

MARCH 1990



# SECHABA

official organ of the african  
national congress south africa



"WE HAVE WAITED  
TOO LONG FOR OUR  
FREEDOM ..."

A TRIUMPHANT HOMECOMING FOR NELSON MANDELA

MARCH 1990

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# SECHABA

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## LISTEN TO RADIO FREEDOM

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

### Radio Lusaka

Daily 7.00 pm:

Wednesday 10.15-10.45 pm:

Thursday 9.30-10.00 pm:

Friday 10.15-10.45 pm:

Short wave 31mb 9505 KHz

Sunday 8.00-8.45 am:

Short wave 25mb 11880 KHz

### Radio Luanda

Monday-Saturday 7.30 pm:

Sunday 8.30 pm:

Short wave 31mb 9535 KHz

and 25 mb

### Radio Madagascar

Monday-Saturday 7.00-9.00 pm:

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Short wave 49mb 6135 KHz

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### Radio Tanzania

Monday Wednesday Friday 8.15 pm:

Tuesday Thursday Saturday 6.15 am:

Short wave 31mb 9750 KHz

The above are South African times

# A WATERSHED?

Friday February 2nd finally dawned and, with it, came the long-awaited watershed speech by Pretoria's President F W de Klerk. For months the Pretoria regime had raised this expectation, carefully planting leaks here and there about the far-reaching changes that would be ushered in when the ninth racist Parliament opened.

When it came, even the most optimistic of the media, even those loyal supporters of the regime who have consistently presented De Klerk as a reformer who is prepared to go all the way, had to admit that while announcements were dramatic and went further than those made by any other apartheid leader before, they still left his administrative, judicial and armed instruments of rule intact. It was no watershed.

The world could not but admit that the laws that are the pillars of the apartheid system, such as the Group Areas Act, will not be repealed; that a major political trial resumed just three days after his speech; and that only a few hours after the announcements, peaceful protesters were being whipped, arrested and shot at by the blood-thirsty South African police.

The announcements that De Klerk made are important in themselves and constitute positive elements of the climate conducive to negotiations that we have demanded his regime should create. Certainly, we welcome the lifting of the bans on the ANC and other organisations. We also welcome other positive measures announced, such as the suspension of the death sentence, the release of some political prisoners, the ending of media restrictions and the lifting of restrictions on ex-detainees.

Understandably, everyone was furious when Nelson Mandela, the only one of the Rivonia trialists remaining in prison, was not immediately released. They could see no justification for this action. Any prolonging of his imprisonment, by a day, a week or more, could only add to the injustice that has kept him behind prison walls for almost three decades.

**Nelson Mandela has now been released,** and

the nation-wide welcome he received clearly proves the amount of support he enjoys from among his people, and how much they look forward to his joining the rest of the leadership of the ANC to lead them forward to freedom and democracy.

On the occasion of his release, Nelson Mandela, like the rest of the leadership on February 2nd, felt that there are limitations in De Klerk's 'offer,' and that he should go farther and quicker to create the proper political climate. (Elsewhere in this issue we publish the two statements made by Mandela — before and after his release.)

Despite Mandela's release and the other measures announced, the fact that some political prisoners will not be released, that the state of emergency is not lifted in its entirety and that the practice of detention without trial will continue, says a lot about the manner in which the Pretoria regime intends to conduct itself at this crucial period in the history of our country. The continued wielding, by the regime, of such repressive laws as the Internal Security Act can only lead to more conflict as the expected freedom resulting from the unbanning of the people's organisations, and the release of their leaders, is stifled by these repressive laws, and the state of emergency is still in existence.

It is important to state that the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the United Democratic Front, in their statements on February 2nd, also felt that a climate of free political activity had not been created.

Again, two issues fundamental to the solution of the apartheid problem in South Africa and the creation of a truly democratic and non-racial country remain almost untouched in the regime's declaration that it is embarking on a path of reconstruction and reconciliation. These are issues pertaining to group rights as advanced by the De Klerk regime, as opposed to the ANC's call for rule by the majority of the whole people, black and white. Mere reference of the issues

concerning all kinds of rights to the South African Law Commission, whose results are expected later this year, is an inexcusable flight from responsibility and, in fact, reality.

To speak of ending apartheid and, at the same time, seek to impose a concept of rights that would favour one group over the rest is a contradiction in deeds. Apartheid is nothing but group rights for Whites. It is the rights arrogated to the white group that are the basis of the problem in our country. There is no other way that these rights can be left to reside where they are and a solution found at the same time. We want a country where the majority of the whole people will govern, on the basis of one person one vote in a non-racial democracy, and not on a group basis.

In the Conference for a Democratic Future we said that only a Constituent Assembly, in which the various leaders of all the people would participate freely, could serve as a viable organ through which the democratic transformation of our country would be discussed. In the January 8th Statement we described such a body as one that would be truly representative of the people and be accountable to them, and one that would, once and for all, answer the question of who the genuine representatives of the people are. We

still stand by our call then, and believe that if the De Klerk regime is genuine, it will review its stand and create the climate necessary for genuine negotiations to take place.

The OAU Harare and United Nations Declarations clearly state our position on negotiations. We stand firm on these, and call on the South African regime to rethink its position and move with the rest of the world. Normalisation of relations with the rest of the world depends on how fast De Klerk moves to end apartheid. Not even the cultural and academic boycotts must be called off in the light of the short distance so far walked by the regime towards the peaceful resolution of the crisis in our country.

For our part, we remain committed to doing everything in our power to end the apartheid system as quickly as possible, and by all means possible, including negotiations. And, in this situation, we call for the greatest unity of all forces within our country that are committed to the perspective of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa.

We have, through our struggles, combined with international pressure, forced the De Klerk regime to take the limited steps it has taken. To advance, we must not let up that pressure.

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## **ORGANISATIONAL AND POLITICAL TASKS FACING THE ANC**

A series of meetings attended by President O R Tambo, the released leaders and members of the National Executive Committee has taken place in Stockholm.

Among other matters, the meetings exchanged ideas on the organisational and political tasks facing the ANC in the light of the decisions announced by De Klerk on February 2nd, 1990.

Final decisions on all these questions will be taken at a plenary meeting of the NEC, after further consultations with leaders at home.

Work has already begun to bring about a disciplined and ordered restructuring of the ANC taking into account the new conditions.

Until a new organisational structure has been finalised, we call upon all ANC structures to remain intact and to maintain their vigilance.

We also call upon all sectors of the mass democratic movement to remain intact as before, and together to continue to mobilise their respective constituencies.

Alfred Nzo, Secretary-General  
February 5th 1990

# **STATEMENT OF THE EXTENDED MEETING OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS**

**An extended meeting of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ANC was held in Lusaka, Zambia on the 19-21 January, 1990. It was attended by members of the NEC as well as the leaders of the ANC recently released from prison.**

The meeting took place subsequent to the designation of the year 1990 by the NEC as our Year of People's Action for a Democratic South Africa. Its deliberations therefore centred on the key question of what needs to be done to end apartheid and transform South Africa into a united, democratic and non-racial country in the shortest possible time.

It emphasised the decisive importance of the struggle carried out by the ANC, other democratic and anti-apartheid forces as well as the people themselves for the realisation of these objectives. Accordingly, it examined all the important elements of that struggle with a view to its intensification.

In this context, it reaffirmed the centrality of the tasks contained in the Statement of the NEC issued on January 8th, the occasion of the 78th anniversary of the ANC, and examined ways and means of ensuring their implementation.

The meeting reiterated the importance of the engagement of the masses of all our people in united action against apartheid as a key element in the continuing offensive against the repugnant system of white minority domination.

In this regard, it considered and agreed on the role of the leaders recently released from prison in mobilising and uniting all the people of South Africa so that these masses can act as one force pursuing the common goals of justice and peace for all. It recognised with great appreciation the work these leaders have carried out already and paid tribute to them as national leaders of our people.

Emphasising the importance of the unity of the people in the struggle for their own liberation, it considered the role of these leaders in ending without delay the fratricidal strife in Natal. It viewed this continuing massacre of the people as totally unacceptable and a national problem which requires the direct intervention of our national leaders to interact with the people affected by this violence and all other forces interested in ending it.

The meeting further called on all those working within the bantustan structures, including the participants in the forthcoming meeting of bantustan leaders, to commit themselves to the perspective of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa, and therefore ally themselves with all other forces fighting for this objective. It congratulated those who have already taken this step and urged them further to deepen their involvement in this struggle.

Having carefully assessed the situation within the country, the meeting reaffirmed that the conditions which forced the ANC to resort to armed struggle had not changed. This situation continues to make this struggle a key component part of our strategy.

It must therefore continue and be intensified. All necessary measures must be taken to strengthen our army within its theatre of operations so that it can carry out its noble tasks with even greater effectiveness. At the same time, the meeting reiterated the commitment of the ANC to negotiate and agree to a mutual suspension of hostilities as provided for in the Harare Declaration.

The meeting paid tribute to the international community for the role it has played and continues to play in the fight against racial tyranny in our country, by isolating apartheid South Africa through the imposition of sanctions, and supporting our national liberation movement and

its struggle for the emancipation of our people.

It calls on the world forces united against apartheid, for a democratic South Africa to continue along this path and act together for the total isolation of the apartheid regime. It also calls on all who wish to see South Africa transformed into a non-racial democracy, and peace in the region secured, to support and extend assistance to the ANC and the rest of the democratic movement of our country.

The meeting expressed its grave concern at the unfriendly act of the government of Hungary which, against the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people of our country, its own international commitments and in contemptuous disregard of our own representations, received representatives of the apartheid regime. It therefore makes an urgent call to the Government of Hungary to return to its traditional positions of opposition to racism and abandon any plans it might have to establish economic, political and other relations with apartheid South Africa.

The meeting reaffirmed the significance of the Harare and United Nations Declarations, the latter unanimously adopted by the General Assembly, as the basis for the political settlement of the problems facing our country. It emphasised the importance of the fact that these documents are supported by the overwhelming majority of the people of South Africa, the rest of Africa and the international community.

It reiterated that, in keeping with the provisions of these Declarations, no negotiations can take place until the necessary climate for such negotiations has been created. The refusal of the Pretoria regime to take the appropriate action in this regard is yet another element confirming its unwillingness to see the apartheid system ended with as little bloodshed and destruction as possible.

In this regard, the meeting reaffirmed the importance of the immediate and unconditional release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners. It paid tribute to our dear comrade and fellow-leader, Comrade Nelson Mandela, and expressed its full support for his continuing actions even from within prison, which are fully in keeping with the policies and objectives of

our movement, to take the struggle to end apartheid further forward.

