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**official organ of the african
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President O. R. Tambo

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The spirit of March 8th

March the 8th is an important date in the calendar of the women's struggle. Throughout the world women — and some men — celebrate and commemorate this day. This year — **The Year of the Women** — March 8th has a special significance for our liberation struggle. This is not just because men have to be 'nice to their women,' but more importantly, because this year, more than at any other time, we (men and women) have to do all in our power to mobilise the masses of our women, the most oppressed section of the population. The women's cause is an integral part, a significant part, of our revolution. When the women began to play a significant role in our liberation struggle, the ANC grew in volume and content — and, one may add, in militancy.

The women of South Africa, especially the black women, face almost insurmountable problems: low wages, sex discrimination and racial oppression. These problems confront them in their daily lives and affect every facet of their lives. Let us take one example. It is said that more than 52 per cent of black South African students leave school illiterate or semi-literate, with the highest qualification among this group being a standard two pass.



This has serious implications for the future of these children, and black mothers have every reason to worry. This is a question of national survival.

These women fight against these injustices. They are harassed, detained and gaoled – some are even murdered in gaol. They fight against the mass removals such as those in Cape Town, and their children die in their bare hands either from exposure or hunger. They are ‘deported’ to the bantustans, and the following day they return to the cities. They are forcibly separated from their families, and they defiantly return to join them. Their husbands, fathers and brothers leave the country, and they keep the home fires burning. How many of these women have been banned and banished, or deposed as chieftainesses because they oppose bantustans? How many have been forced to prostitution, alcoholism and glue-sniffing because of desperation and frustration?

They form women’s organisations and lead community organisations such as the UDF. It is our task to assist these endeavours.

These women are in most cases breadwinners in their families. Quite a number of them feature in the cultural and literary field. They are in the factories and therefore in the trade unions; they form the bulk of the population in the countryside; they are in resettlement camps such as Dimbaza, on the white farms, in white families as domestic workers



and nannies, as nurses in hospitals – very few become doctors – and teachers at schools. They are yearning for a message, and a movement that will give them hope under these trying circumstances and straitened conditions.

Some of them have joined Umkhonto We Sizwe and by so doing are engaged in what Wally Serote in an article in this issue calls “the highest form of cultural expression” – armed struggle for liberation.

What about those serving long-term sentences for their involvement in the struggle for liberation?

In this issue, we publish a profile of Dorothy Nyembe, who has served fifteen years of incarceration in different gaols. In this **Year of the Women** we shall continue to focus on the plight and struggles of the women. This is the spirit of March 8th.

PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT

The
dream
of
total
liberation
of
Africa
is in
sight

**President's
message for 1984**

**Dear Compatriots,
Brothers and Sisters in the Struggle,
Comrades,**

Today, the 8th January, your organisation, the African National Congress, is 72 years old. In keeping with established practice, we ask you to share with us today some thoughts on the tasks that confront us during 1984. Allow me to begin by extending to you all, the wishes of the National Executive Committee and the general leadership of the ANC for great successes in the New Year.

This time last year, when we marked the 71st anniversary of the founding of our organisation, we pointed out that our long struggle had come to a point where the revolutionary ferment had reached unprecedented heights and had plunged the ruling racist clique into deeper and deeper levels of crisis. We went on to state that within the confines of the apartheid system there was no way out of this crisis situation. Apartheid cannot be reformed. The only real solution lies in the victory of the revolutionary forces, the dismantling of the apartheid machinery and the transfer of political and economic power to the democratic majority.

Events of the past year have fully borne out the correctness of this assessment. The momentous struggles of the past year have taken us further upon the road to our cherished goal and have driven the racist rulers into further acts of desperation. For us, the future is brightening daily whilst for the Pretoria racist clique, the future is getting darker each passing day.

We commend you on the sacrifices and dedication by which, during 1983, you took our country significantly forward towards liberation. The past year can have left our enemies in no doubt that we have the determination to struggle, the ability to organise for victory and the will to take power into our hands. The only question that confronts us all, singly and collectively, is how we should respond to the Order of the Day, "Mobilise and march forward to people's power!"

The Four Pillars of our Revolution

Our revolutionary struggle rests on four pillars. These are, first, the all-round vanguard activity of the underground structures of the ANC; second, the united mass action of the peoples; third, our armed offensive, spear-headed by Umkhonto We Sizwe; and fourth, the international drive to isolate the apartheid regime and win world-wide moral, political and material support for the struggle.

Over the last few years, the guardians of reaction in our country have devised a programme of action centred on the twin notions of so-called national security and total strategy. This programme is based on the recognition that the apartheid system is immersed in a deep and permanent general crisis. The ruling group in Pretoria has therefore been addressing itself to the question of how to manage this crisis to ensure that it does not get out of hand.

The bantustan scheme, the militarisation of society, the offensive against the ANC, the new apartheid constitution and other recent pieces of legislation, notably, those covering industrial relations, the so-called community councils, the press and the economy, all are elements in this programme of crisis management. Coupled with the criminal war against the Namibian and Angolan people, and increased aggression against the rest of Southern Africa, these measures point to the desperation of the regime as it battles for its survival.

The racists have decided, under mounting pressure from the revolutionary masses and the international community, to tinker with the apartheid system, but in such a way as to further entrench racism and consolidate this illegitimate and criminal system. Despite all these manoeuvres, apartheid has no future.

In other words, the fascists recognise that they can no longer rule in the old way. We recall how, at the height of the Soweto uprising, J B Vorster made bold to declare, "there is no crisis" — no crisis for minority rule. But a few years later, P W Botha called on the whites to adapt to reality or perish with apartheid.

This was a public admission that there is a crisis threatening the destruction of the apartheid system. It is an imperative task of the revolutionary and democratic forces of our country to compound and further deepen this crisis by ever-intensifying the struggle for national and social emancipation.

Revolutions Are About State Power

The black people of our country have challenged the legitimacy of the South African racist state from its formation in 1910 and throughout the ensuing decades. As we fight the apartheid system today, we should all speak with one voice in declaring that the present regime, like all others before it, has no legitimate authority to rule our country. Indeed, its central purpose is to perpetuate the illegal rule of the white usurpers of power in our country.

All revolutions are about state power. Ours is no exception. The slogan, "Power to the People," means one thing and one thing only. It means we seek to destroy the power of apartheid tyranny and replace it with popular power with a government whose authority derives from the will of all our people, both black and white.

The issue we have to settle together is what steps to take to attain that ultimate goal, what intermediate objectives we should set ourselves building on what we have achieved, and in preparation for the next stage in our forward march to victory. The answer to these questions relates directly to what we have already referred to as the illegality of the apartheid state.

We must begin to use our accumulated strength to destroy the organs of government of the apartheid regime. We have to undermine and weaken its control over us, exactly by frustrating its attempts to control us. We should direct our collective might to rendering the enemy's instruments of authority unworkable. To march forward must mean that we advance against the regime's organs of state-power, creating conditions in which the country becomes increasingly ungovernable.



Comrade Nelson Mandela – symbol of resistance

We Must Hit the Enemy Where It is Weakest
You are aware that the apartheid regime maintains an extensive administrative system through which it directs our lives. This system includes organs of central and provincial government, the army and the police, the judiciary, the bantustans administrations, the community councils, the local management and local affairs committees. It is these institutions of apartheid power that we must attack and demolish, as part of the struggle to put an end to racist minority rule in our country. Needless to say, as strategists, we must select for attack those parts of the enemy administrative system which we have the power to destroy, as a result of our united and determined offensive. We must hit the enemy where it is weakest.

The goal we are setting ourselves today is dictated by the logic of our revolution. Its realisation is made possible by the fact that in our millions, we have already laid the basis for its accomplishment. Thus, through our efforts, the co-called Coloured Persons Representative Council ceased to exist; as a result of extensive mobilisation, the puppet South African Indian Council was brought in by a laughably insignificant minority; the entire Bantustan system faces overwhelming rejection and continuous resistance; and similarly, towards the end of 1983, we united in a massive rejection of the local management committees and community councils.

In certain areas and at different times, we have gone beyond rejection of this oppressive system of government, beyond a challenge to its legitimacy. In 1960, our people in Pondoland destroyed the regime's administration, and set up their own administration and people's courts. Likewise in 1976, we caused the collapse of the Urban Bantu Councils. In the recent past, in Sobantu Village in Pietermaritzburg, we destroyed the newly installed community council and frustrated the plans of the Drakensberg Administration Board.

