power) in the Cape were concentrating their energies on grass-roots work, such as training and practice facilities for the younger musicians.

So CASA provided an opportunity not only for the performance of music, but also for discussion about some of the problems which musicians are facing working and living under the regime. Musicians constantly mentioned the need for resources so that they could continue to survive while playing the music which is culturally rich. We salute these musicians who have persevered, and turned their backs on the more lucrative options so that they can continue with the task of developing the rich musical culture of our people. Through Casa, we were able to sharpen our understanding of the unique problems which musicians experience — as the music paper concluded:

'Of all the art forms, music production is particularly capital intensive, and it is becoming clear that we need to use our resources and contacts to provide practical alternatives for the progressive musician — in particular, we need to encourage the opening of alternative venues, recording studios and distribution networks.

We should note carefully that as long as our artists are dependent on the resources of the apartheid state and capital to survive and disseminate their music, they cannot be free.'

# WOMEN

The following is an edited version of the paper presented, the discussion that followed and the resolutions taken at CASA to support women cultural workers.

Women have traditionally been defined as the homemakers of our society, thus forming the cultural core of any home. They pass on old family customs and traditions, teaching children the heroic stories of our past, developing songs of the struggle for national liberation. Women are the weavers of the rich fabric which underpins the cultural life of South Africans.

The dominant apartheid culture uses women as market tools; their bodies sell fast cars, jewellery, hair straighteners, skin lighteners, whether black or white they are portrayed as fragile creatures. And yet — in the true indigenous cultural life of our

country, hidden in the hills of vast rural areas, still vibrates with the rhythm of the snake dance — the mystery of tales told by grandmothers by the fire, the richness of the rituals for those who still live or dare to live as their ancestors did.

And so — the talent of women who create magical colours and patterns in beadwork, pottery or cloth, women who sing and dance, write into the struggle for survival under apartheid an unbroken spirit of cultural resistance.

### Women Performers

The small number of women involved in

the industry results in decision making by men. The content and relevance of songs is often debasing of women, selling a product commercially acceptable to the public at large. Rarely does one find a manager or producer prepared to sell a voice or relevant material — it's their looks that count. In all areas of performance women and girls face sexual and physical abuse, are financially exploited and rarely educated or trained for the profession.

Yet in our society dance, music and theatre play a key role to unify, politicise and mobilise. Women from Crossroads to Moutse, in the factories and farms, at meeting places and rallies, reflect their political and economic aspirations through freedom songs, traditional dance and performance, mobilising not only other women but the masses as a whole. So in Cape Town a group of women choreograph a dance to Abdullah Ibrahim's song 'Freedom Comes Through the Barrel of a Gun'. In Durban a group performs about issues like rape and unemployment and the women in Moutse perform to conscientise the people against forced removals.

Women in the COSATU choir, singers like Bettina Schauw, those who perform in Amandla, the Thami Mnyele Quartet, Sabenza, those who workshop and act in 'You Strike the Women, You Strike a Rock', 'You Can't Stop the Revolution' and other plays, succeed in bringing to South Africans and the international community the burning issues of apartheid and the rich heritage of our cultural tradition.

### Women Artists

Today the tradition of communal art has changed. With the breakup of families and the migration to cities a new lifestyle was born. Now domestic utensils are bought, not made. Although women continue to plait and weave, practise the traditional art forms of beadwork, pottery and painting, they are given the low status of domestic art, that done in one's spare time, craftwork.

Visual artists' panel:

(Left to right): Bongiwe Dlomo, Mandla Langa, Gordon Metz





# a fountain of resistance

*In tribute to James Phillips, Mmabatho  
Nhlanhla conducting the Dutch choir*

Fine art is practised largely in the urban areas, but the European emphasis on the appreciation of mainly male artists inculcates an attitude that men succeed better in these disciplines and excludes women. Although women artists like Bongiwe Dhlomo, Sue Williamson and so many others have passed this barrier, joining their male counterparts as equals in this art form, they now need to work to promote an understanding that art — be it fine art or traditional — is for all South Africans.

Women photographers like Gill de Vlieg, Wendy Schwegmann, Bea Berman, Jillian Edelstein and many others bring new insights to how we see our struggle. Film makers like Melanie Chait and Betty Wolpert document the struggles of not only women but all South Africans to resist and fight for a new democratic society.

## Women and Literature

When we think of writers in South Africa there are women who come to mind; they have received international acclaim, but do not seek or are credited with token respect or positions in the literary world. These are women who are writers, creating work that displays an understanding of the issues in the country — scratching beneath the surface. Bessie Head, Nadine Gordimer, Miriam Tlali all in their own way rip away the gloss of untruth and display a reality without forfeiting creativity. They deal with the tasks of uplifting women from their traditional subjugative role, they depict the violence and reality of township women's existence, recording the will and courage of women to change a society.

