

THE PEOPLE'S STRUGGLE IS OUR GUIDE

By Theresa

I would like to respond to the 'discussion article' by Ronnie Kasrils, entitled, *The Revolutionary Army*, in the September 1988 issue of *Sechaba*.

What struck me in particular is that, though he makes general statements about the need to merge the military struggle with the political struggle, and the need to root the armed struggle amongst the people, Kasrils devotes very little attention to the concrete forms the mass political struggle is taking in South Africa today. I believe this is a crucial error if we are concerned to work out correct strategies and tactics for the armed, as well as for the political, struggle.

The people's struggle, in the form in which it has emerged in the 1980s, tends to combine political activity, especially of a democratic nature, with forms of people's violence — typical of a people's movement in revolutionary times. Moreover, the people's movement is rich with creative initiatives that point the way for the national liberation movement.

My immediate response to the article was: Why all this over-generalisation, why all this rather unhappy self-questioning, when a revolutionary people's struggle actually exists, and is pointing the way forward? Or do we not take the people's struggle — in a concrete sense — seriously enough? Have we become armchair revolutionaries who talk a lot about the people in an abstract sense, but when those ordinary people are actually in the midst of struggle, they suddenly seem to have not

all that much to do with our theory?

People's Power

Let us have a closer look at the people's struggle as it has developed in the 1980s. In the period 1983-85, it began to bring forth definite organisational forms — the United Democratic Front, with its many constituent organisations, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions. Crucial about these organisations was that the people, in the very midst of a struggle which turned on questions of their daily lives (rents, for example), began to create organs of embryonic state power. In other words, the people began to conquer state power.

The aim of these popular organs is to take over the administration of the people's daily lives. In this sense, they represent organs of people's self-determination, and are deeply democratic. At the same time, their task as revolutionary organs that have emerged in a revolutionary situation is to carry the political struggle forward. In the situation of deep political crisis in our country, they are organs for continuing and spreading the people's insurrection. Above all, they incorporate a merging of the political and armed tasks of the revolution.

Kasrils seems to have missed this point. Instead, he sees the merging of the political and armed tasks as taking place in the midst of the national liberation movement, and above all through Umkhonto We Sizwe. In the circumstances, this is somewhat similar to contemplating one's

own navel. Kasrils is of the opinion that the "revolutionary army," the nucleus of which is Umkhonto We Sizwe, is the main organ for "building up the revolutionary forces and seizing power." For him (p. 9), "the creation of a revolutionary army is our most crucial task."

Geared to the People's Struggle

His position undoubtedly has a militarist tendency, especially in the context of the emergence of a people's movement which has already proved its potential in creating organs that represent the highest forms of the people's movement — namely, people's organs of revolutionary power. Of course it is necessary for the national liberation movement, including Umkhonto We Sizwe, to create its own structures, which, among other things, reflect the interlinkage of political and military tasks; but these structures must be geared to the people's struggle; must arise in the course of efforts to link up with the people's struggle, to guide it, protect it and promote it. The people's struggle as it actually exists, of course.

The building of Umkhonto We Sizwe must not become an end in itself, or be seen as the centre of the armed — and political — struggle. At this stage in the development of our liberation movement, it is undoubtedly the people's struggle that constitutes the political — and armed — centre of the struggle. Here the political and military tasks of the national liberation movement have their focal point at this time.

Kasrils insists that the national liberation movement should clarify its strategy, in particular as to how power is to be seized. The people's struggle itself points to the strategic thrust of the struggle in our country, and confirms the national-democratic nature of our revolution.

The Nature of the Struggle

The character of the people's struggle is a more or less spontaneous product of objective conditions, and it exposes the nature

of the struggle: its content, its general direction and its chief tasks. That does not mean that the people's movement can be a vanguard political movement; that should be clear from its spontaneous nature. It is the national liberation movement that must sum up, make more logical and systematic, the people's experience.