Our determined resistance at Crossroads and at KTC in the Western Cape has made it impossible for Koornhof to carry out his

schemes. He has been unable to govern at will. In Mdantsane our heroic struggle has shaken the puppet Sebe Administration to its core. Commenting on this situation, one South African political observer stated:

"The stakes are high because the issues have moved beyond those of a (bus) fare increase. The boycott has become a conflict of will between the Ciskei (puppet administration) and its many opponents in Mdantsane, the second largest black township in South Africa."

In the course of our struggles against rent increases and other facets of apartheid, such as the proposed incorporation of some townships into the KwaZulu bantustan, we have gone further to destroy part of the administrative infrastructure of the Pretoria regime.

From these examples, it is clear that we have the ability to raise the struggle to greater heights. Having rejected the community councils by boycotting the elections, we should not allow them to be imposed on us. We do not want them. We must ensure that they cease to exist. Where administration boards take over their functions, then these must be destroyed too.

In the Ciskei, as with the other so-called independent bantustans, we must take the battle further. In the conflict of will between ourselves and the murderous Sebe administration, our will must prevail. And it will, if we transform what began in Mdantsane as resistance to bus-fare increases into a nationwide offensive against the Pretoria regime's Bantustan system. In Mdantsane the people have said — "Sebe must go! Power to the people!" That call should spread throughout the Ciskei to galvanise the people into united action for the destruction of the instrument of oppression — the Ciskei bantustan.

Now is the Time to Choose

The intolerable hardships and sufferings; the persecutions, detentions and murders of patriots and democrats in other bantustans call for the establishment of fighting organis-



Comrade Walter Sisulu, serving life imprisonment

ations to organise and lead the struggle for the destruction of these racist institutions of oppression.

This year, Botha and Malan will be busy implementing the provisions of their apartheid constitution. In this regard, our democratic movement must mobilise to ensure that the so-called Coloured and Indian sections of the black population refuse to be recruited to play the role of partners in apartheid tyranny. White South Africa alone should man the apartheid constitutional posts, which it alone has created, for its exclusive benefit. Those who elect to serve in these apartheid institutions must expect to face the wrath of the people.

We must go further to say that our white compatriots, with even a modicum of anti-apartheid feeling, have to abandon the delusion that they can use Botha's constitutional institutions to bring about any change. The forces struggling for a new order in our country are outside of these structures. It is within the ranks of these extra-parliamentary forces that the anti-apartheid whites can make a significant contribution to democratic change in our country. Now is the time to choose.

It is essential that we continue to shift our posture from the defensive to the offensive. The enemy has failed to destroy us and never will. But invincibility is not enough. It is in the attack that we shall find victory. Nor should we wait for the enemy to take the initiative and then react to its plans and schemes. We have a purpose, a goal, an objective, a historic mission to accomplish for our country and for humanity. Our historic duty is to pursue it with relentless determination and persistence, whatever the enemy does or omits to do.

We must apply ourselves with more vigour in our efforts to organise the unorganised, to consolidate, defend and expand existing people's action on all fronts. It is absolutely necessary to raise the standard of our organisational and educational work, as well as our psychological preparedness, to the level of the

major and complex tasks facing our revolution today.

At this juncture allow me to single out the creation of the UDF as a historic achievement in our people's efforts to unite in the broadest possible front for the struggle against the inhuman apartheid system. The formation of the United Democratic Front was a product of our people's determination to be their own liberators.

The Spirit of Rebellion and Politics of Revolutionary Change

The growth of the democratic trade union movement and its power to wrest recognition from both the regime and the employers, together with the determined efforts to form one national trade union federation, constitute one of the most significant advances of our struggle in recent years.

Everywhere in the country, our people and youth have courageously confronted the regime in numerous encounters, whether against rent-increases, forced removals or in military actions among them, the attack on the Air Force Headquarters at Pretoria by Umkhonto We Sizwe.

This is the spirit that must guide and inspire the leaders, organisers and activists of our democratic movement. We are talking of a spirit of rebellion and frame of mind which puts to the fore the politics of revolutionary change.

A special responsibility rests on the shoulders of the ANC and the most advanced members of our broad, democratic movement to act as revolutionaries — as such, to wage revolutionary struggle; and, basing themselves on the conscious and organised involvement of the masses of the people, to build a strong and disciplined revolutionary movement. In this context, the further mobilisation and organisation of the masses of our country assumes special importance.

Quite clearly, we have made great strides in these areas of work. This is evident in the strength of the UDF and the pace at which it continues to grow. It is evident also from the struggles we have conducted, in some areas

for months on end. We can see it in the organisational growth of the trade union movement. There have been commendable advances in the development of the youth and students' as well as civic and women's movements.

We refer here in particular to the organisation of the working class into a revolutionary trade union movement; the organisation of the rural masses, inside and outside the bantustans; the organisation of the women-folk of our country and the religious community into struggle.

Let us now take a brief look at each of these areas of work.

The Working Class Must Lead

Millions of workers in our country, including the unemployed and those engaged in the agricultural sector, remain unorganised. We have to make determined efforts to reach these unorganised workers, bearing in mind that it is the historic responsibility of the working class to take the lead in our struggle for people's power.

The task of forming one federation to unite the democratic trade union movement has not yet been accomplished. We should pursue this goal with even more determination and speed because, apart from anything else, a united democratic workers' movement would give us greater possibilities to advance our struggle.

We do not believe, dear comrades, that there are insurmountable or even very serious obstacles on the way to the creation of such a federation. We do not agree with the school of thought which creates artificial barriers between the fight for trade union rights and the national liberation struggle under the racist conditions obtaining in South Africa. In our situation, the victory of the trade union struggle is unattainable except as an integral part of the victory of the political, ideological and military struggle. The struggle of the working class is, therefore, and must be, an integral part of the national liberation struggle.

The Rural Masses Say, "Seize the Land!"

The organisation and mobilisation of the rural population is clearly lagging behind those of our people in the towns and cities. And yet it is in these rural areas that the apartheid system has its most disastrous impact on our people. We have the organisational capacity to begin to tackle the rural areas seriously and continuously.

In the Freedom Charter we say that "the land shall be shared among those who work it." As you will know, the situation today is that our people in the bantustans have been reduced to landless and jobless outcasts. Many are condemned to a slow and painful death in the so-called resettlement camps. On the commercial farms, the most merciless brutalisation of our people, especially women and children, takes place, every day and every hour of the day at the hands of the landowners.

One of the fundamental elements for the solution of the problems facing our people in the countryside is the resolution of the land question in favour of the tillers. Our immediate task, therefore, is to mobilise the rural masses around the question of land. It is only when the countryside is organised that the rural masses will be able to respond resolutely to the call: "Seize the land!"

Apartheid Threatens Peace

In the past period we have seen the increased involvement of the religious community in our struggle for liberation. In this context, you are aware that at the National Conference of the Council of Churches last year, a proposal was made to convene a conference in 1986 to decide on the issue of the contribution of the Christian church to change in our country. It was then said:

"When peace is broken or threatened by injustice, the Christian has a responsibility to work for peace, to work for righteousness, by striving to rectify what is unrighteous, unjust."

Those words constitute a serious chal- 9

lenge not only to Christians, but also to people of other faiths in our country. While the evil and unjust apartheid system exists in our country, we cannot have peace, nor can the peoples of Southern Africa.

The fraternal peoples of Namibia and Angola, especially, have for years now known no peace because of Pretoria's brutal colonisation and occupation of their countries. Daily, our Namibian and Angolan brothers and sisters suffer death and destruction from the regime's bombs, bullets and bayonets. This war of aggression is being conducted by a regime from our own country. We have a responsibility to ourselves and the children and people of Namibia and Angola, to raise our voices in condemnation of the aggression. We urge upon the people of South Africa to demand and fight for the immediate withdrawal of all South African troops, mercenaries, Pretoria-backed bandits and special assassination groups from Angola, Namibia and other affected countries of Southern Africa. In this context, let the oppressed and democrats of our country assume their historic responsibility, recognising that the struggle in South Africa is the hope of the sub-continent.

We are entitled to expect that people of all faiths in our country, including the Christian, the Jew, the Hindu and the Moslem, will in fact act, and act now, in defence of justice, peace and life, against a system that is totally evil and inhuman.

Woman's Place is in the Battlefield

It will be our special task this year to organise and mobilise our womenfolk into a powerful, united and active force for revolutionary change. This task falls on men and women alike — all of us together as comrades in the struggle. We wish to stress the need, at the present hour, for the emergence on the political scene of a women's movement that is politically and organisationally united. Our struggle needs and demands this potentially mighty force.