Any woman from the continent of Africa who writes fiction today is exceptional, defying prevailing tradition to speak out as an individual. Although the language and settings always differ, women as a subject in South African literature is rapidly changing. Today we witness an emerging group of writers — Gcina Mhlope, Elsa Joubert, Maud Motanyane, Ellen Kuzwayo, Liseka Mda, Gladys Thomas, Menan du Plessis, Mavis Smalberg, Ilva Mackay, Lindiwe Mabuza and many others — raising their voices against racism, sexism and political and economic



repression, all women writing about the realities of their life as South Africans.

## Women Film Makers and Photographers

Sexist attitudes that women are physically too weak to carry film equipment and lack the guts to push for good stories have to be countered by men and women. Women must have access to and knowledge of how to use photographic and film equipment in order to document not only the terrible atrocities committed by the regime against our people, but also to be there to mark the great historical events and day-to-day victories in the struggle for liberation.

## A Resolution to Support Women Cultural Workers

The emergence of democratic cultural organisations, the lack of training, com-

mercialisation, the usurping of traditional women's roles by men, the under-representation of women, the lack of resources, sexist and racist attitudes can be tackled by all South Africans fighting to practise non-racist, non-sexist and non-exploitative principles in all areas of creativity. The CASA resolution on women and culture confirms that women are integral to and have a vital role to play in our struggle, and notes that women are sexually and economically exploited, that women are the victims of racial oppression and archaic patriarchal traditions and practices who have historically waged a struggle against their triple oppression. The resolution demands that progressive cultural organisations have a duty to accord equal status to women cultural workers and ensure their training and positioning, and that women assert themselves in all areas of cultural activity.

# Preamble & Resolutions

## PREAMBLE

During the week of December 14th to 19th 1987, a conference of South African cultural workers sponsored by the CASA Foundation met in the anti-apartheid city of Amsterdam.

The CASA Arts Festival and Conference involved the participation of the Department of Arts and Culture of the ANC, the mass democratic movement in South Africa and the Anti-Apartheid Movement of the Netherlands.

After six days of extensive discussion, including thought-provoking papers covering every discipline of the literary, graphic, visual and performing arts, the participants adopt this statement and these recommendations as their collective view of the place and role of the arts and cultural workers in the struggle for national liberation and democracy in our country.

1.1 That in the course of the struggle of our people against racist domination and exploitation there has developed a vibrant people's culture, rooted in South African realities and steeped in democratic values, in opposition to the racist culture associated with the apartheid regime. This democratic culture is characterised

by a spirit of internationalism and a humanist perspective that derives from the best of the cultural heritage of the various peoples that make up the South African population.

1.2 That cultural activity and the arts are partisan and cannot be separated from politics. Consequently, a great responsibility devolves on artists and cultural workers to consciously align themselves with the forces of democracy and national liberation in the life and death struggle to free our country from racist bondage.

1.3 That in order to play an effective role in the struggle artists and cultural workers must create the appropriate organisational structures at the local, regional, national and international levels to enable themselves to take collective action, consult and co-ordinate their activities.

1.4 That within the developing democratic people's culture and the organised formation it creates we must address all forms of oppression and exploitation, especially the triple oppression borne by the black women of our country, as members of an oppressed gender, oppressed nationalities and exploited class. Democratic culture should strive to be anti-sexist and consciously promote the norms of

equality between men and women.

1.5 That the idiom of this democratic culture must strive for authenticity and be accessible to the mass of our people by speaking to them in language and symbols that they understand.

1.6 That to redress the scandalous discrepancies and disparities in skills, training and resources that are the direct consequences of racist policies, the democratic artists and cultural workers must promote a programme of affirmative action, both now and in the future, to enable black artists to take their rightful place in South African culture.

1.7 That the struggle for the total isolation of the apartheid regime must continue. Among the tactics to be employed during this campaign the academic and cultural boycott are crucial, and must be maintained. However, in view of the growing significance of democratic culture as an alternative to the racist, colonialist culture of apartheid, the conference recommends that South African artists, individually or collectively, who seek to travel and work abroad should consult beforehand with the mass democratic movement and the national liberation movement.

## Resolution on the Role of Culture and Cultural Workers in the Struggle for a Liberated South Africa.

### Recognising:

that culture is an integral part of the national democratic struggle, the national democratic movement therefore asserts that the role of cultural workers is inseparable from the overall struggle against apartheid as well as the moulding of the future non-racial, non-sexist, unitary and democratic South Africa.

## Resolution on People's Culture

### Recognising:

1. that apartheid culture is a tool of oppression intended to maintain the status quo and undermine the national democratic struggle; and  
2. the emergence of a people's culture which expresses the social and political aspirations encompassing the artistic, intellectual and material aspects of culture in South African society

### We hereby pledge:

to assert a humanist, internationalist but distinct-

ly South African character of people's culture which draws upon the cultural heritage of all the people of the country.