What, then, are the people telling us about the objectively determined nature of our struggle? In the first half of the '80s, the people began creating organs to handle questions of their daily lives; organs of self-determination, organs of democracy, and organs for the continuation of the revolutionary struggle. They have emerged where the people live and work. They have emerged in areas of Black settlement, in the urban townships, the villages and potentially in the Bantustan framework.

There have been a number of signs that organs of 'workers' control' have a most important potential in the workplace. They have the character of people's organs of revolutionary power, in the worker context.

It is also of great significance that the people have begun to attempt to take their lives into their own hands in such crucial social areas as education, culture and sport, and to exercise their rights to a religious life. This people's democracy is an integral part of the national liberation struggle itself; the self-realisation of the Black people of South Africa and the African people in the first place, clearly involves a deeply anti-colonial process, a process of national liberation, for this exercise of democracy is tied to organs that constitute local organs of embryonic state power. As we often say, the national liberation struggle in our country is not merely a struggle for citizen rights within the existing state framework, but a struggle for state power.

Even if the national liberation movement, headed by the ANC, is forced, in what will represent a first phase of national liberation, to enter into certain compromises with the ruling class, and even with the apartheid regime, in regard to questions concerning the central state and even the regions, the people's organs of democratic power can ensure the continuation of the process of democratic transformation — and in essentially peaceful forms.

MK Must Protect

In order to be able to perform this role, they must be promoted, strengthened and protected, not only in the present, but in the transition period. The key promoter and protector of the democratic process is the national liberation movement, of which Umkhonto We Sizwe is clearly a most important part.

The people's movement has served to prove, in a concrete manner, the national-democratic, national-liberatory content of our revolution. In their struggle for self-determination, the people demand and actively struggle (utilising political and violent methods) for the removal of the troops and the paramilitary police from Black residential areas and from workplaces. The thrust of the struggle has proved that the people demand genuine self-determination, and not the creation of Black collaborationist political organs that merely act as the Black arm of the apartheid system.

The struggle of the people thus makes clear that they are struggling for genuine self-determination against colonialist and neo-colonialist domination and exploitation. In the course of this struggle, especially where it has been possible to create no-go areas, they have spontaneously set up their own local organs of people's power, including people's courts and a people's militia. How can we afford to ignore this objectively determined response of the people when we work out our strategy and tactics, even when we draw up political platforms? What are the people telling us?

At any rate, it is important to note that the thrust of the people's struggle confirms the national-democratic character of our revolution, in South Africa's special conditions.

Special Conditions

What are South Africa's special conditions? Here we refer in particular to the difference between our conditions and those in other countries of Africa and Asia in which national-democratic revolutions have occurred, or are occurring, or are on the agenda. In South Africa, there exists colonialism of a special type, where imperial-

ist relations have been superimposed on existing colonial relations without dismantling them.

This brings up several fundamental differences when we compare our situation with revolutionary processes in at least most of the countries of Africa and Asia.

■ One concerns the question of the conquest of state power by the national liberation movement. One cannot avoid the conclusion that the attempt to overthrow an imperialist state, which is necessarily closely linked to world imperialism, constitutes quite another task from that of driving out occupation troops of an imperialist metropole situated in another area of the globe, or even toppling a neo-colonialist regime on the soil of one's own country.

■ The other aspect, with which I am here more concerned, is that the socio-economic developments which took place in South Africa in the 60s and early 70s, and which were integrally bound up with the emergence of an imperialist state on South African soil, have, in the context of colonialist relations, laid the basis for a socio-economic crisis in our country, a crisis of a qualitatively different type from the crisis elements existing in the normal run of colonial and former colonial countries. The South African crisis is situated in a national framework; it is a crisis endangering the whole process of capitalist economic reproduction in our country. The socio-economic crisis has laid the basis for a deep political crisis with definite elements of a classical revolutionary situation.