The meeting further reaffirmed the preference of the ANC for a settlement arrived at by political means. The ANC has held this position from its very foundation. It has, throughout the 78 years of its existence, done everything it could to prevail on successive white minority regimes to adopt the same position, to no avail.

The meeting reaffirmed that our commitment to these positions is not in doubt. It is fundamental to the nature of the ANC as a movement which seeks democracy, peace and justice for all. At the same time, the process of ending apartheid through negotiations requires that the Pretoria regime should itself also demonstrate its commitment to a political solution by taking the necessary actions which would make such a solution possible.

The meeting warned that no solution can be arrived at while the apartheid regime seeks to impose its will on the majority of our people and their representatives. A negotiated settlement must address the fundamental aspirations of all the people of our country, with those aspirations having been expressed by the people themselves in open political activity and debate. The Nationalist Party and its government therefore need to take a decisive step forward by meeting the conditions for the creation of a climate conducive to negotiations and recognise the central importance of the genuine representatives of the people of our country.

The meeting expressed its grave concern that there are still some patriots languishing on death row in Pretoria. It demanded that these should, under no circumstances, be hanged. It further demanded that the apartheid regime should stop all its acts of repression, including the banning of meetings and attacks on demonstrators and striking workers, as has happened with the opponents of the rebel cricket tour and the railway workers.

Mindful of the evolving situation in our country, the meeting resolved that the ANC would respond to any positive change, to encourage further movement forward towards the speedy elimination of the apartheid system. Work would therefore continue to strengthen all the organisa

tional structures of the movement so that they can play their historic role in this regard. Furthermore, preparations would continue for the convening of the next National Conference of the ANC, later this year, at which would be represented the entire membership both from inside and outside the country.

The meeting reaffirmed that the senior leaders who have been released from prison are part of one, united leadership of our movement. They will operate together with the National Executive Committee of the movement to provide the necessary leadership as we advance towards the goal of the fundamental transformation of our country.

The meeting looked forward to the forthcoming Summit Meeting of the Frontline States. This would provide an opportunity, especially for our home-based leaders, to meet the leaders of our region, extend our deep appreciation for the unswerving support for our movement and struggle and discuss with them what needs to be done further to intensify the offensive against the apartheid system.

The meeting reaffirmed the urgent responsibility of the ANC, the Mass Democratic Movement and the people of South Africa to take all necessary action within our country to oppose Pretoria's destabilisation of the countries of our region. It confirmed our historic task to liquidate the apartheid system as soon as possible so that peace can prevail throughout Southern Africa. The meeting resolved to convey to President Kaunda, that outstanding statesman and eminent son of our continent, UNIP, the government and people of the Republic of Zambia our sincere gratitude to them for their selfless support and involvement with us in the struggle in Southern Africa for justice and peace. Special thanks are also due to Comrade President Kaunda for everything he has done to enable the leaders from home to travel to Zambia and beyond. The people of Zambia should rest assured that, deeply appreciative of the sacrifices they and other peoples of our region have made, we will not

rest until the apartheid system is destroyed once and for all.

The meeting looked forward to the important visits by our leaders to Tanzania and Ethiopia and the Headquarters respectively of the OAU Liberation Committee and the OAU itself. It is our conviction that the visits will help further to consolidate the relations between the people of South Africa and the rest of Africa, and deepen the involvement of the continent in the common effort to ensure its total liberation.

The meeting further resolved to extend the congratulations and solidarity of the ANC to SWAPO, and the sister people of Namibia, as they advance towards their emancipation. It considered the successes registered by our comrades-in-arms of SWAPO as a major victory for our people as well and looks forward to the day when our representatives will join the people of Namibia at their independence celebrations.

The meeting resolved to extend its warmest greetings to our President, Comrade Oliver Tambo, and wished him a speedy recovery. All the necessary steps will be taken immediately to acquaint him with the results of this historic Extended Meeting of the NEC. Our leaders from home look forward with keen enthusiasm to their meeting with the President before they return home.

The NEC took advantage of the presence in Lusaka of leaders of the Mass Democratic Movement of our country to express its appreciation to them for the way they have received our leaders from jail. It also discussed with them further co-operation in the common struggle for the transformation of our country into a non-racial democracy.

The meeting reaffirmed the perspective that victory is in sight. It urged all the people of South Africa and all their formations to unite around the call for united People's Action for a Democratic South Africa so that we do indeed achieve freedom in our lifetime.

*Lusaka, Zambia, January 21st 1990*



# INTERVIEW

## COSATU

### PRESENT AND FUTURE CAMPAIGNS

In February, we printed part of an interview we had in January with Jay Naidoo, Secretary-General of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Below are more of the questions we asked him, and the answers he gave.

Black workers are suffering both economic exploitation and national oppression, something the Freedom Charter gives expression to. How does COSATU articulate this double oppression?

In 1987, COSATU adopted the Freedom Charter as a programme of its own minimum political demands. We did this mainly because as a trade union federation we're not a political party, but play a major political role in the unfolding transformation of South Africa. What we saw was that the most representative organisation in our country — representing the aspirations of the vast majority of our people — was the African National Congress. A number of the aims and objectives of the African National Congress coincided with the aims and objectives of COSATU itself, in that we are both committed to creating a non-racial, democratic, united South Africa, based on one person one vote on a common voters' roll.

Therefore, the Freedom Charter became a major rallying point of the people of South Africa. The trade union movement saw that its role could not be restricted to economic issues on the factory floor, because the major struggle against economic exploitation is a political struggle. Apartheid ensures that it becomes a political struggle — apartheid legislation, the migrant labour system, the hostel system, the fact that when police intervene in industrial disputes it's usually against the black workers or the unions organising black workers.

So it was essential that we draw the connection between the struggle on the factory floor and the broader struggle for political freedom. That's why we've argued in our policy that the struggle for national liberation is part of an uninterrupted



Jay Naidoo

struggle for economic emancipation. We, in the trade union movement, as well as many other parts of the working class — the youth, the students, the women — are committed to fundamental transformation of South Africa, both politically and economically.

*COSATU is a trade union movement, but the workers in South Africa, the black workers, have contacts and connections with the countryside. They go home on holidays or when their contracts are finished. That means that COSATU has also to tackle the land question, the problem*



*affecting the rural people. How does COSATU do that?*

One of the great weaknesses of our own struggle has been the weakness of organisation in the rural areas. Over half a million workers in COSATU come from the rural areas and when those workers go back they go back with their experiences — organisational, political — and they take those experiences into their different areas. So one can say that COSATU and many other organisations of the past, of today, of the Mass Democratic Movement, have made a great contribution, through the workers who have gone back to these different areas and created forms of organisation that changed the bantustans, or are changing the bantustans, from being areas in the political control of the apartheid regime through puppet regimes to areas that are now flashpoints of resistance.

We, in COSATU see that there is an absolute need now to develop forms of organisation in the rural areas, that can make our resistance more uniform. Therefore, the issue that needs to be identified among the rural masses is the issue of land hunger, and how, in a post-apartheid South Africa, we are going to resolve that question.

*Are you thinking of having a broad peasant organisation to address rural problems?*

No, not at this point in time. I think the farthest COSATU has gone is to say that one of our priorities in 1989 — certainly we hope to make it a priority in 1990 — is the organisation of farm workers. They could provide, in our view, the backbone of any organisation that emerged in the rural areas.

I think the youth organisations that are being built in the rural areas are also important. They play a key role, though they have suffered enormously under the state of emergency. But we have not considered forming peasant organisations. What we will have to consider is that the types of organisation one forms in the rural areas, and the tactics one employs, have to adapt to the conditions that exist in the rural areas, because they are not the same as those that exist in the urban areas.

*Another problem that faces COSATU is the old question of its relationship with NACTU, the National Council of Trade Unions. How are you resolving this problem? What are the basic differences between them?*

At our congress in 1989, we resolved to meet with NACTU to discuss a timetable towards creating one federation. This demonstrates the openness that COSATU has to discussing the unity of organised workers. Our view is that there is more that unites workers than divides them; and that democracy should take place, that workers should be allowed to meet and discuss the problems and challenges that face them.

In South Africa, exploitation is the orientation that the economic system has. We are dominated by huge monopolies that make employers in our country very organised; today there is a major onslaught on the labour movement through the Labour Relations Act, attacks on everything we have successfully negotiated over the past ten years. This requires us to be united, and through the workers' summits we appealed to NACTU to unite with us in opposition to this Labour Relations Act, and we hoped that through unity in action we could lay the basis for unity of organisation.

What has been very disturbing to us is the tendency of NACTU to pull out of campaigns and agreements that they make with us, at the last minute. It happened at the first workers' summit in March 1989, where, though NACTU took a decision not to come, 11 of its affiliates came. It happened now at the Conference for a Democratic Future, where NACTU was part of the convening committee, and at the last minute it withdrew, though some of its affiliates came to the conference. It has also happened in relation to our campaign against the Labour Relations Act. There have been stages where, despite agreements, they have pulled out.

But we are hopeful that in 1990 there could be a much greater basis for unity and united action. We are confident that workers on the ground want unity — they want one federation. It requires a commitment from the leadership to achieve that.

## *How do you assess the Conference for a Democratic Future?*

The CDF was a watershed — the fact that we had 2 000 organisations, 4 600 delegates represented there, was a massive blow against apartheid. The spectrum of political opinion in that conference was greater than we have ever had in the past.

*I'm sure COSATU has discussed the constitutional guidelines of the ANC, and the conditions and preconditions for a negotiated settlement. What are the views of COSATU on these important issues?*

The constitutional guidelines were a major contribution to the debate on the shape and the content of a post-apartheid South Africa. They provided the framework in which the masses of our people could participate in shaping that future. In our 1989 Congress, we adopted a resolution that called for the fullest discussion, not only within the ranks of COSATU but in the broad ranks of the toiling masses of our country, of what elements should be going into the constitution of the future South Africa. A constitution can be negotiated only under conditions of freedom, where mandated representatives of the people will bring forward the expectations and demands of the people.

In that context, we've also begun a campaign, which will become more effective in 1990, of debating the Workers' Charter, and what demands should be going into the Workers' Charter, as part of the debate on constitutional guidelines. Within three years of the last Congress, we are going to call a Workers' Charter Congress to determine what rights the organised workers want built into the constitution through the Workers' Charter.

We have debated the issues of what mechanisms should formulate the constitution arising out of the CDF — for example, the adoption of the resolution that called for a constituent assembly, which is a further development from the Harare Declaration. That constituent assembly is now going to become a major rallying point of the Mass Democratic Movement, of the masses of

the people in our country.