Our struggle will be less than powerful and our national and social emancipation

can never be complete if we continue to treat the women of our country as dependent minors and objects of one form of exploitation or another. Certainly no longer should it be that a woman's place is in the kitchen. In our beleaguered country, the woman's place is in the battlefield of struggle.

People Determined to be Free

We have come a long way from the time, as in the 50's, when we fought barehanded — disarmed and unarmed — against the military might and the trigger-happy army and police force of the apartheid regime. No black hand was allowed to touch a fire-arm or possess any instrument more lethal than a pen-knife.

Today, the racist regime's army and police generals who occupy a central position in Pretoria's state machinery, through the State Security Council, are making frantic efforts to recruit and arm the "Kaffirs, Coolies and Hotnots" of the 50's, to serve as cannon fodder in the defence of a system that has fallen foul of the times, a system that has enslaved and debased us these past 70 years.

It is not that the military might of the regime has declined. It is rather that the people, determined to be free, have taken up arms and, through their own army, Umkhonto We Sizwe, have moved on to the offensive.

Today, armed struggle is a vital, indispensable component of the struggle for national and social liberation in South Africa. Where the apartheid regime relies for survival on its fascist army and police, on black mercenaries, and on puppet armies and murderous puppet administrations who slaughter men as readily as they butcher children, the democratic majority in our country supports the People's Army — Umkhonto We Sizwe — whose rising sophistication will yet compound the survival problems of the apartheid system.

But the challenge confronting Umkhonto We Sizwe, in the face of current developments in Southern Africa, has never been greater. Therefore, in commending its units and commanders on the sustained offensive of the past year, we charge them, and call

upon our people, to carry the struggle to new heights, and sue for victory tomorrow rather than the day after tomorrow.

To this end, Umkhonto We Sizwe must deepen its roots and grow inextricably among the popular masses: among us — the workers, the peasants, the youth, the women; we, the unemployed, the landless, the homeless, and the starving millions.

Umkhonto We Sizwe must grow in size, in the spread and quality of its operations, and in the weight of every blow delivered. The armed struggle must grow. We shall achieve victory through a combination of mass political action and organised revolutionary violence.

We address a special message to the white youth. Your future is in issue. The apartheid regime has no future. Like Adolf Hitler and his war machine, after spreading death and destruction everywhere, the regime will be defeated and destroyed everywhere.

The Future Belongs to the Majority

The future belongs to the majority of the people of South Africa, black and white, who, in struggle, are today laying the foundations of a united, non-racial democratic South Africa in what will then, but only then, become a peaceful and rapidly advancing region of Africa.

Your proper place is among these builders of a new order in our country. Join them. Refuse to join an army whose sole function is to murder, murder, murder, African people everywhere.

It goes without saying that Black youth — African, Indian and so-called Coloured — must under no circumstances serve in Pretoria's army of violent repression and criminal aggression. The democratic movement should immediately take up this issue with our youth throughout the country.

Our democratic movement, our movement for national liberation, is part of a multi-million strong world alliance of forces which fights for national independence, democracy, social progress and peace. On the other hand, the apartheid regime belongs

firmly within the camp of imperialist reaction, and is active within this camp to further counter-revolutionary goals.

We therefore have an international obligation to be active in the struggle to defeat the counter-offensive that the imperialists, led by the Reagan Administration of the United States, have launched. We too must raise our voice against the war-mongers within NATO who have brought humanity closer to a nuclear holocaust by sabotaging all efforts at nuclear disarmament and who have, instead, unleashed a new arms race and heightened international tension and insecurity. We too must struggle together with the world peace forces, especially because the Pretoria regime itself possesses nuclear weapons and maintains secret military relations with the most belligerent circles on the world scene.

We too must speak out, and have spoken out, against the attempts of the United States to impose its will on the peoples of the world. This policy has already resulted in the criminal invasion of Grenada, the undeclared war against Nicaragua and the direct intervention of the United States in El Salvador, in support of a gang of murderers. It has led to a reign of terror against the people of Palestine and their organisation, the PLO, as well as the people of Lebanon. It has helped Morocco to ignore the resolutions of the OAU and to maintain its colonial hold over the people of Western Sahara. This policy has further delayed the independence of Namibia and emboldened the Pretoria regime itself to seek to impose its will on the peoples of Southern Africa by force of arms.

Policy of Military Terror and Economic Strangulation

In this regard, through a policy of military terror and economic strangulation, the racists seek to compel the independent states of our region to surrender their independence and, as an important part of that surrender, to help evict the ANC from the whole of Southern Africa. Never was there a clearer illustration of the relationship between the struggle to liberate our country and the struggle to de-

defend the independence and sovereignty of the countries of Southern Africa. The peoples of our region share one common destiny. Certainly, that can never be a destiny of subservience to the criminal regime of Pretoria.

As the Maputo Frontline States Summit of March 1982 agreed, the only way forward for the peoples of our region is to support the ANC and SWAPO in our common struggle against the Pretoria regime and to repulse the offensive of this regime against independent Africa.

For some time now, especially since the Maseru massacre, spokesmen of the South African regime have repeatedly boasted of the intimate nature of their collaboration, and the happy relations they have, with the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland. The people of Swaziland, like most in the rest of Africa, will have resented that claim, especially if, as we suspect, Pretoria has in mind collaboration in the fruitless attempt to liquidate the ANC by assassinating and harassing its members and supporters in Swaziland.

The trouble about any alliance with apartheid is that the liberation struggle is growing and destined to grow and advance, no matter which or how many members and leaders of the liberation movement are murdered or arrested in the doubtful interests of either white minority domination or good neighbourliness.

Of course the Botha regime is frantic about the emergence of the ANC as the alternative power on the South African political scene. The regime is frantic also because of its inability to block the powerful and evidently dangerous thrust of the ANC and the people towards the goal of liberation. The regime is therefore blackmailing African States into an alliance targetted on the destruction of the ANC.

ANC — Integral Part of the World Revolutionary Process

But the ANC has grown among the people of Southern Africa in the past 70 years. It has always embraced and always will embrace them as allies and comrades-in-arms. It is a

child of Africa's determination to achieve and enjoy human dignity, freedom and national independence; it will never betray that parentage. It is an integral part of the world revolutionary process; it will stay in the revolution until final victory. The ANC is at once the life, the national awareness and the political experience of the popular masses of South Africa. As the people cannot be liquidated, neither can the ANC.

We take this opportunity to give a stern warning to some of our people against the dangerous temptation to work as enemy agents for the liquidation of the people's struggle.

The indestructibility of the ANC should however not induce complacency on our part. In order for the ANC to pursue and accomplish its historic mission effectively, we must be unceasing in our efforts to strengthen and expand its underground structures, ensuring its active presence everywhere in this country.

We Support Independent States of Southern Africa

We hereby extend our unequivocal support to the independent states of Southern Africa, including Seychelles, in the common struggle to defeat the aggressive policies of the Botha regime. The training, arming and deployment of counter-revolutionary bandits into Mozambique, Lesotho and Zimbabwe forms part of this aggression. We are greatly inspired by the heroic struggle of the people of Angola to expel the occupying South African forces from their country and to wipe out the puppet UNITA bandits. We salute the internationalist Cuban forces which have contributed so decisively to frustrate the schemes of the Pretoria regime and its ally, the Reagan Administration.

We extend our greetings to our comrades in arms of SWAPO, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia and the Namibian people as a whole and pledge to fight side by side with them until our continent is rid of all vestiges of colonial and white minority domination.

As we enter this New Year — we hail the

firm and positive role played by the frontline states and the forward country of Lesotho, despite Pretoria's destabilisation efforts and naked aggression against them. The dream of the total liberation of Africa is in sight.

We salute the resilience of the OAU in the face of concerted imperialist manoeuvres and call upon both the OAU and the non-aligned countries to increase their material and moral support for our struggle as well as that of SWAPO and the frontline countries.

Socialist Countries – Pillar of Support

The Socialist countries remain a solid pillar of support to our national liberation struggle. We are assured of their continued internationalist solidarity till the triumph of our revolutionary struggle.

In the past year we have succeeded in widening and deepening our support in the western countries. We are particularly cognisant of the consistent support we receive from Sweden and other Nordic countries, from Holland, Italy and Austria to mention a few. We are happy to report the establishment of a new office in Australia, at the supportive invitation of the Government and people of that friendly country.