The People: A Creative Force

The special conditions in South Africa have laid the objective groundwork for the appearance of the people on the South African stage as an independent, historically creative force, which — on the basis of new revolutionary forms of democracy — will play a crucial role in realising the national-democratic revolution. The emergence of the people's democratic movement is especially crucial where the national liberation movement, in the context

of imperialist forms of repression, has been severely weakened, driven into prison and exile, and its underground apparatus, as Kasrils confirms, substantially limited.

What does this special situation demand of the national liberation movement? In my opinion, it should be geared to creating the conditions for the emergence, consolidation and spread of the organs of popular power. The people must be encouraged, by all means, political and armed, to feel themselves in a position to take over the running of all important aspects of their lives. This means that the national liberation movement, headed by the ANC and in close co-operation with Umkhonto We Sizwe and the South African Congress of Trade Unions, must lay the political and armed basis for consolidation of 'people's control.' It will necessarily involve many different types of initiative.

■ Umkhonto We Sizwe might support the people's self-defence, through such activities as arming and training, and armed actions which may develop into genuine military actions, possibly including confrontations with units of the South African Defence Force. What is meant here is not simply the protection of life and limb, but the political task of defending the people's mass organisations and the organs of popular democratic power; in general, the right of the people to self-determination. When the people set up defence units, it serves, of course, to strengthen the democratic organs as organs of local state power. Here again we see the close interplay between the political and armed tasks of the revolution; indeed, the merging of the two.

■ The UDF and COSATU might be encouraged to make full use of their deeply democratic potential by avoiding any tendency to bureaucratisation of their structures, by giving guidance, by generalising the people's experience and giving it back in readily accessible form, in regard to the general direction in which they should develop activities in order to strengthen the front of people's democracy.

■ If every effort is made to widen democracy in our country, conditions will be created that give room to the development of the organs of people's power. The harsh repression of the state of emergen-

cy has led to the break-up of many of these organs, or their forced inactivity. More room for manoeuvre will help the people's committees to sprout once more.

Action, not only 'from below' but also 'from above,' is important for the people's struggle. 'Talks' conducted by the ANC, which will serve to widen democratic possibilities, are, in this respect, as 'revolutionary' as defending the people's organs with arms in hand. We demand the lifting of the state of emergency, withdrawal of the troops and paramilitary police from the townships and workplaces, non-interference in the 'homelands' and so on. The realisation of even such minimum demands will serve the people's movement and create more favourable conditions for the liberation movement itself.

A Foothold for Armed Struggle

No doubt my approach to the armed struggle will be regarded by some people as too tame, too 'unrevolutionary,' but I suggest that if we base our armed struggle on the people's struggle as it actually exists, and in general on the realities of our situation, the armed struggle will really begin to get a foothold on the soil of our country. There will be a snowball effect; one form of struggle will lead to another, new forms will develop logically out of already existing ones, and so on. The political and armed struggles will interlink in many varied and new ways, strengthening each other. This is the dialectic of real historical processes. If we do not link up in the first place with the processes that are objectively determined, we will inevitably remain on the sidelines, frustrated, wondering why our influence is so limited.

I suggest that Ronnie Kasrils asks himself whether the "problems" which, he claims, have emerged in relation to the strategy of seizure of power (from above, that is, through a revolutionary army which will seek to overthrow the South African state essentially by military means) have less to do with subjective weaknesses than with the objective conditions in our country I have already referred to. I doubt whether the problems which have existed — over

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the past 25 years! — reflect simply subjective difficulties at the level of the national liberation movement. Let's stop bumping our heads against the realities, and take advantage of the emergence of the people's movement!

Centred on the People

My stress on the need to centre the armed struggle on the people's movement does not mean we should ignore other forms, including armed propaganda and sabotage of key installations of the regime. But these must not take place in a vacuum — some of the latter-day actions have begun to appear almost self-defeating, and have resulted, or so it seems, in a relatively high casualty rate. The question of land mines, too, which Kasrils raises, must, it seems to me, be more organically linked with the development of the people's movement.