At this point in time, when the crisis of De Klerk is irreversible, we are definitely not going to hand over the future of our country to any group or individuals that impose their interests on our people. I think that's the view that was taken when the ANC put forward the constitutional guidelines. It is not international conferences that are going to determine the content of our post-apartheid South Africa, it is the demands and expectations of our people on the ground, and the role that the organisations have played in fighting for the new South Africa. We are very confident that that is what will happen.

*British trade union leaders Norman Willis and Arthur Scargill with James Motlatsi, President of the SANUM, 1986*



*What is your final message to the international community — to our supporters?*

I believe that the Harare Declaration represents the aspirations of the vast majority of people in South Africa. It contains within it the programme that we see unfolding in our march to a new South Africa.

We believe the apartheid regime is very sensitive to international pressure. Therefore it would be a disaster if the international community had to discuss the lifting or the relaxing of that pressure. In fact, in this moment of transition for South Africa, the pressure against apartheid needs to be intensified. Therefore, COSATU and the democratic movement as a whole has called for the imposition of comprehensive, mandatory sanctions through the United Nations Security Council. That would be decisive in breaking the log jam that exists at present, and in forcing the apartheid regime to meet the demands being made by millions of people.

# "WE HAVE WAITED TOO LONG FOR OUR FREEDOM"

**The full text of Nelson Mandela's address to the people, made on the Grand Parade in Cape Town on February 11th 1990, the day of his unconditional release after twenty-seven years in prison.**

Friends, Comrades and Fellow South Africans, I greet you in the name of peace, democracy and freedom for all. I stand here before you, not as a prophet, but as a humble servant of you, the people.

Your tireless and heroic sacrifices have made it possible for me to be here today. I therefore place the remaining years of my life in your hands.

On this day of my release I extend my sincere and warmest gratitude to the millions of my compatriots and those in every corner of the globe who have campaigned tirelessly for my release.

I extend special greetings to the people of Cape Town, the city which has been my home for three decades. Your mass marches and other forms of struggle have served as a constant source of strength to all political prisoners.

I salute the African National Congress. It has fulfilled our every expectation in its role as leader of the great march to freedom.

I salute our President, Comrade Oliver Tambo, for leading the ANC even under the most difficult circumstances. I salute the rank and file members of the ANC. You have sacrificed life and limb in the pursuit of the noble cause of our struggle.

I salute combatants of Umkhonto we Sizwe, like Solomon Mahlangu and Ashley Kriel, who have paid the ultimate price for the freedom of all South Africans.

I salute the South African Communist Party for its sterling contribution to the struggle for democracy. You have survived 40 years of unrelenting persecution. The memory of great communists like Moses Kotane, Yusuf Dadoo, Bram Fischer and Moses Mabhida will be cherished for generations to come. I salute General Secretary Joe Slovo — one of our finest patriots. We are heartened by the fact that the

alliance between ourselves and the Party remains as strong as it always was.

I salute the United Democratic Front, Cosatu, the National Education Crisis Committee, the South African Youth Congress, the Transvaal and Natal Indian Congresses and the many other formations of the Mass Democratic Movement.

## **Conscience of Whites**

I also salute the Black Sash and the National Union of South African Students. We note with pride that you have acted as the conscience of white South Africans. Even during the darkest days in the history of your struggle you held the flag of liberty high. The large-scale mass mobilisation of the past few years is one of the key factors which led to the opening of the final chapter of our struggle.

I extend my greetings to the working class of our country. Your organised strength is the pride of our movement. You remain the most dependable force in the struggle to end exploitation and oppression.

I pay tribute to the many religious communities who carried the campaign for justice forward when the organisations of our people were silenced.

I greet the traditional leaders of our country. Many among you continue to walk in the footsteps of great heroes like Hintsa and Sekhukhuni.

I pay tribute to the endless heroism of the youth. You, the young lions, have energised our entire struggle.

I pay tribute to the mothers and wives and sisters of our nation. You are the rock-hard foundation of our struggle. Apartheid has inflicted more pain on you than on anyone else.

## **Front Line sacrifices**

On this occasion we thank the world community for their great contribution to the anti-apartheid struggle. Without your support our struggle would not have reached this advanced stage. The sacrifices of the Frontline States will be remembered by South Africans for ever.

My salutations will be incomplete without expressing my deep appreciation for the strength given to me during my long and lonely years in prison by my beloved wife and family. I am convinced that your pain and suffering was far greater than my own.

Before I go any further, I wish to make the point that I intend making only a few preliminary comments at this stage. I will make a more public statement only after I have had the opportunity to consult with my comrades.

Today the majority of South Africans, black and white, recognise that apartheid has no future. It has to be ended by our own decisive mass action in order to build peace and security. The mass campaign of defiance and other actions of our organisation and people can only culminate with the establishment of democracy.

The apartheid destruction on our sub-continent is incalculable. The fabric of family life of millions of our people has been shattered. Millions are homeless and unemployed, our economy lies in ruins and our people are embroiled in political strife.

## **Armed struggle — No option but to continue**

Our resort to the armed struggle in 1960, with the formation of the military wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe, was a purely defensive action against the violence of apartheid.

The factors which necessitated the armed struggle still exist today. We have no option but to continue. We express the hope that a climate conducive to a negotiated settlement will be created soon so that there may no longer be the need for the armed struggle.

I am a loyal and disciplined member of the African National Congress. I am therefore in full

agreement with all of its objectives, strategies and tactics.

The need to unite the people of our country is as important a task now as it always has been. No individual leader is able to take on this enormous task on his own.

It is our task as leaders to place our views before our organisation and to allow the democratic structures to decide on the way forward. On the question of democratic practice, I feel duty-bound to make the point that a leader of the movement is a person who has been democratically elected at a national conference. This is a principle which must be upheld without any exceptions.

## **Insistence on a meeting**

Today I wish to report to you that my talks with the government have been aimed at normalising the political situation in the country. We have not as yet begun discussing the basic demands of the struggle. I wish to stress that I, myself, have at no time entered into negotiation about the future of our country, except to insist on a meeting between the ANC and the government.

Mr De Klerk has gone further than any other Nationalist president in taking real steps to normalise the situation.

However, there are further steps as outlined in the Harare Declaration that have to be met before negotiations on the basic demands of our people can begin.

I reiterate our call for, *inter alia*, the immediate ending of the State of Emergency and the freeing of all, and not only some, political prisoners.

Only such a normalised situation which allows for free political activity, can allow us to consult our people in order to obtain a mandate.

## **Not behind the backs of the people**

The people need to be consulted on who will negotiate and on the content of such negotiations. Negotiations cannot take place above the heads or behind the backs of our people.

It is our belief that the future of our country can only be determined by a body which is democratically elected on a non-racial basis.

Negotiations on the dismantling of apartheid will have to address the overwhelming demands of our people for a democratic, non-racial and unitary South Africa.

There must be an end to white monopoly on political power and a fundamental restructuring of our political and economic system to ensure that the inequalities of apartheid are addressed and our society thoroughly democratised.

It must be added that Mr De Klerk himself is a man of integrity who is acutely aware of the danger of a public figure not honouring his undertakings.

But as an organisation we base our policy and strategies on the harsh reality we are faced with and this reality is that we are still suffering under the policy of the Nationalist government. Our struggle has reached a decisive moment. We call on our people to seize this moment so that the process towards democracy is rapid and uninterrupted.

We have waited too long for our freedom. We can no longer wait. Now is the time to intensify the struggle on all fronts. To relax our effort now would be a mistake which generations to come will not be able to forgive.

## The sight of freedom

The sight of freedom looming on the horizon should encourage us to redouble our efforts. It is only through disciplined mass action that our victory can be assured.

We call on our white compatriots to join us in the shaping of a new South Africa. The freedom movement is a political home for you too. We call on the international community to continue the campaign to isolate the apartheid regime.

To lift sanctions now would be to run the risk of aborting the process towards the complete eradication of apartheid. Our march to freedom is irreversible. We must not allow fear to stand in our way.

Universal suffrage on a common voters' roll

in a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa is the only way to peace and racial harmony.

In conclusion, I wish to quote my own words during my trial in 1964. They are as true today as they were then. I quote:

*"I have fought against white domination and I have fought against black domination. I have carried the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunity. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But, if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."*

I hope you will disperse with dignity and not a single one of you should do anything which will make other people say that we can't control our own people.



# MALIBONGWE CONFERENCE

By Ilva Mackay

**The MALIBONGWE Conference on Women's Struggle in South Africa took place in the Dutch capital of Amsterdam from January 6th to 18th 1990. It was one of those unique events in that, 6 000 miles from home, 100 women from inside South Africa met, discussed and shared the sisterhood of political and cultural experience with 50 delegates from the Women's Section of the African National Congress.**

Delegates from home comprised activists from women's organisations, the trade unions, churches, the Mass Democratic Movement and other structures that seek a new social and political order in our country which is dripping with the blood of the innocent.

Today, the position of the oppressed black woman still leaves a lot to be desired. We need to combat the prejudices governing the traditional perceptions about women that most societies hold, and change completely the attitude to women in our homes, in our organisations and in society.

Delegates to Malibongwe travelled through the length and breadth of the Netherlands. We were touched by the hospitality that highlighted how thoroughly inhuman the system of apartheid is. This interaction with our Dutch hosts also served to underscore the importance of international solidarity, where Dutch and South African women learnt from one another.

Malibongwe served an important task of giving back to the women of South Africa the self-respect and positive self-image that the regime and its system has tried to negate. The experience and opportunity to conduct interviews with the media, share experiences with women from other lands, function like normal human beings in a society unfettered by fear, rage and despair, exploded all myths about the second-class status of black South African women. The chemistry generated through the interaction of people from home with us in the national liberation movement created a foretaste of the vibrant life of a united, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist South Africa of the future.

## **Message of resistance and struggle**

Through joint cultural programmes with Dutch and Surinamese cultural workers, South African women cultural workers achieved enormous success in bringing across the message of resistance and struggle. One of the most memorable moments was a meeting held in the Dominicus Kerk where women testified about their experience at the hands of the regime of terror. One had the uncomfortable feeling of reliving testimonies of mothers who were separated from their young and loved ones during nazi fascism. Women spoke about their children who are on Death Row; mothers described how they had witnessed their children being taken and detained, and how children are denied the right to be children in the land of their birth. Women spoke with a touching eloquence about their own experiences in detention, what it is like to be completely at someone's mercy.

But the strength, the determination, courage and optimism in our victory against an illegal racist regime that emerged and was maintained throughout the Malibongwe Conference will serve as an inspiration to all those who attended.