## Resolution on Structures

### Noting:

1. the need for and desire of cultural workers to be organised into a national democratic organisation to represent the interests of all cultural workers.  
2. that the national democratic movement has a role to co-ordinate the formation and consolidation of cultural workers into local, regional and national structures in conformity with Resolution 1.

### We hereby resolve:

that a national democratic cultural organisation be formed to cater for the cultural, social, political and economic aspirations of cultural workers in the national democratic movement; and

### We hereby recommend:

1. that this organisation link up and liaise with

existing organisations consisting of South African cultural workers in exile which have similar aims and objectives.

2(a). that cultural workers represented at this conference consolidate and create organisations in their respective disciplines in consultation with the mass democratic movement  
2(b). that these organisations then meet to create a national organisation of cultural workers.

## Resolution on Women and Culture

### Confirming:

that women are integral to and have a vital role to play in our struggle, and

### Noting.

1. that women are sexually and economically exploited  
2. that women are the victims of racist oppression and archaic patriarchal traditions and practices.  
3. that South African women have historically waged a struggle against their triple



## preamble & resolutions

oppression.

### **Demand:**

1. that progressive cultural organisations have a duty to accord equal status to women cultural workers and ensure their training and positioning.
2. that women assert themselves in all areas of cultural activity.

### **Resolution on Funding**

#### **Noting:**

1. that organisations and structures within the national democratic movement require financial assistance in the pursuance of their cultural objectives.
2. that imperialist forces are continually attempting to undermine the national liberation struggle, by, amongst other things, using funding to co-opt cultural workers, organisations and projects.

#### **We hereby resolve:**

that financial assistance for cultural projects be solicited and obtained in consultation with the national democratic movement and that an arts trust fund be formed to facilitate this process.

### **Resolution on Language**

#### **Noting:**

1. that multi-lingualism is a characteristic feature of South African society
2. that English and Afrikaans have taken on a disproportionate role in cultural production and communication because of their status as official languages
3. that cultural workers have a special role to play in the preservation and development of all the languages of our country.

#### **We hereby resolve:**

1. that all the languages of our country be accorded equal status
2. that cultural workers be encouraged to use all the languages of South Africa in their work and that language training facilities be made available to spread the knowledge of South African languages.

### **Resolution on the Cultural Boycott**

#### **Confirming:**

that apartheid South Africa must be totally isolated

#### **And noting:**

1. that the objective of the cultural boycott to

isolate the regime is inviolate and needs to be pursued with even greater vigour

2. the need to recognise and strengthen the emerging progressive and democratic culture in South Africa
3. that the cultural boycott as a tactic needs to be applied with a degree of flexibility which takes into consideration the developing situation within the country

#### **We therefore resolve:**

1. that apartheid South Africa be totally isolated and that cultural workers and academics not be allowed to enter the country, save and except in those instances where such movement, after consultation with the national liberatory movement, is considered to be in furtherance of the national democratic struggle
2. that South African artists, individually or collectively, who seek to travel and work abroad should consult with the mass democratic movement and the national liberation movement.

### **Resolution on Literature**

#### **Confirming:**

1. that writers play a role in shaping the cultural values of people
2. that progressive writers are instrumental in the development of a democratic culture and political consciousness

#### **Noting:**

1. the need to strengthen links between progressive writers within the national democratic movement
2. that the recently constituted Congress of South African Writers (COSAW) is playing a vital role in the furtherance of our cultural struggle
3. that poor educational facilities for the training of writers is a direct consequence of apartheid oppression and exploitation
4. that the means of gathering, documenting and disseminating information and publications is almost exclusively controlled by the ruling class

#### **We hereby resolve:**

1. that links between COSAW and the national democratic movement be consolidated
2. that links be forged between the progressive writers and the literacy programmes and that workshops be organised for the enhancement of training in creative writing skills
3. that COSAW, in conjunction with the national democratic movement, establish libraries in both the rural and urban areas. The co-

operation of publishers should be sought in this process.

### **Resolution on Poetry**

#### **Confirming:**

that our people have a proud poetic tradition expressing their cultural values and norms, their history and aspirations

#### **We recommend:**

1. the continuing development of poetry as a mobilising force in our people's struggle against apartheid exploitation, oppression and repression
2. that competitions, workshops and symposia be organised to promote youth and children's poetry
3. that our poets be encouraged to express themselves in their languages.