Our efforts to win international support have been significantly sustained by a wide spectrum of anti-apartheid solidarity and mass organisations in almost all the western countries as well as the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. With respect to the latter continent, the bestowal of the Simon Bolivar International Award to our people's hero, Nelson Mandela, served the great purpose of laying a firm foundation for the future development of our relations with the peoples of Panama, Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and other South and Central American countries.

We pay tribute to the progressive forces in the USA for their valiant efforts to achieve wide-scale US disinvestment in South Africa. On them rests the heavy responsibility to defeat the Reagan Administration's racist "constructive engagement" policy with Pret-

oria, and to curb and confine the aggressive character of American imperialism.

We salute the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people, fighting for their birthright under the tried and tested leadership of the PLO, and commend those Arab countries who are making a positive contribution towards the achievement of genuine and lasting peace in the Middle East.

We Pay Homage

On this historic 72nd Anniversary of the ANC, we pay undying tribute to the many patriots who have fallen in action since January 8th last year. Among these we remember with great affection, especially Comrades Dora Tamana, Yusuf Mota Dadoo, Rev. James Calata – great stalwarts whose contribution to our movement shall be remembered by all future generations. We dip our revolutionary banner in tribute to the heroic combatants of Umkhonto We Sizwe, including Comrades Jerry Mosololi, Simon Mogoerane and Thabo Motaung. We pay homage to the martyrs of our people like Saul Mkhize and Msize Dube – all of whom were murdered in cold blood by the Pretoria regime.

We salute all our leaders and activists incarcerated in Pretoria's dungeons, and greet all those who are banned and banished. We greet all our working people in the mines and factories, in the fields and highways, in offices, churches, schools, and hospitals and in various other socio-cultural services.

We greet parents, mothers and fathers who managed to raise families against tremendous odds in the face of the genocidal apartheid policies. The loss of life resulting from the operation of this system is staggering. The progress and victory of our struggle will redeem the situation. In the meantime, as a people, we need to address the problem of lack of respect for human life which is manifest in the growing number of deaths from unnatural causes in the ghettos of our country.

We have just brought to its close a year that we observed as one of United Action. During this year, we built up the unity of 13

our democratic forces as never before. We must defend and consolidate these gains. We must build on them as we move to the next stage of our struggle. The workers and peasants; women, youth and students — all of us black and white — must continue to engage in an ever-broader and united assault on the racist regime and its policies.

1984 — The Year of the Women

One of the principal tasks we have to accomplish this year is, as I have said, the organisation and mobilisation of our womenfolk into struggle. For this reason, in the name of the National Executive Committee of the African National Congress, I declare 1984 THE

YEAR OF THE WOMEN, and charge the entire democratic and patriotic forces of our country with the task of joining in the effort to mobilise our women to unite in struggle for people's power!

To all true patriots of our country, we extend best wishes for success in our common struggle during this,

THE YEAR OF THE WOMEN!

**MOBILISE AND MARCH FORWARD
TO PEOPLE'S POWER!**

Amandla ngawethu!

Matla ke a rona!

Power to the people!



interview

UDF an historical development

This interview with Comrade Mac Maharaj, a senior member of the ANC, was first published in the ANC journal, Mayibuye, No 10, 1983.

Question: Over the past few months, there has been a number of significant events taking place inside the country, particularly the formation of the United Democratic Front. Does the formation of the UDF give a new complexion to the political scene in South Africa?

Answer: The question you asked is a profound one. There are very simple answers, very straightforward. But in order to understand what is happening in our country we have to take in the background. Since the early seventies, in particular since 1972, there has been a continuing mass upsurge in every corner of our country. It began with the workers' strike of 1973. There are various high water marks in that period, but I think there are essential points that we should note in recognising the significance of the formation of the UDF, which are the following:

First thing, our people throughout the country, in little pockets of resistance and in forms where they have united with other sections, have been rising to resist the regime at every level.

Secondly, this resistance and upsurge en-

compasses first and foremost the militancy of the workers and virtually all strata of the oppressed black population.

Thirdly, given that the regime tries to divide our people in order to perpetuate its apartheid rule, and one of the basic methods of division is the differential treatment of the different black communities, our people have transcended that division, and have been acting together.

When we talk of Unity in Action, I am referring to the unity of what I call the African people, the Indian community and the so-called coloured community, as well as, one might add, a section, a very small section but a significant section, of the white community. So the unity that has been taking place, the unity that has been forged in struggle, has been a process of different communities acting together, of different classes acting together; of parents and students, of workers as well as sections of the middle class.

Expanding Area of Struggle

This process of mass upsurge has remained till today somewhat unstructured, and the pockets of resistance somewhat isolated from each other. People have taken up local issues, fought those heroically, sometimes defeated but always coming out of it with experience of the need to unite. Nonetheless, those localised pockets of resistance

have often remained localised.

So the question of the significance of the formation of the UDF comes at a time when the historical development in our country has created conditions where the problem was ripe for solution.

The problem, to put it simply, was one of creating a vehicle where these pockets of resistance have to be brought together, where the localised experience can be generalised in terms of the national oppression and exploitation that we endure, and where they would unite to form a strength based on every pocket of resistance. Furthermore, this process was ripe for gathering this energy and expanding it in areas where the people, despite their opposition and exploitation, remain relatively quiet, so as to expand the area of struggle.

The third question that history has made our struggle ripe for was that this process of struggle and uniting in action required some sort of structure, but a structure that would be capable of withstanding the repression unleashed by the enemy.

These are some of the conditions that led to the formation of the UDF.

I believe, therefore, that this is a historic development in our people's march to freedom. It is a development which deepens the unity of our people, which gives us the opportunity to gather the resources to not only resist the repressive and oppressive laws promulgated by the apartheid regime, but to gather their energies in order to carry out an all-out offensive. I believe the UDF has now reached the point where it is creating a structure, but structured according to the conditions of our country. Its significance can never be underestimated. Today, already, since its launching, I think of the rally in Cape Town; it has been claimed that more than 400 organisations were present. I think one can legitimately say that the UDF already commands the loyalty of, the support of, a million to a million and a half people of our country.

minded that at one point in the development of our struggle the Congress Alliance was formed. Do you see any similarities? You have said that the formation of the UDF was historic, but there was the Congress Alliance. How do you react to that?

Answer: I think that, again, is a very interesting question because it has been raised in various quarters inside our country as well as outside.

The short answer to that is that one must not mistake particular formations at particular moments in our history. The Congress Alliance was born at a time when the liberation movement was practically legal except for the Communist Party. It was born out of a particular set of experiences, where each of the communities had existing viable national organisations. It brought together the different communities through their respective organs. That condition does not obtain any more. The ANC is banned; it exists, but it cannot exist in any form as an open participant.

Community Organs

The alliance was specific to that time. What we are seeing today is different.

The UDF's strength does not lie in the alliance of four or five organisations. Its strength lies in the fact that there has been a proliferation of community-based organs in our country.

It is those local organs that are the mainstay and strength of the UDF. They have come to it in increasing numbers because they see their specific problems as being related to the major issues that the UDF is taking up. It is not an alliance of those organisations. Each of these organs, of these community-based organs, maintain their structure, have a specific duty to continue to mobilise the people in the area, but now have an added dimension, and opportunity of relating this to a wider struggle. It is, in fact, a united front as its name says; it is not an alliance. It will be a mistake to equate it with the Congress Alliance.

Secondly, it will be a mistake, in its form of development, to think that it should be an alliance. In the Alliance, we had a common and deep understanding of the strategy we wanted to follow. In the UDF it is not necessary that the participants should agree on all the major issues. What is necessary is that they should agree on a single point on which they should agree to act together. The differences that exist, the different perceptions arising out of different experiences, are allowable, are healthy in that front, provided they have agreed to act together on a specific issue, and that the unity in action will grow wider on that basis.

Somebody has put the question very sharply — and it is from experiences of united fronts in other parts of the world — namely, that in a united front what is important is not the 99% of the questions on which they are disagreed. What is important is the 1% on which they are agreed to act together and stand together. The Congress Alliance, or any other alliance, has a different shape. One has to be agreed on a basic strategy, one has to agree on a basic policy for change.

Question: Now, Comrade Mac, you have said that there must be a basis for agreement. That is, they have to agree on the 1% even if they differ 99%. What would you say the point of agreement is? — since the UDF has made it clear that they are not a Charter organisation, which, in my view, would have been the basis on which the UDF could forge ahead.

Politics of Refusal

Answer: There are two aspects to this question, I think.

Firstly, it is true the UDF has not adopted the Freedom Charter as its basic policy programme. The UDF is not a creation of the African National Congress.