## **Enormous tasks ahead**

It added to our conviction that the system of apartheid must be ended as soon as possible. It made everyone understand the enormous tasks ahead and the need for a common approach to be evolved



*The CASA choir, composed of Dutch people, at the Malibongwe Conference*

against the Pretoria regime. There is no doubt that 1990 is a decisive year for the National Liberation Movement and the Mass Democratic Movement. The apartheid regime is in a deep economic and political crisis with no viable policy, and the Malibongwe Conference sought concrete ways of paralysing apartheid, whilst strengthening our own structures.

One of the major reasons for convening Malibongwe was to facilitate the creation of a national women's movement that will speak with one voice, represent the women of South Africa and unite us in our common goals. Stress was laid throughout on the need to build a greater and lasting unity. Factors that hinder and limit women's participation in the struggle were subjected to hard scrutiny. It was noted that in the past there had been a tendency to play down gender oppression and to place different emphases on the struggle of women.

The patriarchal nature of South African society was discussed and identified as having a great bearing on the treatment, attitude and position of women in the home, in people's organisations and in society. Issues too numerous to mention were discussed in great depth — women's oppression, working women, tradition and culture, health, education, the family, children, repression, women's emancipation, unity ... A Malibongwe Bursary Trust was created at Conference to raise

funds for rural women's training and development programmes.

A Programme of Action was evolved to chart the way forward from Conference and it states:

*"Through our concerted efforts to forge unity and to build one national women's organisation, we shall be able to place firmly on the agenda of the National Liberation Movement, the Mass Democratic Movement and all our organisations, the process of integrating women's emancipation into the national liberation struggle."*

One highlight of Malibongwe was the impassioned message sent by our President Oliver Tambo who declared that "I will take you home with me." In this darkest hour of our people's history, glimmers of light are appearing on the horizon; there is nothing written on the sky that says the women won't be the ones carrying the first torch.

Sister Bernard Ncube, of Fedtraw, who could not attend because she was refused a passport, said in her message:

*"The struggle that we are waging is not just a women's struggle — it is a social struggle; a religious struggle; a political struggle; an economic struggle — for a new order ... The hands that rock the cradle can rule the world!"*

# "THE CRISIS HAS FREED ME TO TALK"

It is a matter of record that over the last three years, Comrade Nelson Mandela has been engaged in a series of meetings involving himself and a team of representatives of the Pretoria regime. The exchanges that took place ranged over a number of issues, finally focusing on finding a way out of the deadlock occasioned by the regime's insistence that the ANC meet two principal conditions: a renunciation of armed struggle as the means of bringing about change; and renunciation of its alliance with the South African Communist Party.

When it became clear that P W Botha himself would meet with Comrade Mandela during mid-1989, Mandela prepared a written statement which would be transmitted to Botha in preparation for such a meeting.

We are publishing that statement to make it more widely accessible to our ANC membership, the South African people and the international community, who have made so impressive a contribution to the fight for his release from prison. It is a testament of his political faith and beliefs after more than a quarter of a century in the dungeons of the Pretoria regime. We are certain that, like his speech from the dock during the Rivonia trial, this statement from prison will be remembered as one of the most outstanding.

Throughout his discussions with the representatives of his gaolers, Comrade Mandela made clear that he was not engaged in negotiations. Such a course could only be undertaken by the elected leadership of the African National Congress or its accredited representatives. His role, he made clear, was to act as a facilitator, exploring the difficult terrain together with the state's representatives, by explaining the ANC's policy on a number of thorny issues. It is our considered view that there could not be a better exposition of those policies than this statement.

It is proper that all who read this document recall that it was written by a courageous man who remains a prisoner. He has been imprisoned by the apartheid regime for 27 years, yet there is no bitterness or rancour in his voice. His tone remains dignified and firm. Yet there is that same steadfastness to principle heard in his statement from the dock in 1964. This is a voice that deserves to be heard consistently and clearly regarding the future of South Africa.

As we go to press, Nelson Mandela is no longer in prison. De Klerk has been compelled to throw open the prison gates. Imprisonment has not diminished Comrade Nelson Mandela. In his shadow his gaolers remain puny men, stubbornly clinging to a past without honour. (His document, published below, has been shortened by *Sechaba*.)

The deepening political crisis in our country has been a matter of grave concern to me for quite some time and I now consider it necessary in the national interest for the African National Congress and the government to meet urgently to negotiate an effective political settlement.

At the outset I must point out that I make this move without consultation with the ANC. I am a loyal and disciplined member of the ANC, my political loyalty is owed, primarily, if not exclusively, to this organisation and particularly to our Lusaka headquarters where the official leadership is stationed and from where our af-

fairs are directed.

## **The organisation first**

In the normal course of events, I would put my views to the organisation first, and if these views were accepted, the organisation would then decide on who were the best qualified members to handle the matter on its behalf and on exactly when to make the move. But in the current circumstances I cannot follow this course, and this is the only reason why I am acting on my own



initiative, in the hope that the organisation will, in due course endorse my action.

The step I am taking should not be seen as the beginning of actual negotiations between the government and the ANC. My task is a very limited one, and that is to bring the country's two major political bodies to the negotiating table.

My intervention is influenced by purely domestic issues, by the civil strife and ruin into which the country is now sliding. This is the crisis that has freed me to act.

I must add that the purpose of this discussion is not only to urge the government to talk to the ANC, but it is also to acquaint you with the views current among Blacks, especially those in the Mass Democratic Movement.

## **Obstacles to negotiation**

I have already indicated that I propose to deal with some of the obstacles to a meeting between the government and the ANC. The government gives several reasons why it will not negotiate with us. However, for purposes of this discussion, I will confine myself to only three main demands set by the government as a precondition for negotiations, namely that the ANC must first renounce violence, break with the SACP and abandon its demand for majority rule.

## **Renunciation of violence**

The position of the ANC on the question of violence is very simple. The organisation has no vested interest in violence. It abhors any action which may cause loss of life, destruction of property and misery to the people. It has worked long and patiently for a South Africa of common values and for an undivided and peaceful non-racial state. But we consider the armed struggle a legitimate form of self-defence against a morally repugnant system of government which will not allow even peaceful forms of protest.

## **Apartheid violence**

The government ignored our demands for a meeting, instead it took advantage of our commitment to a non-violent struggle and unleash-

ed the most violent form of racial oppression this country has ever seen. It stripped us of all basic human rights, outlawed our organisations and barred all channels of peaceful resistance. It met our demands with force and, despite the grave problems facing the country, it continues to refuse to talk to us. There can only be one answer to this challenge; violent forms of struggle.

## **Pretoria not ready for talks**

It is perfectly clear on the facts that the refusal of the ANC to renounce violence is not the real problem facing the government. The truth is that the government is not yet ready for negotiation and for the sharing of political power with Blacks. It is still committed to white domination and, for that reason, it will only tolerate those Blacks who are willing to serve on its apartheid structures. Its policy is to remove from the political scene Blacks who refuse to conform, who reject white supremacy and its apartheid structures, and who insist on equal rights with Whites.

## **Armed struggle**

White South Africa must accept the plain fact that the ANC will not suspend, to say nothing of abandoning, the armed struggle until the government shows its willingness to surrender the monopoly of political power, and to negotiate directly and in good faith with the acknowledged black leaders. The renunciation of violence by either the government or the ANC should not be a precondition to, but the result of, negotiation.

## **The South African Communist Party**

I have already pointed out that no self-respecting freedom fighter will allow the government to prescribe who his allies in the freedom struggle should be, and that to obey such instructions would be a betrayal of those who have suffered repression with us for so long.

We reject the charge that the ANC is dominated by the SACP.

Co-operation between the ANC and the South African Communist Party goes back to the early twenties and has always been, and still is, strictly limited to the struggle against racial oppression and for a just society. At no time has the organisation ever adopted or co-operated with communism itself. Apart from the question of co-operation between the two organisations, members of the SACP have always been free to join the ANC. But once they do so, they become fully bound by the policy of the organisation set out in the Freedom Charter.

As members of the ANC engaged in the anti-apartheid struggle, their Marxist ideology is not directly relevant. The SACP has throughout the years accepted the leading role of the ANC, a position which is respected by the SACP members who join the ANC.

### **Firmly established tradition**

There is, of course, a firmly established tradition in the ANC in terms of which any attempt is resisted, from whatever quarter, which is intended to undermine co-operation between the two organisations.

No dedicated ANC member will ever heed a call to break with the SACP. We regard such a demand as a purely divisive government strategy.

What the government is, in effect, asking us to do is to desert our faithful allies. We will not fall into that trap.

### **ANC is non-aligned**

The government also accuses us of being agents of the Soviet Union. The truth is that the ANC is non-aligned, and we welcome support from the East and the West, from the socialist and capitalist countries. The only difference, as we have explained on countless occasions before, is that the socialist countries supply us with weapons, which the West refuses to give us. We have no intention whatsoever of changing our stand on this question.

### **Personal position**

Concerning my own personal position, I have

already informed you that I will not respond to the government's demand that ANC members should state whether they are members of the SACP or not.

My political beliefs have been explained in the course of several political trials in which I was charged, in the policy documents of the ANC and in my autobiography, *The Struggle is my Life*, which I wrote in prison in 1975.

I stated in these trials and publications that I did not belong to any organisation apart from the ANC.

### **My views still the same**

My views are still the same. Equally important is the fact that many ANC leaders who are labelled communists by the government embrace nothing different from these beliefs.

The term 'communist' when used by the government has a totally different meaning from the conventional one. Practically every freedom fighter who receives his military training or education in the socialist countries is, to the government, a communist.

### **Majority rule**

The government is equally vehement in condemning the principle of majority rule. The principle is rejected despite the fact that it is a pillar of democratic rule in many countries of the world. It is a principle which is fully accepted in the white politics of this country.

Majority rule and internal peace are like the two sides of a single coin, and white South Africa simply has to accept that there will never be peace and stability in this country until the principle is fully applied.

### **Negotiated political settlement**

By insisting on compliance with the above-mentioned conditions before there can be talks, the government clearly confirms that it wants no peace in this country but turmoil; no strong and

independent ANC, but a weak and servile organisation playing a supportive role to white minority rule, not a non-aligned ANC but one which is a satellite of the West, and which is ready to serve the interests of capitalism.

No worthy leaders of a freedom movement will ever submit to conditions which are essentially terms of surrender dictated by a victorious commander to a beaten enemy, and which are really intended to weaken the organisation and to humiliate its leadership.

The key to the whole situation is a negotiated settlement, and a meeting between the government and the ANC will be the first major step towards lasting peace in the country, better relations with our neighbour states, admission to the Organisation of African Unity, readmission to the United Nations and other world bodies, to international markets and improved international relations generally.