In all this, I am not denying that attention must be devoted, as a task in itself, to strengthening Umkhonto We Sizwe as the embryonic army of the national liberation movement, as long as we do not conceive of its growth outside the framework of objective realities. The growth and consolidation of Umkhonto will take place, as I have indicated, largely in connection with the defence of the people's movement, and in principle this does not exclude direct military activities — this should be quite clear when we think of the bantustans for instance. Of course the liberation movement cannot ignore the need to strengthen Umkhonto, including in the immediate military sense. Apart from everything else, the national liberation movement must have at its disposal military personnel of a relatively high calibre, who, with their skills, can make a contribution to the defence of a new South Africa. But if we connect such tasks with a conception of a full-scale 'revolutionary war,' we will not even begin to get off the ground.

Neutralising Enemy Forces

Important, too, as Kasrils notes, is the winning over of forces from the Black com-

munity, involved in various military sectors of the apartheid regime, and this will take place in the course of both political and armed struggle. The struggle to win over and neutralise sections of the SADF requires, as Kasrils notes, special measures.

However, I am not in agreement with Kasrils' general approach, in which he envisages the armed struggle as centred on military confrontation with the SADF and the SAP; I believe it should be centred on the political task of defence of the people's movement.

The emergence of the people's movement opens up a path for compromise in South Africa, a compromise which I believe can only take place on the basis of a less centralised conception of political structures and economic policies than the liberation movement has espoused in the past. Indeed, less centralised conceptions would directly serve the interests of the development of the people's movement, laying a favourable basis for its development 'from below.' Moreover, the profile of South Africa's socio-economic relations — qualitatively new as compared with those of the 1950s and early 1960s — suggests, too, possibilities for less centralised conceptions in the field of social and economic policy.

The thing is to see South Africa as it is and to go from there. That is the best way we can utilise the present crisis in our interests.

A decentralised approach would also, in my opinion, reflect more adequately the complex nature of the national question in South Africa. Such a conception, propagated by the national liberation movement headed by the ANC, would serve to isolate the most reactionary sections among the White population, as well as the most corrupt elements in the Black communities.

A compromise solution along these lines would represent a kind of transitional phase in the framework of the national liberation struggle. It would lay a favourable basis for further progress along peaceful lines. The perspective I have outlined emphasises the significance of promoting and defending the people's movement, without which a genuine and principled compromise is not possible.

OBITUARY JOHNSTONE MFANAFUTHI MAKATINI

1932 — 1988

With deep sorrow and a profound sense of loss, the African National Congress announces the death of Comrade Johnstone Mfanafuthi Makatini. Comrade Makatini, popularly known as 'Johnny,' was director of the ANC's Department of International Affairs and a long-standing member of our National Executive Committee. He passed away on December 3rd 1988, after a short illness. He had been admitted to the University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka, Zambia, the previous Tuesday, with complications arising from a diabetic condition he had been suffering from during the past year.

Born in Durban on February 8th 1932, Johnny was a bright and gifted child. A talented debater at school, he was articulate, with an aptitude for languages — qualities he developed from his mother, Mama Jali, a well-known radio personality.

Johnny attended high school at Adams College, Natal, where he was one of the soccer stars. After matriculating, he went on to train as a teacher. He taught at Mzinyathi in the Inanda area, and was soon active in organised opposition to the imposition of Bantu Education in African schools. Rather than serve under this hated system, he resigned from the teaching profession and registered as a part-time law student at Natal University.

He devoted the rest of his time to organising the people as an activist of the ANC, becoming a key youth and student organiser around Durban and in the rural areas of Natal. He was actively involved in all the ANC campaigns of the period and was arrested on numerous occasions. Johnny was one of the principal organisers of both the historic Pietermaritzburg Conference of March 1961, which was addressed by

Nelson Mandela, and the highly successful anti-fascist Republic Strike of May 1961.