What has happened is that, in response, at the Transvaal Anti-South African Indian Council Conference held on the 23rd January, the Reverend Alan Boesak caught the right moment in the history of our people, interpreted correctly the conditions that

have matured, and made a stirring call for unity of our people in a United Democratic Front. In his call — and he is well known as a propagator of the politics of refusal — he drew the line between the regime and the people, and the necessity for our people to refuse to be enmeshed in the mechanism of the regime aimed at drawing our people to help the regime to perpetuate the oppression of our people. He set out pretty broad guidelines for this front. He did not state that we should be agreed on the programme for the future. So that became the first divide.

The confusion arises in part because a large number of grassroots organisations, the community-based structures as well as other bodies, have taken positions, have come out in support of the Freedom Charter. They have analysed their problems in a wider context and come to the recognition that the Freedom Charter is the only viable programme for the future of our country, for the immediate future. Now the organs, the bodies, that join the UDF maintain their independence. It is correct that those who have seen their way through, who have matured in their understanding, who have been steeled in battle and recognise that the Freedom Charter provides the basic framework, should go on to propagate that.

The important difference is that they do so in their independent status. They will talk about it, naturally, as many thousands of our people are talking about the Freedom Charter, but they will not impose it on the UDF as a condition for membership, because to do so is to narrow the issue. The breadth of, the strength of, the UDF lies in the support that it can muster on the minimum issue on which they are agreed.

The minimum issues, then, have been the refusal to become enmeshed into the regime's designs. To gather their resources to be able to resist the constitutional proposals will be the final nail in the coffin of the attempts at perpetuation, at the legal level, the structure of domination of the black community.



Tim Jenkin

Welcome home, Dorothy Nyembe, women's leader!

Dorothy Nyembe, who is due to be released from prison this month, March 1984, has served the longest prison term ever imposed on a woman for a political 'offence' in South Africa. She was sentenced in 1969 to fifteen years' imprisonment under the notorious Terrorism Act, for 'harbouring' African National Congress freedom fighters.

When she was sentenced in 1969 she had behind her a distinguished political career of seventeen years with the ANC. Doubtless, her political career will extend many years into her future. She is not the sort of person to be deterred by a bout in an apartheid gaol.

Dorothy was born in 1930 and became a member of the ANC in 1952. This was the year of the great Defiance Campaign against Unjust Laws. She immediately became involved, was arrested, and served two periods in gaol for passive resistance. She was soon elected to a leading position in the Durban branch of the ANC Women's League, and went on to become one of the Natal leaders of the Federation of South African Women after it

was formed in 1954. When thousands of women marched on the Union Buildings in August 1956 to protest at the extension of the pass laws to women, Dorothy Nyembe was at the head of the Natal contingent.

During the nineteen-fifties she set up ANC branches throughout Natal. In the rural areas she led the women in various campaigns against the apartheid authorities. In the urban areas she led protests against the municipal beerhalls — on one occasion overcoming a guard and driving out all the men drinking inside. She took a leading role in the potato boycott too, explaining in the markets and in the townships how potatoes were cultivated by forced labour and child labour in the Transvaal.

In December 1956 she was one of 18 women among the 156 arrested and charged with high treason. For most of 1957 she was in court as an accused in the Treason Trial, but in December 1957, charges against her were dropped.

In 1959 she was elected the President of the Natal ANC Women's League. She faced intense pressure from the police, and an attempt was made to have her endorsed out of Durban under the Native (Urban Areas) Act, by which the regime may move Africans to any area and to restrict them to that area.

An Anti-Pass Women's Committee was formed in Durban in 1960 to mobilise women to protest against the extension of passes to them. During the State of Emergency in that year, she was detained for five months.

In 1962, she represented the Women's Federation at a conference on labour problems called by SACTU and the Natal Rural Areas Committee. Despite every attempt by the police to prevent this conference taking place, over 1 500 delegates from all over the country attended.

'Furthering the Aims' of the ANC

A period of imprisonment followed in 1963, when Dorothy was convicted for 'furthering the aims of an illegal organisation' – the ANC, which had been banned in 1960.

In November 1968 Dorothy was again arrested and detained, along with eleven men. After being held in solitary confinement, she was eventually brought to court with the other eleven in January 1969. The trial took place in the Pietermaritzburg Supreme Court.

There was a sixteen-page indictment, alleging that between June 1962 and the time of their arrest, they had conspired with others to overthrow the existing order in South Africa by means of violent revolution, terrorism, subversion, etc. The accused were stated to have been in league with, amongst others, Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Abram Fischer and Walter Sisulu. Exhibits before the court included military weapons.

Judgment was given on 26th March 1969. One of the men was acquitted, the rest being found guilty of various charges under the Terrorism Act, including going abroad for military training in Ethiopia, Algeria, Tanzania and the Soviet Union; establishing means for trained guerrillas to re-enter South

Africa; locating suitable submarine landing sites on the coast; encouraging people to go for military training; and giving assistance to freedom fighters.

One of the men was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment, six to eighteen years, two to ten years and one to five years. Though she was convicted on only one charge, that of harbouring the freedom fighters, Dorothy was sentenced to fifteen years.

Dorothy served her sentence in a variety of prisons. She was first at the Barberton Women's Prison, then in Kroonstad and Potchefstroom, and finally, it is believed, in Pretoria Central Prison. Even in prison she has maintained her spirit of defiance, being charged in 1980, with three other women political prisoners, with disobeying prison orders and going on a hunger strike.

It is known that the conditions of the women are the worst of all political prisoners in South Africa. Concessions won by prisoners on Robben Island and by the white prisoners at Pretoria have not been passed on to the women, as the apartheid authorities have claimed. It appears too that in recent years, following the Prison Service's Robben Island strategy, the women political prisoners have been separated from each other, and held in sections with criminal elements.

International tributes have been conferred on Dorothy Nyembe for her courageous contribution to the liberation struggle. In 1977 she was awarded a medal by the Central Committee of the National Front of the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia. The medal commemorated the 30th anniversary of the defeat of fascism, in May 1945. On 21st March 1977 she was honoured by the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation.

There is no doubt that Dorothy Nyembe will carry on the fight from the point where she left off in 1968. Her courage and unflinching determination will once again inspire people to take up the cudgels against apartheid and fascist rule.

**Welcome home, Dorothy!
Lead us forward once again!**

CUBA and AFRICA

by Alex La Guma

The South African writer, Alex La Guma, is ANC Chief Representative in Cuba.

The early days of November 1983 were brave ones for the Cuban people. At Jose Marti airport of Havana the planes were landing to disembark the 700-odd construction workers and co-operation personnel who had gone to Grenada to build the commercial airport at Point Salines, and who had taken up arms to defend their work-sites when attacked by the Yankee invaders of that tiny island. Among them were their wounded, and with them came their 24 dead in flag-draped coffins. All of them were workers: bricklayers, painters, crane-operators, mechanics, architects and so on. There were a handful of military personnel among them, giving the lie to Reagan and the US imperialists, who were stating that there were thousands of Cuban troops in Grenada.

Lie of a Cuban-Soviet Pact

It has been the policy of world imperialism, led by the United States, to advance the impression that Cuba is a military nation with thousands of soldiers ready to overrun the 'Third World.' Using the presence of internationalist Cuban troops in Angola or Ethiopia, imperialism has tried to spread the lie of a Cuban-Soviet plot to conquer Africa. Time and again the government of the People's Republic of Angola has explained that, apart from the fact that Cuba and Angola are independent countries and can enter into whatever treaties and agreements they please, the presence of Cuban troops in that country is determined by the continued occupation of parts of Angola by South African racist forces and by the threat of further invasion by the apartheid regime.

It is well known that Cuban troops only arrived in Angola because that country was

under attack from the racists' army. Obviously the withdrawal of South Africa from the territory of Angola and the guarantee of Angolan security and no indication of invasion can be the basis for withdrawing the Cuban internationalist forces.

But it is not only with military support for certain countries that Cuba has shown its internationalist solidarity with Africa, apart from other developing countries.

Health Programmes

Angola inherited many terrible things from Portuguese colonialism, among these the deplorable state of medical and hygiene services. The Angolan authorities stress that Cuba plays a key role in improving medical care in their country by providing doctors, nurses, technicians and support personnel as part of bilateral health programmes.

By late 1975, the year of independence, a small group of Cuban health workers had already arrived in the northern province of Cabinda, and 1982 figures showed that by then thirty per cent of Cuban medical personnel on internationalist assignments were stationed in Angola.