An accord with the ANC, and the introduction of a non-racial society, is the only way in which our rich and beautiful country will be saved from the stigma which repels the world.

Two central issues will have to be addressed at such a meeting; firstly, the demand for majority rule in a unitary state; secondly, the concern of white South Africa over this demand, as well as the insistence of Whites on structural guarantees that majority rule will not mean domination of the white minority by Blacks.

The most crucial task which will face the government and the ANC will be to reconcile these two positions. Such reconciliation will be achieved only if both parties are willing to compromise. The organisation will determine precisely how negotiations should be conducted. It may well be that this should be done at least in two stages. The first, where the organisation and the government will work out together the preconditions for a proper climate for negotiations. Up to now both parties have been broadcasting their conditions for negotiations without putting them directly to each other.

The second stage would be the actual negotiations themselves when the climate is ripe for doing so. Any other approach would entail the danger of an irresolvable stalemate.

## Overcome the current deadlock

Lastly, I must point out that the move I have taken provides you with the opportunity to overcome the current deadlock, and to normalise the country's political situation. I hope you will seize it without delay. I believe that the overwhelming majority of South Africans, black and white, hope to see the ANC and the government working closely together to lay the foundations for a new era in our country, in which racial discrimination and prejudice, coercion and confrontation, death and destruction will be forgotten.

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### NOTE

The last part of the document containing the idea that there could be an exchange between the regime and the ANC on the question of what steps each side could take to create conditions for talks was considered by the National Executive Committee.

The National Executive Committee was able to convey its thinking to Comrade Mandela on this question; he fully accepted the organisation's insistence that before talks could take place the preconditions contained in the Harare Declaration had to be met by the government.



# INTERNATIONAL

## UNITED KINGDOM SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN 1990

Two years ago, the **Nelson Mandela, Freedom at 70 Campaign**, launched by the British Anti-Apartheid Movement, drew millions of people into political activity. During 1989, the AAM concentrated on its **Boycott Apartheid '89 Campaign** and on working to ensure the implementation of Resolution 435 in Namibia.

The **South Africa Freedom Now!** campaign for 1990 was launched in London in January. In a statement to a press conference, Archbishop Trevor Huddleston, President of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, explained the political reasons behind the campaign:

*"... The first few months of 1990 will see both the release of Nelson Mandela and the independence of Namibia under a SWAPO government. These events will be a cause of great celebration. However ... we need to intensify, not relax, both internal and external pressures on the apartheid regime during the critical period ahead."*

The South Africa Freedom Now! campaign will have four themes:

- ★ Stop Apartheid Repression: the AAM will produce fact sheets giving information on the present level of repression in South Africa.
- ★ Boycott Apartheid — Sanctions Now.
- ★ Solidarity with the ANC. The AAM will promote the work in Britain of the Nelson Mandela Reception Committee, established to ensure that Mandela's release becomes an occasion for celebration and re-dedication to the struggle.
- ★ For a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa.

The Southern Africa Coalition in Britain, a broad organisation in which the AAM is playing a major role, is planning a Southern Africa Week from 21st-28th February. A national demonstra-

tion, with the slogan, "Tell Mrs Thatcher: Stop Supporting Apartheid!" will take place on March 25th, 30th anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre, and a lobby of Parliament on March 27th.

## ANC in Japan

In November 1989, Japanese parliamentarians from both the Upper and Lower Houses, and representing all Japanese political parties, coordinated with the ANC in Japan to form the Parliamentary League Against Apartheid. The launch took place in the Parliament building.

The Chairperson of the League, Dietman Tamio Kawakami, and Ambassador Dagon Yaro of Nigeria who represented the huge number of African countries present at the occasion, said they felt the occasion was timely, as Japan is a leading trade partner of apartheid South Africa.

Comrade Jerry Matsila, ANC Chief Representative in Japan, urged the parliamentarians to:

- ★ Support ANC policies and the Constitutional Guidelines for a future democratic South Africa;
- ★ Support the Harare Declaration of the OAU Ad Hoc Committee on Southern Africa;
- ★ Support the Mass Democratic Movement and the Defiance Campaign;
- ★ Introduce legislation in both Houses of the Diet for sanctions and to isolate the De Klerk regime
- ★ Work for support from the Japanese government and public for the ANC and the democratic struggle in South Africa.

The formation of the Parliamentary League Against Apartheid follows the formation earlier of the organisations, Lawyers Against Apartheid and the University Students' Committees Against Apartheid.

# SOME THOUGHTS ON LANGUAGE AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

By Dawn Karim

**Since strategies relating to the national question are essentially long-term, because of the cultural factor involved, they must be studied with seriousness and sensibility. The sensitive nature of cultural and linguistic factors cannot be ridden over roughshod, if we care about the nature of the legacy we wish to hand down to our grandchildren.**

The question of language and its relationship to the national question is one we should consider carefully as we prepare ourselves to build a post-apartheid South Africa, as language is the manifestation of a common culture and the most important form of human communication.

The present historical period abounds with instances where undermining of, or insensitivity to, the feelings of a people about their language has led to social and political unrest. It has often happened that, in a unitary or federative state, one language group constitutes the majority in that state, and officials from that group use their own language when addressing a minority language group in its own area. Quite naturally, they have been treated as cultural outsiders.

Quite often, nationalism, manifested in this case by language, may be an excuse for other grievances not as yet articulated. If this is the case, it would be necessary to find out what these grievances are, and if they stem from ideological differences. The attitudes we have described in the majority language group would further alienate a minority group which may not have been won over entirely.

To elaborate further on this idea, it is necessary to look at concrete situations that have developed in the past regarding language and the national question, and draw lessons from the outcome of these situations.

## Suppressing a nation

At the time of the Spanish Civil War, there were

provinces of Spain like Catalonia, the Basque country and Galicia, which were both agriculturally and industrially advanced. The rest of Spain, including the capital province of Castile, was backward, semi-feudal and seen by Catalonia as economically parasitic.

One of the factors leading to the invasion of Spain (with the help of Moroccan horsemen and German planes) was that Catalonia had gained effective political autonomy and economic independence in 1932, with all the state apparatus that that entailed.

What Franco did immediately after seizing power was to annex these regions and ban every manifestation of cultural independence the people might cling to.

Catalans were not allowed even primary education in their mother tongue, which is now one of the rights of children as stipulated in the United Nations Charter on the Rights of the Child. The publication of books in Catalan was forbidden. The national dance of Catalonia, symbolising Catalan unity, was Franco's bugbear. Anyone caught doing this would face prison. And, of course, the Catalan language was replaced by Castilian in all official usage.

Forty years later, after the death of Franco, I went to Barcelona to study Spanish. On arriving there, I realised almost immediately that I should have chosen to go to Madrid instead. Everyone was speaking Catalan. People would speak Castilian Spanish only once they realised I was a foreigner. I was identified with the conquering forces because of the language I spoke, and the only way I was able to show my good faith was to try to learn Catalan as well.

Without the dictatorship of Franco, the then prevalent bilingualism of these autonomous regions would probably have continued, with Spanish rationally accepted as the *lingua franca*

for economic and social purposes within Spain, and as the necessary vehicle for communication with the outside world, as has now become policy. The result of this unthinking oppression of the healthy manifestation of a cultural identity was that even the Catalan industrial bourgeoisie were alienated from central government, pushing them into a unity of interests with the progressive forces against Franco's dictatorship.

## Creating a national language

A quite different, original and bold step was taken by a post-revolutionary developing country in Asia. The role of deliberate political efforts in shaping a national language and promoting its development becomes clear when one considers the evolution of the the national language policy in Indonesia. Some 250 languages and dialects grew up in Indonesia over the past centuries. In a population of over 100 million, Javanese is spoken as the mother tongue by some 40 million people. Other languages are spoken by numbers which do not effectively challenge the dominant position of Javanese.

Yet, faced with the question of choosing a national language as the *lingua franca*, the Indonesian political elite created Bahasa Indonesia as the new national language, and effectively imposed it on the heterogeneous population. This language is based on Malay, the native tongue of roughly six million people, a small minority of the population.

Several factors, some of them unique to the Indonesian situation, contributed to the choice of this new language and to the success of its acceptance. Malay is an easy language to learn and, unlike Javanese, which was spoken by the political leadership, it contains few implications of social superiority, so the case for Malay was a strong one. Since no competing regional language of major strength was elevated to a favoured position, the ground for language rivalry was weakened. When the Japanese occupied Indonesia in 1942, Malay was used as the official language instead of Dutch, which the Japanese had suppressed. In this way, Malay became the language of official use, public law and educational establishments.

## Language and national consciousness

This paved the way for the rising consciousness that Malay, or "the Indonesian language," was the symbol of national unity. Since the consolidation of new Indonesia, the same official language has continued in use, and has already made its mark as an interesting experiment in language planning carried out through political initiative and authority.

In an article in *The American Anthropologist*, E Haugen wrote:

*"Whenever any important segment of the population, an elite, is familiar with the language of another nation, it is tempting to make use of this as the medium of government simply as a matter of convenience. If this is also the language of most of the people, the problem is easily solved. But where it is not, there is the necessity of re-educating a population, with all the effort and disruption of cultural unity that this entails."\**

It seems that, when a nation is free to determine its own educational policies, bilingualism is the only democratic solution to this apparently contradictory situation. On the one hand, it enriches national cultural heritage, while, on the other, it affords to every individual access to communication at every level, including internationally.

Free movement of people, and the sharing of political and other institutions, will create a feeling of togetherness, a situation in which the languages might be used alternately, and in which the official *lingua franca* would tend to spread, especially if it possessed both prestige and practical advantages.

In this case, it would be up to cultural interest groups to prevent the consequent degradation of their respective languages. For a language to keep pace with the world, it is not enough to ensure its oral survival. Neither will it reach a crucial stage of development until success has been achieved in writing serious expository prose. Beyond this comes the elaboration of the language for purposes of technical and scientific writing and government use.

## Nation-building

In South Africa, we too will be faced with the massive task of uniting all our people into a single nation state.

Included in our vast task of nation-building and modernisation will be the question of which language to choose as our *lingua franca*, and the task of implementing the decision.

The importance of this cannot be over-emphasised, since the experience of many developing countries has shown that if the institutional environment is relatively flexible, cultural groups will seek to be included in centralised activity, while perhaps maintaining their status as independent social movements. In struggles for political power, however, they may express themselves through institutionalised party structures and economic organisations, and may only sporadically create vehicles which compete for power with the dominant institutions. Moreover, though self-consciously committed to maintaining ethnic distinctiveness, they may continue to undergo a gradual process of cultural homogenisation.