In 1962, Johnny was among the first group of volunteers from Natal to be sent out of the country for military training. In Johannesburg they were joined by volunteers from other parts of the country and Johnny, assisted by Joseph Jack, was put in charge of the combined group. Nelson Mandela, the then 'Black Pimpernel,' gave the group a staggering shock when, wearing a holster with a pistol and looking like an accomplished soldier, he suddenly walked into a room in Dar es Salaam, interrupting a song about him which the group were singing, believing him to be in South Africa. Johnny often referred to that incident, claiming that he had nearly fainted.

Johnny led part of the group to Morocco, with instructions that when the training was completed he should remain in Morocco to receive new groups of trainees, which meant he was our representative in that country. This was the beginning of a record of diplomatic work in the service of the people of South Africa that today stands unsurpassed.

Trudging the streets of Rabat on an empty stomach and thrown out by one landlord after another for unpaid rent, Johnny nonetheless quickly lapped up the French language and within a year he spoke it with surprising fluency. This proved invaluable, and fed into his inexhaustible zeal for discussing apartheid and the struggle with every one he met, for 24 hours if necessary. He now had access to both the French and English speaking worlds, and he exploited these possibilities to the fullest.

In Morocco, he worked with, and struck

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up close friendships with, leaders of liberation movements from the then Portuguese colonies, among them Marcelino Dos Santos of Mozambique, Dr Agostinho Neto of Angola and Amílcar Cabral of Guinea Bissau.

In 1963, Algeria became independent. An ANC mission was promptly opened in Algeria headed by Robert Resha, a member of the National Executive of the ANC. Johnny, his vision of the struggle broadened and deepened by fraternal association with freedom fighters from other African countries, was transferred to join Robbie Resha in Algeria. The two made a dynamic partnership. Algeria, which hosted many liberation movements, mainly from Africa, and including the Palestine Liberation Organisation, was a beehive of political activity involving solidarity support for the liberation struggle. Robbie and Johnny proved more than equal to the challenge. The status of the ANC in Algeria rocketed.

Apart from his close friendship with freedom fighters whose countries later became independent, Johnny was an active and leading member of the Pan-African Youth Movement most of whose members grew to hold important positions in government. In 1966, Johnny succeeded Robert Resha as Chief Representative in Algeria, and soon extended the activities of his mission to cover France, where he became a well-known personality in the circles of the solidarity movement. By this time he was beginning to emerge as one of the ANC's most accomplished diplomats. From his Algerian base he 'invaded' Western Europe, often 'shooting down' meetings the ANC considered detrimental to our cause.

In 1974, Johnny became a member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC. He was already a well-known figure in the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), and in United Nations circles where he earned a well-deserved reputation as an articulate champion of the cause of our people. It was these qualities that contributed to his appointment as head of the ANC mission to the United Nations in 1977 and later, in 1983, as head of our Department of International Affairs.

Johnny's unique flair for diplomatic work flowered during his years at the United Nations. There was no UN diplomat who did not know Johnny Makatini, and few escaped his persuasive tongue. The point was even reached when some accused the ANC of dominating the United Nations.

While establishing strong relationships with government representatives, organisations and people from all corners of the world, and particularly in Africa, Johnny paid special attention to the solidarity movement in the United States. He won millions of friends and supporters for our struggle, not least among them the Reverend Jesse Jackson.

After the 1985 National Consultative Conference of the ANC, Johnny transferred to Lusaka to give personal attention to his departmental responsibilities.

Johnny Makatini was an indefatigable organiser and campaigner on behalf of the African National Congress. He worked tirelessly and travelled ceaselessly on our work throughout Africa and to many parts of the world in pursuit of a single goal — the liberation of our people. This took its toll on his health, but, despite the appeals and remonstrances of his colleagues, he stubbornly persisted with a rigorous schedule of appointments and meetings. The very weekend before he went into hospital, he had returned from strenuous missions to Nigeria, Mali and Egypt, which he had continued with even after he began to feel unwell.

With the departure of Comrade Johnny Makatini, the African National Congress and the oppressed people of South Africa have lost a most dedicated and talented fighter and leader who gave his whole life in the service of his people and country. His passing leaves a gap in our ranks which will be difficult to fill. His shining qualities will continue to inspire his colleagues and the younger generation with the added determination to complete his life's work.