In 1980 Cuban doctors in Angola saw 1 020 096 people in their surgeries, and, in the first half of 1981 alone, the number was 1 102 480. These figures do not include the tens of thousands of operations performed, vaccinations administered, babies delivered, laboratory tests and X-rays. In addition to clinical work done, there are also advisers at the international level in medicines, statistics and epidemiology, and teachers training nurses and intermediate technicians.

The Cuban medical personnel do not limit themselves to their specific work; rather they co-operate in all programmes outlined by the Angolan Ministry of Public Health and its agencies. Local officials say that Cuban participation in the drives against polio, leprosy and malaria has been especially significant, as well as their help in taking preventative measures against communicable diseases.

The importance of scholarships granted by the Cuban government to young Angolans

to train in Cuba as doctors, dentists, physiotherapists, dental technicians and so forth has been repeatedly stressed.

All these examples of Cuban medical co-operation are in addition to the extensive building programmes which are being carried out by Cuban construction brigades in Angola.

Socialist Ethiopia

Similar medical assistance is given to Socialist Ethiopia, as well as assistance in combating the drought which affects that country. During the course of his visit to Ethiopia, Comrade Fidel Castro, accompanied by President Mengistu Haile Mariam, toured the area of Debre Zeit, including the Centre for Recovery and Rehabilitation of Disabled War Heroes. Fidel suggested that agricultural projects could be established in the area as part of the rehabilitation of the patients, mostly young men who could work there, and this be useful to the revolution and to their country.

This was in 1978. The first Cuban technicians arrived a few weeks later, followed by heavy equipment, such as bulldozers, trucks, and so on. While this was going on in Debre Zeit, the Cubans were also hard at work reviewing and adjusting the plans for the Birete dam, which would provide water for the cement factory built with Cuban help at New Muger in Shos province, about 100 kilometres from the capital.

Also working with Cubans on these projects are Ethiopian technicians, along with thousands of people from near and far, who pitch in. Some are involved in construction, but the bulk of them work in agriculture. The waterworks and farms have provided employment for thousands of men and women.

Scores of Cubans work on these important tasks of aiding Ethiopia's hydrological development over the past years. As is the case with other Cuban co-operation programmes, every Cuban has an Ethiopian counterpart at his side. In this way, workers have been trained for similar projects all over this huge country, which covers an area of

1 235 000 square kilometres.

People's Republic of Congo

Minister Mouabenga of the People's Republic of the Congo, when visiting Cuba, stated,;

"One thing we should stress is the importance of our ties with Cuba. These ties in co-operation date back a number of years and will continue."

Among other things, Cuba gives assistance to the Congo in poultry and livestock raising and in agriculture generally. The Minister mentioned the work done at the Red Kilometre experimental farm located about 80 kilometres north of Brazzaville. Here nine Cubans are advising 21 Congolese professionals, technicians and workers who are engaged in the difficult task of providing this country with cattle that will be good milk and meat providers and that at the same time can adapt well to the climate.

Dr Ndouang Dambert-Rene, who heads the farm, said that in his opinion and that of the other Congolese staff members the Cuban advisers were "dedicated workers and outstanding teachers."

Another field of work in which the Cubans are engaged in the Congo is drilling for water in areas traditionally viewed by residents and experts alike as dry. The Minister remarked,

"It was believed there was no hope of finding water here. A serious social problem has been solved, since the people there never had water. Now that we've found it, they have water, thanks to the Cubans."

The Minister mentioned another very important aspect of co-operation, the training of cadres and skilled technicians.

"Many of our technicians and specialists study in Cuba, and now they are making a vital contribution to carrying out development programmes."

Education

Cuba continues to maintain friendly relations with many countries of Africa, including Mozambique, Cape Verde, Zimbabwe, Zambia and the Democratic Saharawi Arab Republic.

One of the most important acts of solidarity with Africa and Asia and Latin America is the education of scholars and training of specialists in Cuba itself. More than 16 000 young people from 81 countries live and study in Cuba. Fidel said,

"By being internationalists we are repaying our debt to humanity."

A renowned centre of education for foreign and Cuban youth is the Isle of Youth (Isla de la Juventud), formerly the Isle of Pines.

It is a sunny island, filled with orange groves and gently-rolling hills, and dotted with dozens of modern junior high schools (ESBECs) in the countryside. A visiting foreign journalist remarked when visiting there,

"This must be the only place in the world where you can mistake a school for a first-class hotel."

African countries who won liberation only a relatively short time ago and where illiteracy still rates an average of 90 per cent still lack resources to tackle the major problem of education at all levels. After more than twenty years Cuba is able to offer help to these countries in a field where she herself has scored many victories.

Visiting the Island of Youth, President Samora Machel addressed more than 2 000 Mozambican students studying there, saying,

"You are our ambassadors here. Your mission is to strengthen friendship between our peoples. You should return to Mozambique as men and women of science and culture carrying this people's values. We want to see what the Cuban people are like through you."

Many delegations from African countries, from the liberation movement, ANC and SWAPO, have borne testimony to the sterling internationalist work in education carried out by Cuba both on junior and higher levels.

The Hendrik Witbooi School, where Namibian scholars are situated, is well known. Many of the children there are survivors of the Cassinga massacre and other terrorist acts of the South African racists. Bernard Kamwui, former principal of the Hendrik Witbooi Junior High School, said,

“Generally speaking, all our children have been directly affected by apartheid. The moment they arrive in Cuba they undergo a complete change; they’re contented, happy, in their new surroundings.”

On the higher level, students are educated in universities and institutes on the mainland. Ibrahim Konate, a hydraulic engineering student from Mali, said,

“I came to Cuba for many reasons. In the career I chose, Cuba is a wonderful example of what an under-developed country can achieve thanks to science and technology ... The goal that we seek is to make the most of our stay in Cuba and return one day to our country as competent professionals; there’s a lot for us to do here.”

Speaking on behalf of ANC students in Cuba, a recently qualified medical doctor, Thabo Mnisi, said,

“We feel profoundly grateful for having the experience of studying in Cuba, which has given generous internationalist help to many under-developed countries and to struggling people. ANC students manifest an eloquent and living testimony of this noble expression of solidarity. Indeed, this gesture of the Cuban people will live in the hearts and history of our people. We must now place our acquired skills and professional capabil-

ities at the service of the just cause of our people.”

We Are Latin-Africans

Touring Africa, Comrade Juan Almaida Bosque, Vice-President of Cuba, stated,

“It is important to draw attention to the fruitful relations of friendship and co-operation between Cuba (and Africa), relations that date back to the days when African men and women, victims of the colonialists’ insane greed, were first taken to America to be placed under the odious yoke of slavery. From then on, criollo blood blended with the blood of the people of Africa and the Cuban nationality began to take shape...”

“We are Latin-Africans,” was the way Fidel Castro put it.

This is manifested in the character and cultural face of Cuba. Historically, Cuba received important cultural contributions which constitute the foundation of Cuban culture. Thousands of African captives during the past centuries brought to Cuba elements of their civilisation. Cuban ethnographer, Fernando Ortiz, has said that the Fantis, Minas, Ashantis and many other ethnic groups came to Cuba from Ghana. From Angola came Bacongós, Loandas and Benguelas, from Mozambique came the Macuas and Mosambiques. It was found that in the Volta region many understood the lyrics of Afro-Cuban songs when the Cuban National Folklore Group visited four African countries. Deep are the roots which are shared by Cuba and Africa.

No imperialist slander or bellicose threats will sever the bonds which bind our peoples and countries.

**Patria o muerte!
Venceremos!**

INTERNATIONAL

Cultural Boycott in the Caribbean

In April 1983, a delegation of the African National Congress Observer Mission to the United Nations toured the Caribbean countries. The tour was sponsored by the Caribbean Council of Churches, to mobilise public support for the campaign to isolate South Africa in the fields of sport and culture.

The ANC delegation, comprising Mfanafuni Makatini and Ms Ntathu Mbatha, was received by heads of state and foreign ministers in most of the countries they visited, and there was extensive radio, TV and press coverage.

They visited Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Antigua and Barbuda, St Vincent and Grenadines and St Kitts. In all these countries public meetings were held, as well as discussions with government officials. The officials reiterated their strong determination to undertake co-ordinated action

in order to prevent a repetition of the rebel tour of South Africa by the West Indian cricket team.