Flexibility signifies a strong central administration, with the allocation of control over education, linguistic policies, property, and civil law in the provinces.

In cases such as India, Indonesia and Nigeria, these environments have been flexible to varying degrees. Where they have not, secessionist movements have developed. In many cases, open language conflict became acute immediately following national independence. In the case of Nigeria, civil war erupted.

For argument's sake, let us say that English is decided upon as the *lingua franca* of our country, since it affords us direct access to international relations and trading.

## Education policy

The bilingualism I refer to has to be introduced through an education policy. Certain areas, for example the Cape, would offer bilingual education at primary level in English and Xhosa in some schools, English and Afrikaans in others

and perhaps English and Setswana in others, according to the needs of the local population in the rural and urban areas. In Natal, for example, bilingual education would be mainly in English and Zulu, with some schools offering alternatives such as English and Siswati or English and Tamil. Needless to say, the choice of school would be for the parents alone to decide, regardless of their cultural antecedents.

For the first two or three years, then, the mother tongue would be the medium of instruction, while throughout the rest of primary education the two languages would become a little more evenly distributed. For those urban areas where the majority of children have English as their mother tongue, English would be the language of instruction from Grade One, with a regional language taught as a second language.

At secondary level, English would become the medium of instruction, with the mother tongue a non-compulsory choice among several modern languages. There would, of course, be choices of second, or even third, modern languages, which could be chosen from among South African as well as other African languages: for example, Arabic, French, Portuguese or Swahili.

I have referred only to the cultural and linguistic aspect of the national question. The factor of class interests — which often transcend ethnic interests, or are transcended by them — has not been treated.

What must be stressed is that nations, like languages themselves, are living organisms, which are therefore subject to the laws of dialectics. No two countries or regions can ever resemble each other exactly, since each one is unique, given its own objective and subjective reality at a given point in time.

\* E Haugen, *Dialect, Language, Nation*, in *The American Anthropologist*, Vol. 68, pp 922-935.

# LAND REFORM IN THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC REVOLUTION: SOME CENTRAL CONSIDERATIONS

By Tessa Marcus

**This article was written for a seminar on the land question that took place in the Netherlands in November 1989. The author examines the land question from different perspectives, and, in the process, wishes to stimulate debate on this crucial question that has seized our movement from its very formation.**

One of the very first acts of the Boer government, after it had been given power by the British in 1910 to perpetuate colonialism in our country, was to pass the Land Act of 1913. Under this Act, an almost total displacement of the African people of South Africa from the land they had used for grazing and crop growing was effected. The ANC, after just a year of its existence, mobilised the people widely and went into action against this law. That struggle continues and is reflected in the importance that the ANC and the rest of the democratic movement in the country places on it.

Land, or the absence of rights to and control over it, is a national grievance. The relatively slow and uneven development of popular democratic forces in the countryside, the difficulties of initiating and sustaining rural organisation, concern about the actual conditions on the land and the way these ought to be redressed in the national democratic revolution have all combined to stimulate growing debate on the land question. The role of the state, the policies it adopts and the implications these have for the extension of democracy in the countryside are key issues which I propose to raise for discussion here.

## **'Political' versus 'economic' solutions**

The land question affects a complex array of social forces, whose interests are difficult to reconcile, and the relation of these to the perceived national interest gives rise to considerable tension for policy-makers.

Land reform has frequently fallen victim to political expediency. Measures have been devised to deflate political and social unrest and to win the support of key social forces in the countryside and towns, without taking into consideration the broader economic and political implications these carry. The evident economic failure of those policies (which therefore fail politically) has stimulated a reaction that argues for 'economic' (rational and objective) rather than 'political' (ideological) answers. And what is understood as 'economic' is little more than the *status quo*, with a few modifications to iron out the more apparent injustices. Disregarding national and social grievances in the interests of narrow economism generates considerable political discontent and social disruption, and invariably fails economically as well.

Ironically, the weakness of both approaches is rooted in the same problem: they reduce and distort the political and economic dimensions of the land question and fail to deal with their close interrelation. To redress the national grievances of the black majority and the social grievances of those who are directly and indirectly linked to the land, the state has to try to reconcile political demands with economic needs.

This is not easy. Reductionism and distortions aren't simply a product of subjective conditions



or individual idiosyncrasies. They stem from objective conditions. The options open to a national democratic state are determined by, among others, the landed relations it inherits and the relative strength of different class forces in both town and countryside, as well as by its own approach to land reform policy, which will be shaped in large measure by whether or not it is subject to democratic control.

## Land ownership

Perhaps the most burning question is that of ownership, as who owns the land determines who has access to it and how it will be worked. The notion of a mixed economy suggests that there will be different forms of land ownership and therefore different routes of access. In theory and practice, this is generally tension-filled, as it is difficult to achieve an equitable mix.

At the heart of the matter is whether or not a national democratic state should vest in itself the ownership of land. Although nationalisation is often presented as a socialist measure,



*Farm workers*

especially by those who have vested interest in private land ownership, in itself it is not. The colonial state in South Africa, and elsewhere in Africa, has a long history of using nationalisation to pursue white minority rule. At the same time as it denies Africans ownership, and severely restricts their access to land in most of the country, it uses nationalisation to control and determine the terms of their ownership and access to it in the reserves — the land areas the state designates 'African'. By so doing it has never given up its authority over this land. The nature of the state, therefore, will determine whether it is a socialising measure or not.

It may be presumed that in a mixed economy there will be land held privately by individuals, groups or companies. We need to ask ourselves:

- ★ What do we aim to achieve through nationalisation, and how socially extensive should it be?
- ★ Can other measures effectively achieve similar or better results?
- ★ What are the limitations of partial nationalisation?
- ★ Is the complete nationalisation of land feasible?

A democratic government has to attend to the national grievance of the African majority, namely their all but complete dispossession of the land.

## Breaking white monopoly

Its first and most urgent task is to break the legal and social monopoly Whites have over land ownership and access. Repealing all existing laws which related to the land (the Land Acts, laws defining the homelands, anti-squatting legislation and so on) will undoubtedly expand black access to land, but it is likely to make only insignificant inroads into the monopoly over land ownership that Whites enjoy. Market forces will create an opening for only a tiny minority of Blacks, leaving the majority land-hungry, with the option of trying to gain access to white-owned land on terms set by the minority.

There is, therefore, a need to do more than abolish discriminatory laws. Some attempt has

to be made to redistribute the land in order to have a more far-reaching and acceptable impact. This suggests that the state needs to transfer land from the hands of private individuals to society as a whole — that is, to nationalise it. But is this the only alternative?

There is the idea in some circles that the state should buy land which has been 'abandoned' or is 'unused,' especially around or near the reserves. This action, it is suggested, will redistribute land which is at present unfunctional, without disrupting production on land which is



*Young children exploited as labourers on white farms*

Leading sections of the ruling class argue that unfettered market forces, rather than nationalisation, will redistribute wealth. There are no indications that this is the case. All the evidence suggests that they tend towards its further concentration in the hands of fewer people. There is no better example of this process at work than what is happening on the platteland today.

Their argument is based on a belief in the inherent goodness of capitalism, which they allege functions 'objectively' rather than politically. This ideology finds little substance in the real world. Neither the state nor the people can rely on market forces to break the white monopoly of land ownership and access. What is required is intervention by the state on a variety of fronts, including nationalisation of the land.

## **Partial nationalisation**

If land nationalisation is partial, for it to be meaningful it is vital that its extent and focus is defined.

being effectively used. This solution seems to satisfy both the political and economic needs of a democratic government, but does it?

First, it is highly contentious to suggest that this land is 'abandoned' or 'unused' because Whites have ceased to live on or work it. Existing evidence shows the opposite, that this land is often quite heavily populated and worked by people — black people — though lack of resources and overcrowding probably means that while it is over-exploited it is under-utilised.

Secondly, even if this land is under-utilised, what purpose would it serve to extend African access only to land with the lowest yield, that heavily subsidised white farmers have been forced to abandon? The state would have to divert large amounts of its limited resources into these areas, with very little gain, while the richest land areas would remain untouched, firmly in the hands of private, mostly white, highly capitalised farmers. The positive effect of nationalisation of this land is that it would legalise *de facto* black land possession. However, without more extensive nationalisation, it would have no impact on

the commanding position occupied by Whites, and would impose a considerable burden on the state without doing much to relieve black land hunger. Even partial nationalisation must make inroads into the heart of power in the sector.

If productive land which is well located in terms of marketing and distribution is to be partially nationalised, then it is necessary to work out criteria to determine what land should remain privately held, and what should be nationalised. Factors such as size and effective productive use could be used in this difficult task.

## **Total nationalisation**

It is worth giving serious consideration to nationalisation of all the land. This does not automatically imply nationalisation of the enterprises on it. Decisions to nationalise particular enterprises would be determined by, among other things, effective use, productivity, the level of worker organisation, as well as the capacity of the state to run them.

However, by nationalising land, the state would be able to broaden the social base of land access, as people wanting to work the land would have to sink a large part of their very limited capital into private purchase. In turn, this capital would be released for productive purposes directly affecting output. Also, while benefiting from the revenue earned in its capacity as landlord, the state would be able to control rent, and so prevent the exploitation of tenants.

The way production is to be organised on the land will be shaped by both land and agrarian reform policies. Some issues related to the production mix need to be considered when devising policy.

Different farming types will all be framed by the dominant system of production. As things stand in South Africa, this means large-scale, privately owned, commercial farming. This form of production is characterised by cheap and rightless labour and considerable state support, both of which raise major problems for its functioning under a national democratic government.

Regarding labour, there is the immediate question of terms of employment. From the workers'

point of view, farm work is one of the most hated sectors of employment. Farm work is a last resort. Generally, people will be extremely reluctant to remain and work on these farms without considerable change in their social conditions. Yet the profitability of this form of production rests largely on the cheapness of labour. Rights for workers and a minimum wage will affect this profitability, generate resistance from farmers and even threaten production. This means that the state will either concede to farmers' demands out of its concern to keep production levels up, as in Zimbabwe, or it will act in the interests of labour. Acting in the interests of labour will mean reconsidering the way large-scale commercial farming is organised, and its role in the sector.

## **State support**

Regarding state support, the state has only limited resources to allocate to the countryside. Invariably, these resources gravitate towards the rich and well established, who are able to mobilise themselves politically and economically. Subsidising large-scale, private, commercial farming will inevitably be at the expense of the less dominant forms of production in the sector. Therefore, apart from general efforts to develop the social infrastructure in the countryside, the state needs to prioritise and direct its support. It needs to determine the importance given to each particular form of production, evaluating them in terms of gross output, and in terms of employment levels, conditions of work and so on.