Comrade Johnstone Mfanafuthi Makatini is survived by his wife, Valerie, and a five-year-old daughter, Nandi, as well as by his mother, three brothers, and a sister. To his entire family the NEC of the ANC expresses its condolences.

Hamba Kahle!

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ZAMBIA
PO Box 31791
Lusaka

Published by the African National Congress of South Africa, PO Box 31971, Lusaka, Zambia
Printed by the Druckerel 'Erich Weinert' 2000 Neubrandenburg German Democratic Republic

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SIEN AAN HANGSEL "H"

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MARCH 1989



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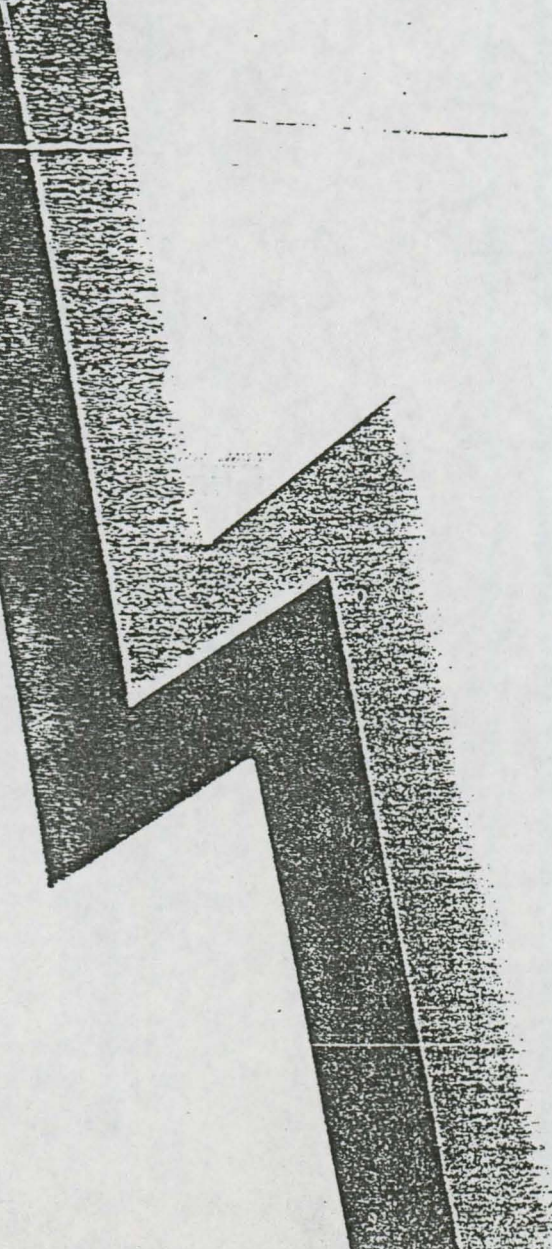
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MARCH 1989

SECHABA

Volume 23 No 3

ISSN:0037-0509

EDITORIAL

HEROES, NOT CRIMINALS

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Graphic design by Hylton Alcock

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The above are South African times

The end of 1988 saw the end of the 'Bethal' trial, where the ANC underground and Umkhonto We Sizwe were in the dock. Judgment in this trial was given in December 1988, after 16 months in court, and sentence was passed in January 1989. Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim and Acton Mandla Maseko were found guilty of treason; Maseko was sentenced to 23 years and Ebrahim to 20. Simon Dladla was found guilty of terrorism, and sentenced to 12 years.

There had been four land mine explosions in the farming areas of Breyten and Volksrust in late April 1986, and an arms cache had been found in Roodepoort. According to evidence later led in court, Maseko and Dladla had crossed from Swaziland earlier in the month and planted the mines, and had then gone on to Johannesburg where they had recruited two other men. On June 22nd, all four were stopped at a police road block in Edenvale. Maseko was found to be armed, and they were arrested.

Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim was not captured in South Africa. In December 1986, he was kidnapped at gunpoint from the house in Swaziland where he lived in exile. His kidnappers tied his hands (they had the rope ready), searched the house, and then drove Ebrahim, in his own car, gagged and blindfolded, to a border post, where he was handed over to two other captors. These placed him in handcuffs and leg-irons and drove him to Pretoria in a convoy of two cars that kept in radio contact all the way, delivered him to security police headquarters (a sign over the door said, "Police Museum") and left. The police later made the unlikely claim that these men were not policemen, merely public-spirited citizens, whose names and addresses they had not happened to record.

Ebrahim, Maseko and Dladla were

brought to court on August 3rd 1987. Maseko and Dladla were charged with laying the land mines, and Ebrahim with making the plans and giving the orders.

Ebrahim refused to acknowledge the right of the court to try him. He carried an Indian passport and had been taken by force from Swaziland. There was some argument over whether he should be returned to Swaziland, but this was overruled and the trial proceeded.

There were other arguments in this case, and strange developments. One argument, a familiar one in South African political trials, was over whether confessions taken in the duress of detention and torture are admissible as evidence. There was a need for reliable evidence on the policy and structures of the ANC, and this led to argument over defence witnesses. The defence wished to call the two who had been arrested with Maseko and Dladla, but they were being held under Section 32, and the judge ruled that if they were to be questioned by a magistrate it would constitute access, which the law forbids. Three possible witnesses for the defence had been murdered — Paul Dikeledi, murdered in Swaziland, was one of them — and one was claimed as a witness by the state as well, and the state claimed the ANC had killed him. The truth about all this never came out in court.

If the purpose of a trial is to get to the truth, the state did little to further the cause of this one. Truth would have remained shrouded in secrecy altogether had it not been for the dedication and determination of the legal team for the defence, for South Africa produces some brave and honest lawyers. They did not succeed in unveiling all the mysteries, but they managed to illuminate some matters.

The urgent need for light in the darkness

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led to an unusual development, when the defence applied for evidence on the policy and structures of the ANC to be taken from the ANC itself. The application was successful, the trial was adjourned, and the legal teams travelled to London, where Jacob Zuma and Ronnie Kasrils of the National Executive Committee gave evidence under commission. When these proceedings were reported in the South African press, it was the first time the voice of the NEC of the ANC had been publicly and legally heard in the country since the ANC was banned.

The state had called four witnesses, known to the press (the anonymity was to protect them) as X1, X2, X3 and X4. The defence said it found many fabrications in their evidence, and Ebrahim said later that evidence had been given against him by people he had never seen before. The claims the state was making about Ebrahim rested mainly on the testimony of X1. It became known that he had also used the name, 'September,' and shortly before the trial the Ministry of Law and Order had paraded him, under the name of 'Glory,' at a press briefing in Cape Town.

The defence denied that Ebrahim had had a military function in the ANC. X1 said Ebrahim had been head of the military structure in Swaziland. He described a meeting with Ronnie Kasrils and Ebrahim in December 1984, where, he said, Ebrahim had given military orders. In London, Ronnie Kasrils produced his passport to prove he had been in London in December 1984, and that the story was therefore untrue. Jacob Zuma testified Ebrahim was not involved in military work in Swaziland, and said it was unthinkable he could have given a military command.

In the end, the court believed the witnesses, and found Ebrahim to have been 'probably' a member of the Swaziland Revolutionary Political-Military Council of the ANC, so Ebrahim was sentenced on what the judge saw as a probability. Before he was sentenced, Ebrahim said in court:

"I wonder in the future whether freedom fighters should bother to even stand trial ... the testimony of secret witnesses of despicable character, who would sell their own souls for a sixpence, was preferred

over the testimony of respected leaders of our people"

All three of the accused in the trial are mature men. Acton Mandla Maseko and Simon Dladla are highly trained and experienced soldiers, with years of dedicated service behind them.