Comrade Makatini also had discussions with Jimmy Cliff, the world-famous reggae singer, who visited South Africa in 1980. Afterwards, at a press conference, Jimmy Cliff publicly declared,

“As a consequence of the increased communication between my brothers on the continent and I and brothers of Ethiopian ancestry exiled in the West, I, Jimmy Cliff, will not go back to South Africa until it is free.”

Jimmy Cliff also announced his intention to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the OAU by promoting and taking part in a series of benefit concerts in Jamaica, starting in May.

The African National Congress has recommended that Jimmy Cliff's name be removed from the list of entertainers to be boycotted for having played in South Africa.

Subsequently, at the end of December,

and after a meeting at which Comrade Makatini was present, the singer Brook Benton, who twice visited South Africa in the past, also made a public statement undertaking never to return until majority rule is achieved, and promising to work with organisations dedicated to the struggle against apartheid.

ANC and SWAPO Comrades Tour Canada

Father Michael Lapsley of the ANC and Susan Nghidinwa, SWAPO Women's Council representative in Zambia, toured Canada at the end of 1983, under the auspices of Canadians Concerned about Southern Africa.

During their six-week tour, they spoke at public meetings, met with church, labour, women's and students' groups, and held numerous interviews with the media. In St. Johns, Newfoundland, they met with officials of the Newfoundland Liquor Corporation to request the removal of South African liquor

and wines from the corporation's shelves. In Ottawa, they spoke to representatives of the Canadian Labour Congress, and also met with a representative from the Department of External Affairs. There were also meetings held in Quebec with representatives of the Parti Quebecois.

Michael Lapsley, an Anglican priest, put particular emphasis on making Christians aware of their moral obligation to support the armed struggle of the ANC and SWAPO. Susan Nghidinwa felt the tour was particularly useful in informing people about the situation in Namibia, for she was surprised to find how little Canadians knew about her homeland.

In each city they visited, both comrades tried to make Canadians aware of the role they can play in assisting the struggle — boycotting products, withdrawing funds from banks that support apartheid, providing material aid to the ANC and SWAPO refugee camps, and so on. Both agreed that the tour had been successful in raising Canadian awareness about the situation in southern Africa.

The politics of culture

by Wally Serote

This paper was presented by Comrade Wally Serote, on behalf of the Medu Editorial Board, at the Foundation for Education with Production "Cultural Studies" workshop in Gaborone, September 12th-14th 1983. It first appeared in Medu Art Ensemble Newsletter, Vol. 5 No. 2.

For us who have been through years of severe oppression and exploitation, any discussion of the politics of culture starts where we agree that culture is partisan. The imperialists came to a land where people lived; they smashed our kingdoms and raped our economy under the banner of so-called 'Christian civilisation.' Our culture, from dance to dress to medicine to agriculture, was labelled 'tribal;' we were told we were too ignorant to appreciate proper housing or enough food; we were told we were barely 'civilised' enough to work in their mines and gardens and factories and kitchens and certainly not civilised enough to appreciate higher wages. When the people resisted, they were called 'savages,' and they were savagely suppressed. A Portuguese administrator explained the imperialist approach to culture quite clearly in the 1890s:

"The state, not only as a sovereign of semi-barbaric populations, but also as a depositary of social authority, should

have no scruples in obliging and if necessary forcing these rude Negroes in Africa, these ignorant Pariahs in Asia, these half-witted savages in Oceania, to work ..."
(1)

We never had much reason to believe that culture of aesthetics sits above politics.

Our discussion then starts at the point where we say, how is it possible that we have been so dominated and have survived? We have survived for no other reason than that every single day of our lives, from when the colonisers took our country and us to today, we have known that we had to resist. A people's culture is their expression of their awareness of their conditions of existence; our culture is a culture of resistance. The imperialists took our land and handed us the bible. In so doing, they destroyed the foundations of pre-colonial culture. In its place they gave us a misery of tin and mud huts, poll-tax, malnutrition and disease, migrant labour and the mines, a few shillings to work the land that had once been ours. We shared this misery in Angola, Mozambique, South Africa, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho. And this very misery became a common bond between our people, a common ground from which has grown a new awareness: an awareness of the need to resist.

until it fails to interact at any level with the real world we live in. The dances on the mines; the South African Sunday paper's version of a sangoma; the Mkishe masks painted with enamel wall-paint and sold at Victoria Falls. These impotent, pseudo-traditions have nothing to do with our people's culture.

As we said earlier, this 'civilisation' they have foisted upon us neglects to provide even the most basic necessities for the majority of the population — food, space to live and work in, light in the evening. These lacks in themselves contribute to deadening people's awareness. How can a woman who spends eight hours in a factory, commutes for two more hours to and from home, and has to care for children and cook for husband in the remaining time of her day, write poetry or paint pictures? The 'artistic freedom' the oppressor culture so often admires is a worthless irrelevance to that woman: 'art for art's sake' would only take her even farther away from challenging the miseries of her life. The oppressor's very concept of culture, rather than leading people to deal with their own realities, serves rather to confuse and distract.

Yet we have resisted; and we have had to find ways of transforming that resistance to an offensive. It is not sufficient for culture to reflect an awareness of oppression and exploitation; such awareness only becomes meaningful when it leads to action to end that oppression. Culture is not only awareness, but the expression of that awareness.

Culture is Struggle and Resistance

Our culture is every facet of struggle which contests for a place in the mind of the oppressed, and those who actively support the cause of the oppressed against the plotting and intrigues of the oppressors and exploiters. Our culture is the struggle for a piece of land which must grow into a country; it is the struggle for every single grain of the soil; it is every means we may devise to take and use our country's resources to create a better life for every single one of us. In this part of the world, Southern Africa, in the past twenty years, we have seen and exper-

enced in five countries the highest form of cultural expression, when the people of these countries — South Africa, Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia — when no other alternative was left, embarked on armed struggle for liberation.

The vicious and violent methods employed to create cheap labour out of the majority of the peoples of these countries have formed items on the agendas of hundreds and thousands of conferences throughout the world. And these discussions, if nothing else, have informed the oppressed majority that in the end, what matters is how they themselves define the objective of their struggles for liberation, and who they themselves choose as their allies. The liberation of these oppressed majorities had been fought for, and won, by their own political organisations, consciously mobilising their own forces to overthrow the oppressor. In 1983, both the now independent countries and those still fighting have clearly defined to the world the direction and objective of their struggle. It is wise that the gathering here note this and be guided by either the governments of these countries or the liberation movements in those countries still engaged in the struggle for liberation. For we cannot talk about the people's culture today without looking to these, the people's hard-won and democratically built organisations, to give us direction; we cannot even begin to discuss the people's culture without seeing these structures as the first and most concrete expression of the people's consciousness.

We Create a New Culture

This process of struggle is an expression of our people's awareness. It is also the source for the creation of a new culture, a culture which will destroy exploitation, and create a new man and a new country where freedom, peace and progress are established and cherished and protected by every single man and woman. A book on the Murals of Mozambique begins:

“Revolution is a highly conscious act. It

permits the unthinkable to be thought, the inconceivable to be imagined, and the unspoken to be shouted out loud. When independence came to Mozambique in 1975, the people celebrated not only the end of centuries of Portuguese colonialists, but also the unfolding of a deep process of internal transformation, the sudden flowering in bright sunlight of all that had been hidden in darkness and fear." (5)

A Zimbabwean collection of poems on their liberation struggle points out that

"the colonial and racial malaise into which we have become sunk had created so much confusion and deprivation that culturally, we now had only one source from which to seek ultimate salvation — the success of the revolution." (6)

And Agostinho Neto wrote:

"Tomorrow
we shall sing anthems to freedom
when we celebrate
the day of the abolition of this slavery."
(7)

We take it then that the major question of this gathering is: How do the Southern African cultural workers break with the past and embark on the new road defined by the oppressed peoples to a free and just society? Here I would like to quote Ngugi:

"In the process of their economic and political life, the community develops a way of life often seemingly unique to that society. They evolve language, song, dance, literature, religion, theatre, art, architecture, and an educational system that transmits all those plus a knowledge of the history and geography of their territory of habitation from one generation to the next. Thus their economics and political community evolves a cultural life expressed in their language, art, architecture, dance, song, theatre,

literature and their educational system. It is a community of culture linked together by a shared way of life." (8)

Today we are creating a new economic and political life; we must create at the same time a new cultural life. As we build our new society, as we take control of the institutions of state, of the economy, we must ask how these institutions, that new life, can become our new culture, a culture that involves all the people of our land, that expresses their highest values and hopes and demands.