Nationalising large-scale commercial enterprises (not necessarily all) opens up several possibilities for reorganising production.

★ The state can retain the enterprise intact, running it as a single entity under state management.

In theory, at least, this is the most satisfactory solution, both economically and politically, allowing the production unit to benefit from the advantages of economies of scale and to extend democratic authority and control. In practice, however, this does not always occur — management skills are lacking, or relations mirror those of privately owned large-scale enterprises, with

worker participation and control subordinated to the demands of output. And where there has been partial nationalisation of enterprises, it is frequently the most marginal that have been taken over by the state.

The option of running state farms, therefore, needs to be guided by our capacity to manage them effectively, ensuring that production is maintained or increased, and by our ability to extend workers' authority and control.

★ The state can redistribute the enterprises more literally — either by creating agricultural production co-operatives, or by dividing them into small-scale family farms with security of tenure through leasehold, or both. Each of these options meets the agricultural aspirations of different social groups in the countryside. While the landless have historically responded most positively to production co-operatives, those with access to land yearn for individual tenure.

As with state farming, both these possibilities need to be approached carefully and developed in a systematic way, to improve the well-being of rural dwellers. The small family farmer must not be compelled to survive by "superhuman efforts and a subhuman life." Producer co-operatives should not be imposed, nor should they be relegated to a secondary status in the sector. Both forms of production require considerable input from the state. This should range from calculating appropriate minimum farm size to ensuring easy access to essential capital goods and services, including marketing and distribution.

## **Level of state operation**

Given both the political and economic complexity of the land and agrarian questions, it is clear that the state has a crucial role to play in the process of ensuring a redistribution of wealth in the countryside. Those who argue against state intervention and support condemn the black and land-hungry majority to a future little different from the conditions they labour under now.

This said, an actively interventionist state generates problems of its own making. It needs to proceed cautiously and carefully under mass popular control. This is not an easy task, as there

are various, often conflicting, interests in the countryside as well as at a national level. There are potential dangers, not necessarily peculiar to the land question.

★ The aspirant bourgeoisie may use the state apparatus to enrich themselves, their families and kin, and perhaps to solicit political support. Patronage through the allocation of resources — such as leases, access to funding, goods, services and technical know-how — is a familiar feature of the functioning of the state at present, and of many post-independence state apparatuses.

★ Centralised planning at a national level may be doctrinaire and insensitive to local conditions. Preconceived notions (invariably urban, often academic, always class-based and class-biased) about existing landed relations and what they ought to become have often failed to reflect shades of land consciousness in the countryside, with detrimental consequences for both state land reform policy and large sections of the rural population. National land policy should create a general prescriptive framework in which the particular implementation can be devised at a local level: for example, land commissions as suggested by Dolny<sup>1</sup>.

★ Because of pressures exerted by particularly strong social forces in the countryside, national economic interests or international pressures, reactive intervention may be made for immediate effect, without a long-term policy strategy, or in conflict with such a strategy. Although reactive intervention may be unavoidable at times, it is important that land and agrarian reform policies are conceived in a generalised time frame, and are guided by the overall strategic objectives of raising the standard of living, and improving social conditions of the majority of the population in both town and countryside.

## **Democratic control of the land**

The question of democratic control is one we rarely think about when we consider land and agrarian reform. Perhaps it is because we unconsciously concede political and social authority to individual private landed interests, be they large-scale commercial farmers or 'peasants.'

Yet it is clear from the argument I have set out that control over the land must be democratised for policy reforms to have the desired effect.

Democratising social relations on the land means ensuring that the base of ownership and control is significantly altered in favour of the black, landless majority, and that reforms are instituted by, and in conjunction with, those who live and work on the land. As Klaassens<sup>2</sup> cogently puts it:

*"The land issue is not an empty page that needs filling. Every piece of land in South Africa has a history and people who lay claim to it. An appropriate land strategy must be based on a proper understanding of the traditions, beliefs and dreams that have inspired people to fight decades-long struggles. Only a policy that grows out of these traditions and incorporates the dreams and concrete necessities that people have been fighting for will get popular support."*

The nature and extent of democratic control that is possible will be determined by the particular forms of ownership and production relations that emerge and the extent and relative strength of popular rural organisation. It is in this way that rural activism in the present shapes the possibilities open to a national democratic government in the future. Weak organisation today undermines the capacity of rural dwellers to exercise their democratic rights tomorrow.

The state, no less than individual private farmers, must be controlled through accountability. There is a need for considerable consultation and exchange between different levels of the state apparatus and trade union and local popular organisations for land reform policies to succeed in addressing national and social grievances.

Political organisation is also essential if the interests of the least privileged and most down-trodden sections of rural society are to be defended against those who are economically stronger, better organised and more articulate. While the state may at times act as mediator between different rural interests, it may not always be able, or want, to do so. There will be substantial social divisions in the countryside. When conflicts of

interest arise, as they inevitably will, then the state must be encouraged to act in the national and social interest rather than out of political expediency. This will be possible only through strong popular organisation.

## Conclusion

The commitment to land reform enshrined in the constitution ought to express the social and political conditions it aims to redress.

Constitutional protection on the land question obliges the national democratic state to act on it. On its own, however, it can have only a limited effect; it is not a substitute for political and social organisation in the countryside. Strong rural organisation is essential to ensure that popular constitutional rights to the land materialise and are given their broadest and deepest interpretation. There must be some nationalisation of land in order to redress the national and social grievances of the black majority. There is a strong case for nationalisation of all the land, but should the political balance of forces not permit it, partial land nationalisation must include productive, well-located land. With land reform, there is a need for agrarian reform. Both must be framed to redress national and social grievances, with short and medium term policies being guided by this long-term objective.

The state has a key role to play in land and agrarian reform. It must exercise its responsibilities subject to democratic control, with rural people playing a central role in determining policy. Every effort must be made to marry national interest with local needs and aspirations.

Without adequate reform policies, it is difficult to envisage how people will be assured a meaningful existence on the land. Without that, the already extreme pressures to leave the land will only intensify, with serious political and economic consequences for all.

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# ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES ARE NOT JUST JUMPING ON THE 'GREEN BANDWAGGON'

By Thobeka Majola and Elaine Unterhalter

**This is the second article in recent months where the environmental impact of apartheid has been raised. In the first article, the author exposed the deliberate planning by big business (with the active collusion of the regime) to ruin our country by converting it into one of the world's major importers of toxic waste — all in order to soften the impact of sanctions and the general economic decline brought about by the apartheid system.**

**The authors of this article relate the environmental issue to the landlessness of millions of South African people, and the haunting spectre that when the country eventually reverts to the people there may well be no productive land to give to the land-hungry millions.**

Apartheid has perpetrated crimes against humanity and against the land that sustains the people of South Africa. The unbridled thirst for profit, the brutal exploitation and callous disregard of people that have been features of the political economy of South Africa have also stamped themselves on the very land itself. There are six areas where the hideous consequences of apartheid are evident:

- ★ Land exploitation
- ★ The use of dangerous chemicals
- ★ Uncontrolled air pollution
- ★ Pollution of water
- ★ The use of nuclear energy
- ★ Conservation of wildlife

It is important for the ANC to consider these environmental issues as integral to the whole land question. The Freedom Charter affirms that the land will be returned to those who work it, but, three and a half decades after Kliptown, the land is no longer the same. It is wasted and dangerously polluted. To give any content to the clauses of the Freedom Charter, environmental issues need to be urgently addressed. They cannot wait for a democratic government to legislate, because the health of the population is at risk **now**. It is vital for the ANC, SACTU, the MDM and other democratic forces to see environmental issues as as im-

portant to mobilise and campaign around as the other strands of the national liberation movement.

## Exploitation of the land

The expansion of capitalist farming in South Africa had has hideous costs for farm workers and rural people who were dispossessed. But the same ruthlessness characterised capitalist exploitation of the land itself. In 1980 it was estimated that the result of the 'successful' and untrammelled breeding of sheep in the Karroo was that the semi-desert expanded by one mile every five years.

It is not only the heedless and exploitative development of capitalism that has so degraded much of the land. The vicious policies of successive apartheid regimes that forced millions of people into the bantustans have played a key role in the destruction of the land. Already in the 1950s, the land in the bantustans could not sustain their populations living there. Nearly four decades later, more than a million people (on conservative estimates) have been forced into these areas. It is a commonplace that much of the land in the bantustans is barren, eroded, lacking in water and overgrazed. But this is not because the land is **naturally** poor. Up till a hundred years ago, these

were fertile areas of great beauty. The degradation of bantustan land with dire environmental consequences has been the result of apartheid policies of forced removal. However, even if the regime halts forced removals, the shadow of these large tracts of exhausted land will darken many of the attempts to reallocate and redistribute the land that has been seized from the people.

Clearing of land for agri-business has resulted in large-scale deforestation. Because of the political importance of the white farmers' votes and the extensive subsidies paid to them, hundreds of miles of land, which is barely profitable to farm commercially, continues to be put under crops and to be subsidised by public money. In these areas, the relentless destruction of natural habitats produces neither food for the home market nor commodities for export, but only political bribes to the landowners.

Timber is farmed commercially in South Africa — 1.2 million hectares of the country are afforested with pine and eucalyptus — but these commercial forests provide an extremely limited habitat for birds, animals and other plants. In fact, they skew the ecological balance, and are no substitute for the mixed wood forests which once characterised the countryside.

The abuse of the natural environment is probably most evident in the seas. South African pilchards can no longer be bought in the shops, because South African fishing fleets fished out the pilchards. The fish which once swarmed along the coasts were caught in such numbers that they failed to reproduce in South African waters. (The same fate befell the Namibian pilchard shoals, which the South Africans treated with the same greed for profit.) All the waters close to the coast are now close to depletion. To supply even a domestic market, South African fishing fleets have to go further and further afield. Snoek, and other once common fish, may be the rarest of delicacies in a democratic South Africa.

Commercial agriculture, commercial forestry and commercial fishing pay scant regard to the protection of the land and the seas because all they have cared about is easy profit.

Unless alternative methods of farming and fishing are considered, many of the promises of liberation in the land clauses of the Freedom

Charter will be impossible to fulfil, as the land will be so wasted.

## **Use of dangerous chemicals**

Slowly but steadily, the South African regime is poisoning our environment. Recently, vast quantities of the chemicals used to make Agent Orange appear to have been dumped in South Africa by multinational companies in the wake of a worldwide ban on 245-T, the most dangerous ingredient of the notorious defoliant.