### **Resolution on Copyright**

#### **Noting:**

1. that our cultural workers have been and are economically exploited
2. that our cultural workers have been kept in ignorance of the laws pertaining to copyright
3. that plagiarism of our cultural heritage is increasing
4. that the national democratic movement has a duty to document and preserve our cultural heritage

#### **We therefore recommend:**

1. that our cultural workers organise themselves and act in concert whenever necessary to safeguard their interests
2. that our cultural workers seek advice before committing themselves to contract
3. that the national democratic movement gives serious consideration to the concept of establishing alternative structures to secure the rights of cultural workers
4. that the national democratic movement, in conjunction with cultural workers, commence with the documentation and preservation of our cultural heritage.

### **Resolution on Media**

#### **Noting:**

1. the present assault on the democratic media by the apartheid regime
2. the importance of international media towards the development of a people's culture as well as the political mobilisation of our people

**We hereby resolve:**

1. to internationalise the campaign to defend the progressive press in South Africa
2. to build solidarity between South African media workers and those abroad
3. to call upon governments and non-governmental organisations abroad to devise means to pressure the South African regime such as
  - a. reviewing the position of South African press attaches in the light of repression in South Africa.
  - b. curbing the practice of allowing foreign journalists to be used by the regime for its propaganda.
4. to call on the international community to insist on its right to be informed and to evolve methods which ensure there is a constant flow of information into and out of the country.
5. that solidarity movements internationally should increase financial assistance to media projects within the national democratic movement.
6. that media workers should organise themselves into truly national and democratic structures
7. that appropriate structures be set up in the country that will survive the state onslaught in the long term
8. that media training be seen as a priority in all sectors and that women be incorporated fully into media projects.



**Resolution on a Collective Approach to Cultural Work**

**Noting:**

the culture of the oppressors has encouraged a high degree of individualism among artists

**Recognising:**

that culture must be viewed in the context of people's struggle

**We therefore recommend:**

that cultural workers and artists be encouraged to work and develop collectively by sharing ideas, resources and skills with a view to enriching people's culture.



**Resolution on Performing Arts (incorporating theatre, music and dance)**

**Confirming:**

that the performing arts have been distorted and inhibited by co-option, censorship and exploitation by the ruling class

**Noting:**

1. historically the performing arts have been divided into two traditions — one representing the interests of the apartheid regime and the ruling class, and the other a true representation of people's culture and struggle
2. that the performing arts have long been exploited by capital

**Therefore we resolve:**

1. to restore the performing arts to their rightful role of both reflecting and being instruments of resistance to the apartheid regime
2. to organise and unite the performing arts into national democratic structures which will, *inter alia*,
  - a. protect performing artists against exploitation
  - b. conscientise and mobilise performing artists
  - c. produce progressive journals and literature
  - d. set up a progressive network for cultural products
3. to secure funding towards providing training inside and outside the country, providing alternative venues, festivals and sponsorships
4. to establish and develop archives to record and preserve traditional music, song and dance
5. to secure as much performing space as possible by bringing existing venues into the fold of the progressive cultural organisations
6. that the recommended structures urgently take steps to ensure the provision of adequate academic education for child performers and their protection against all forms of abuse and exploitation.



**Resolution on Visual Arts**

**Confirming:**

the importance of the role of visual arts in the democratic struggle

**Noting:**

1. that posters and other graphics have made a significant contribution to advance the national democratic struggle
2. that architects and craftspeople are often inadvertently excluded from such conferences
3. craft is an essential part of our culture and the erosion of our craft traditions by, among other things, exploitation
4. the power of film and television as a popular cultural medium and the need to develop an authentic democratic film culture in South Africa, taking into account the particular difficulties surrounding the financing of production and distribution of film and television
5. visual art education in the black community is seriously undeveloped

**We call upon:**

Visual artists to apply their skills and resources to further the national democratic struggle; and

**We recommend:**

1. that graphics directly associated with the democratic struggle, such as posters and other art work, be further developed as our revolutionary art; and that resources be allocated to this end
2. that architects and craftspeople be organised alongside other cultural workers
3. that our cultural workers undertake the documentation and analysis of our visual art in consultation with the mass democratic movement
4. that archives be established and developed to record and preserve our work
5. that cultural workers and the mass democratic movement urgently look into the question of drawing crafts people into the cultural structures of the mass democratic movement and into production and distribution collectives
6. that cultural workers commit themselves to the sharing of skills and resources in the form of workshops and other progressive educational programmes in the community.



**Resolution on Religion and Culture**

**Noting:**

The historical role of religion in the oppression of our people and the laudatory efforts of democratic theologians of various religions to play a meaningful role in the national democratic struggle

**We resolve:**

1. to support the efforts of all theologians struggling to find a meaningful way of expressing their faith in our struggle for a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa
2. call upon all those theologians to identify completely with the national democratic struggle of our people and to regularly consult with the national liberation movement and the mass democratic movement with a view to maintaining and strengthening the links between religion and the national democratic struggle

**In Conclusion**

This conference reaffirms that it is only through the implementation of the Freedom Charter by the mass democratic movement that we can fully realise a true Culture in Another South Africa.