In Mozambique, Frelimo talks of 'developing people's culture' not 'discovering traditional culture.' Local dance groups in Mozambique sang songs for Zimbabwean liberation even as they were bombed by Smith's airplanes; today they sing songs which say, "Let the boers come ... we want peace but we are not afraid of war ... let the boers come." In 1978 half a million Mozambicans took part in the National Festival of Dance. Posters proclaim the dignity of women, working in fields and factories; cartoons attack the corrupt and inefficient bureaucrat, the lazy and arrogant drunk; murals recount the history of the liberation struggle and the people's victory, and point towards the economic and social growth of the new nation.

The development of people's culture includes the recognition and incorporation of the existing African art forms, where they have survived and resisted oppressor culture. Many of these rich and varied modes of expression have been adopted by the people's resistance, as with the Chimurenga songs of Zimbabwe. Traditional African culture should not be upheld because it is more 'real' to our people than imposed oppressor culture — in the mines or in the townships it may not be. But that richness and quality can be taken over by the people in their search for new forms to express their new consciousness. Thus, the Freedom Charter of South Africa proclaims that all national groups shall have equal rights "to use their own languages and to develop their own folk culture and cus-

toms;" and that "the doors of learning and culture shall be opened. The government shall discover, develop and encourage national talent for the enhancement of our cultural life ..."

Control of the state gives us the opportunity to instil and develop our nation's culture through the major societal institutions — the educational system, the mass media, the law: even to create new institutions that can directly encourage the development of culture.

Tools of Culture Must Be Made Available

A basic requirement of a people's culture is literacy. Thus the first act of the Zimbabwe Ministry of Education has been to expand the number of children attending all levels of school from 830 000 to 2.2 million. And beyond that first requirement of numbers, literacy has to be directly related to the content of what is read; thus, adult literacy campaigns in Mozambique use as their subject matter the revolutionary process itself — adults are taught to read with the words, "A Luta Continua." Literacy becomes a skill for dealing with the real experiences of the people; it becomes a step towards self-determination.

Equipment and cultural institutions too must be available to the people. The majority of the people cannot have access to the graphic arts, for instance, when good drawing paper costs half a day's salary per sheet, as it does today in most of Southern Africa (if it is available at all). Musicians and theatre groups need rooms to rehearse and perform; writers need publications, and indeed a whole printing industry. These institutions for the production of culture must be structured so that people have access to them.

Less obvious, but critically important indeed, are electric lights for every house, living space for every person, room to study in quiet. Without such underpinnings the development of culture will remain the privilege of a sheltered elite.

Southern African Culture and the SADCC

Culture is a weapon in the people's movement; it is a tool that a liberated nation can use to build a new society. It is too important to be left to the inspiration of the individual artist, and the haphazard and often self-serving dictates of commerce. This raises the question: have the independent countries of Southern Africa mobilised and organised cultural workers within government structures, and what has been the definition of the course of that cultural work? It is time that the independent governments of Southern Africa confronted this issue of cultural development very directly.

Further: in their economic and political life, the Southern African countries have created SADCC. Realising that out of this creation another creation must develop, that of language, song, dance, literature, theatre, art and so on, are the cultural workers in this region organised within SADCC? If so how, if not, why not? Since independence great progress has been made, yet our people still share illiteracy, poverty, drought and disease; they are still cut off from a world which has made tremendous strides in science, in production, in standards of living. And our people and governments face together the political subversion, the economic domination, and military aggression of the racist South African regime. Surely we should pool our cultural awareness, our developing consciousness, to confront these issues?

We realise all sorts of problems arise as soon as we ask that question. Implied in it is another question: what kind of political and economic direction do our countries share? However, for SADCC to exist requires a minimal agreement by the leadership of these countries; and this must be our point of reference. Otherwise, who are we to draw up a cultural studies handbook for teachers in Southern Africa?

Really, what we have suggested here has been two issues. That, our discussions should be governed by an agreement that cultural work is partisan, and that must reflect the realities of our situation. Since we are dealing

with Southern Africa, we cannot discuss cultural work outside SADCC; that is, we cannot be fruitfully engaged in cultural work if we are not in dynamic contact with the liberated Governments of Southern Africa and the liberation movements in those areas still seeking independence. It is through these bodies that we will be in touch with relevant cultural workers, community cultural bodies, and official programmes, so as to draw a minimum cultural programme for all of us. It is in this framework that we suggest, finally, that the papers and discussions of this gathering might lay the basis for the creation of a working committee of cultural workers representative of the countries of this region.

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FILM REVIEW

New Zealanders
fight apartheid

The word 'Patu' is a Maori word that means 'striking out.' It is the title of a documentary film which was shown at the London Film Festival in November 1983, where a Sechaba representative saw it.

Patu! is a full-length documentary film made from the point of view of the people who decided to mobilise against and stop the South African rugby tour of New Zealand in 1981. It shows the events and captures the mood of the tour, which politically almost tore New Zealand apart. The reasons for the resistance to the tour are interestingly brought together and interwoven into the chronicle of events which made up the prep-

aration for the anti-tour protests and the protests themselves.

This was the first racist South African tour for sixteen years. It coincided with election year, and Muldoon's concern was to get the 'rugby vote,' — a large part of the electorate. He was prepared to surrender his principles on apartheid South Africa. 1981 was also the centenary of the fierce Parihaka resistance, when the Maori occupied land to prevent its annexation by the colonialists. It was a resistance which was bloodily put down by troops.

Little did the New Zealand school children, who re-enacted the events of Bloody Wednesday, June 16th 1976, as part of the 31

campaign to stop the racist rugby tour from getting to New Zealand, realise that by the time the tour had arrived they would find themselves confronting the police in pitched battle. Whilst the anti-tour protesters were determined to resist without violence, the film shows that the government was increasingly prepared to use force to suppress the mounting opposition. We see how rugby fields were turned into fortresses, and anti-tour protesters are shown face to face with four layers of fully clad riot police.

Nearly half the population of New Zealand was mobilised into opposition to the tour. The people's protest was taken as a challenge to the authority of the government, who turned it into a question of 'law and order.' Over two thousand protesters were arrested, and we see anti-tour demonstrators being brutally clubbed as the government escalated the violence. Whereas in early stages the film records anti-tour demonstrators wearing ordinary clothes, by the end of the tour they are filmed at protest demonstrations wearing helmets and padding to protect themselves against the police. The police tried to get television and press film to use in court prosecutions against tour protesters. This caused an almost universal reaction amongst journalists, who, in doing their work, found themselves in the invidious position of inadvertently working for the police. They protested, and many refused to hand over their photographs.

In mobilising against the Springbok tour, the raw sore of racism came to the fore. New Zealand prides itself on not being racist, a false pride, as the Maori indigenous minority know at first hand. In rugby terms, for example, Maoris were excluded from selection into the All Black teams until 1967. For them, rejection of the tour meant a stand against racism at home, as it did for many other people, young and old, who abhorred the system of apartheid.

In the film, veterans of the Second World War recall the stand they took against Nazism, and can't help but draw parallels with South Africa under apartheid. Most poignant-

ly, a young Maori woman recalls the experience of her father, who, as part of the Maori Battalion, found himself on a ship off Cape Town during the war. Whilst his fellow New Zealanders — white — were allowed ashore, the South African authorities refused to allow black New Zealanders off the ship. Fifty pounds had to be sent from New Zealand to hire a bus to take the Maori soldiers into Cape Town.

Patu! is a film made by a Maori woman film director, Merata Mita. It is also the first full-length film in New Zealand to be made by a woman. In her remarkable film, Merata Mita sticks to her principles and is determined to hold a point of view and convey it through pictures and sound. To do so, she had to resist considerable harassment by the police, by 'rugby-loving' New Zealanders and establishment opinion, which accused her of bias. During the shooting of the film, to secure its safety, the negatives had to be flown out of New Zealand. In an interview, she said,

"I had a lot of harassment before the game that was held in Auckland here. My son was picked up by the police ... for no crime at all. I had frequent visits by the police to my house. I had obscene phone calls at all hours of the night ... I would not jeopardise the security of the film or the people who were in it ... If necessary, I would go to gaol."

Broadsheet, July/August 1983

Above all else, the film *Patu!* stands as a testimony to the political courage and determination of millions of New Zealanders who were determined to stand up against apartheid South Africa and to fight the tarnish of racism that contact with that system brings.

By making the film, Merata Mita has given us an insight into the struggle against apartheid South Africa in New Zealand, and she has provided us with a weapon (another meaning for the Maori word, 'Patu') to mobilise international support for our struggle. This is an inspiring film by a committed director.

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