Banned in more than 60 countries, Agent Orange is one of the cheapest forms of shrub eradication available on the market. In South Africa, it is being used extensively in the government-owned forestry industry and also on sugar plantations in Natal. In July 1989, dioxin, a by-product of Agent Orange, was reported in rain water samples in Natal at 10 000 times the maximum safety levels set by the United States, and a million times more than the dose which would damage edible crops. The levels were up to three times the amounts recorded in Vietnamese rain water samples after its forests had been bombed with more than four million litres of Agent Orange. It is clear that areas of South Africa's soil have been massively contaminated.

The toxic effect of Agent Orange on those in contact with it have been brought home to the American public because of the cancers in American servicemen who served in Vietnam and used the defoliant, and the birth defects of their children. There are no government controls on the use of poisons on farms in South Africa. Farm workers handling these chemicals today have a grim future ahead of them.

DDT, another notorious chemical, is widely used in South Africa. Bantustan governments spray homes, hospitals and public buildings with DDT to control malaria. The toxins contained in DDT take years to break down. They pose a serious threat to human health when they enter the food chain. Although DDT was prohibited for use in the USA as long ago as 1972, the USA still manufactures 18 million kilogrammes a year for export, largely to the developing countries.

Pesticides and herbicides are frequently used

by South African farmers, despite their harmful effects. They see them as essential to protect crops against losses from insect and fungal attacks and to limit the effect of weeds. Lindane, a chemical banned in many countries, is used in commercial forests to protect stockpiles of timber from pests. Most pesticides are toxic to humans and some are so poisonous that less than one teaspoonful will kill an adult. A few drops of the widely-used herbicide, Paraquat, in its undiluted form, can be fatal.

Some effects on workers in contact with pesticides and herbicides are nausea, giddiness, restricted breathing and even unconsciousness. They act as irritants affecting the skin, the eyes and the gut. Chronic effects may only become evident many years after the original exposure. These include cancer, tumours, birth defects, allergies, a breakdown of the immune system, and psychological disturbance.

There is no statutory provision for protection of workers handling these poisons. Ignorance of the dangers is a widespread problem. To date, only two unions, the South African Chemical Workers' Union and the Pulp and Paper Allied Workers' Union, are involved in a campaign against the indiscriminate use of pesticides.

The fight for safety and control in the use of these dangerous substances is integral to the fight of farm and forestry workers for health and safety at work. But in addition there is a wider fight to impose controls on the manufacture, distribution and use of these poisons which threaten the well-being of those who live and work on the land, and pose grave threats to the whole population which lives off the food that land produces.

## **Air pollution**

South Africa has developed a large energy industry based on electricity and converting coal into oil. Electricity production in South Africa far outpaced demand in the period 1975-85, when electricity output increased by 8% per annum, and demand increased by only 6% per annum. (The majority of the population have no electricity in their homes.) The careless production of excessive electricity in this period took place with scant

regard to pollution. Electricity production was concentrated in the Eastern Transvaal. Here in the mid-1980s, air pollutants — predominantly carbon dioxide — amounted annually to 125 million tonnes. This density of pollutants is equivalent to that of the worst industrial pollution in Europe and the north-eastern USA. Acid rain is already destroying crops in the rich agricultural area of the Eastern Transvaal, and is likely to have a harmful effect on the forests of the region, and on rivers and lakes.

In South Africa, the electrification of African townships is a major aspect of the regime's reformist initiative for the 1990s. As a consequence, the output of electricity will increase spectacularly. However, there has been little attention to investment to minimise the toxic effects of this increase in production. ESCOM argues that the costs are prohibitive and they will have to wait for the development of new technology. By that time, much of the land in the Eastern Transvaal may well be poisoned by acid rain, while the health of the people in the region will be gravely jeopardised.

In many areas the regime and monopoly capital are attempting to use civic structures allied with the MDM to sell the benefits of electrification to the mass of the people. Often they offer shares in the local electricity company to the civic.

It is vital that, if through popular struggle people win electrification for their township, this electrification is carried out on terms they dictate, and these terms should include a control on pollution. Otherwise, the victory of electrification will leave a bitter legacy.

## **Water pollution**

Acid rain destroys not only crops but also rivers and lakes. The effects of this still have to be seen in South Africa, but in Europe and North America the effects have been grave. However, water pollution is a problem of the present as well as the future. The needless mining of South Africa has resulted in considerable pollution of its rivers and underground water reserves with chemical residues, which include arsenic and other poisons. Hartebeespoort Dam is the most polluted body of water of its size in the world. The effect of



pollution on drinking water and crop irrigation will only be evident in years to come.

Water is a major political issue in South Africa, and access to water a key dimension in any discussion of the land question. By the end of the decade, if current levels of industrial production continue, South Africa will be critically short of water. At present, there is a close correlation between wealth and access to water. In redressing this, both the quantity and the quality of the water of the country needs to be considered.

## **Nuclear energy**

At present, 2% of the energy of South Africa is produced from nuclear energy. Koeberg, the nuclear power station in the Western Cape, is built on a geological fault near the densely populated squatter townships of the Cape Flats. There is extensive evidence in Britain of the health hazards posed for people, particularly children, living close to nuclear reactors; there have been significant increases in the incidence of leukaemia in children living in these areas. The health of the people living in the shadow of Koeberg is at risk. At the same time, its very site makes the threat of a nuclear accident triggered by an earthquake an ever-present danger.

The recent outcry at the threat to dump European nuclear waste in South Africa indicated that this is another potential hazard of the industry. With so little regard for the lives of the majority of the population, it is not surprising that the regime has no stringent controls on nuclear dumping, and glosses over the long-term dangers.

## **Wildlife conservation**

The conservation of wildlife is an area full of contradictions. The South African Tourist Board projects the game parks of South Africa as one of its major tourist attractions. Black South Africans are often expelled from land they have farmed for decades to establish game parks as tourist areas. Yet side by side with the game park industry has gone a ruthless programme of hunting, as trade in ivory and hides are big business. The SADF

has had a key hand in this. Many species of wildlife are at risk of extinction. This process has been hastened by agri-business, deforestation and monoculture.

While much international concern for the protection of wildlife can be criticised because of its silence on the abuse and exploitation of people, in building a society that seeks to redress this and eradicate the oppression that has characterised apartheid relations on the land, there is room to consider the preservation of birds and animals that are part of the beauty of that land.

## **Some strategic issues**

The effects of apartheid on the environment mean that there are grave problems about the health of people, the productivity of the land and the quality of life, that need to be addressed now. The ANC should consider these problems not as issues of rhetoric or as means of jumping on a 'green bandwaggon' to win new international support, though the evidence of the effects of apartheid on the environment is a powerful indictment and should be used as such.

Much more important, if there are no campaigns now to demand controls on the use of pesticides and herbicides, to reduce the extent of acid rain and the pollution of water, to control the extent of sheep farming and deforestation, and to address the dangers of nuclear energy and the extinction of our wild life, we may win adherence to the slogan that the land must be returned to those who work it, and, though in a democratic South Africa we may begin to implement this, there may not be much good land to return, and those who work it may be in such poor health there will be no fruits of national liberation to enjoy.



*South Africa — a wasted land*

# BOOK REVIEW

**Sanctions Against Apartheid**, edited by Mark Orkin. First published by David Philip, Cape Town and Johannesburg, 1989. Published in the United Kingdom by the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CIIR), London, 1989.

This collection of essays by experts from South and Southern Africa, Britain, Canada, the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany, presents the case for sanctions against the apartheid regime. It shows how sanctions can be highly successful in conjunction with other forms of struggle in destroying apartheid and assisting in the transition to a non-racial, democratic South Africa.

The book is edited by South African sociologist Mark Orkin of the Community Agency of Social Enquiry (CASE), an independent policy research agency which "undertakes enquiries of use to unions, churches, community groups and alternative organisations." CASE's initial aim was to counteract the censorship of the disinvestment debate of 1985-86 by conducting a study of attitudes among Blacks on disinvestment. The issue quickly expanded to cover the subject of sanctions, and with the encouragement of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), among others. CASE decided to produce this book to make known various aspects of the sanctions debate to South Africans.

Orkin's book covers the political, economic, legal and moral arguments on the sanctions issue — at local, regional and international levels. This comprehensive collection of essays can be recommended for those interested in the sanctions debate, and provides valuable material for discussion on the subject.

The ANC has consistently demanded comprehensive and mandatory sanctions as a way of hastening the end of apartheid. Although sanctions against Pretoria have been adopted by the United Nations, the European Community, the Commonwealth, and by various local authorities, widespread sanctions of a truly effective nature have not been forthcoming from conservative governments who are South Africa's main trade partners — such as Britain, the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany. CASE also hopes that the pro-sanctions debate will become

better known to such parties through this book.

The basis of the pro-sanctions debate is that once the apartheid regime experiences economic hardships, its policies will change dramatically. Orkin's book demonstrates several examples of how sanctions have already begun to bite. P W Botha's hasty announcement of the end of influx control in 1986 was largely a result of the collapse of the rand in 1985. This collapse occurred after American bankers refused to renew their loans to South African borrowers after seeing television coverage of the South African Police shooting unarmed demonstrators during the partial state of emergency in 1985.

A more recent and dramatic example, revealing the cumulative effect of various measures, was South Africa's participation in the Angola-Namibia peace accords. What really brought about the crunch for South Africa was a combination of sanctions, MiGs and surface-to-air missiles (SAMs). After the 1988 loans crisis, Pretoria could no longer afford its Angolan adventure. A new supply of SAMs to Angola finally tipped the balance of power in the conflict. As a result of the 1977 arms embargo against South Africa imposed by the UN, the SADF had no answer to the SAMs, and quickly lost air superiority — this and a potentially extensive loss of troops at Cuito Cuanavale brought the regime to the negotiating table.

Various essays illustrate how anti-sanctions propaganda has greatly misrepresented the effect of sanctions. A popular anti-sanctions myth is that the Front Line States will be economically harmed by sanctions imposed against South Africa. It is pointed out that these countries had a traditional and exploitative relationship with South Africa, and, if anything, would benefit from being freed from the cost of destabilisation by the regime.

Britain's Margaret Thatcher contends that she cannot impose sanctions because they would cause greater unemployment among Blacks. The ANC response is that the effect of sanctions on black unemployment is small in comparison with the worsening unemployment resulting from the apartheid's economic decline. A survey conducted by CASE among Blacks in 1987 showed that 92% of those interviewed were in favour of sanctions against apartheid and supported the ANC's call for comprehensive, mandatory sanctions.

—DMS

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**PRESIDENT O R TAMBO (THIRD FROM LEFT STANDING) WITH OTHER LEADERS OF THE ANC AFTER THE HISTORIC MEETING IN STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN, FEBRUARY 1990**