Ebrahim Ismail Ebrahim came into the freedom struggle while hardly more than a child. He joined the Natal Indian Congress during the Defiance Campaign of 1952; represented his branch at the Congress of the People in Kliptown in 1955 and at the Potato Boycott Conference in Johannesburg in 1959; was active in political campaigns till the early sixties. He joined Umkhonto We Sizwe when it was formed, (though one friend and comrade from that time has since commented that while he is 'dynamite' as a politician, he wasn't cut out to be a military commander). He spent the years from 1964 to 1979 in gaol on Robben Island. After his release, he continued with political work, first in Durban and then in exile.

He told the court:

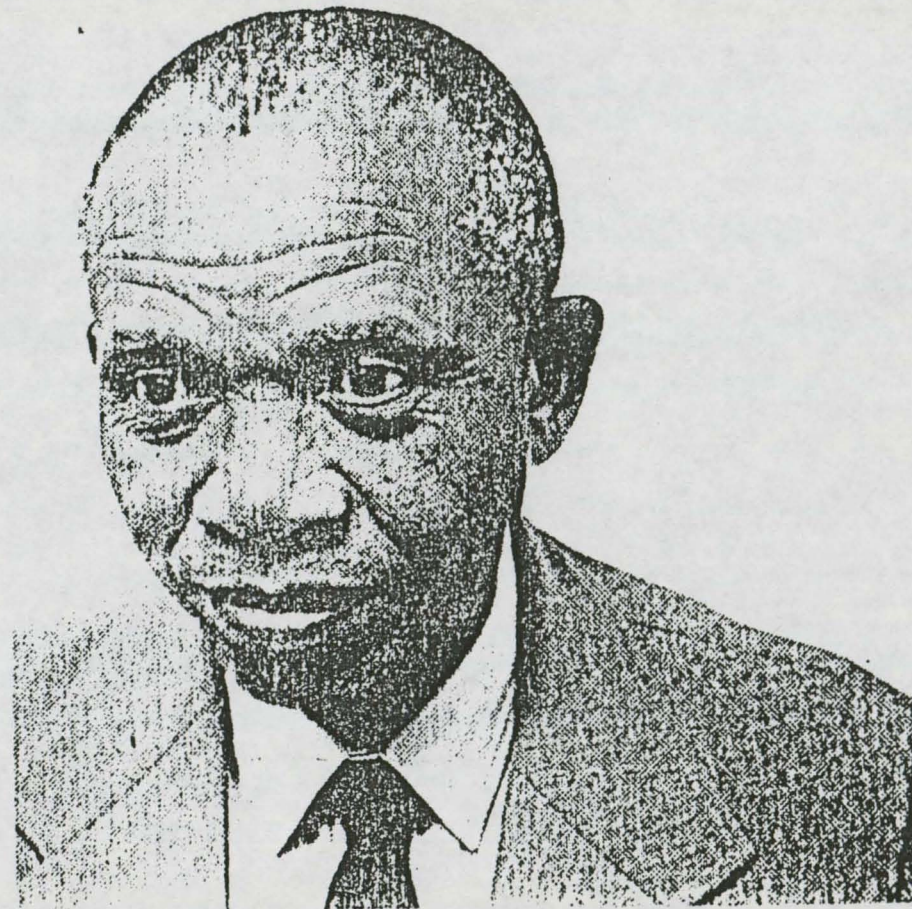
"Finding us guilty is merely a statement that the state considers the struggle for democracy, equality, justice, peace and a non-racial society to be ... reprehensible and requiring suppression by judicial and other means."

One issue raised by the trial was that of the sovereignty of states bordering on South Africa. This is not the only time the South African security police have put themselves above the law and snatched prisoners illegally from neighbouring countries; not the only time the agents of the regime have behaved like bandits, violating the frontiers of smaller neighbours, 'destabilising' those without the military strength to resist. The Pretoria regime is not restrained by any considerations of morality, or even of international law.

Another issue was the policy of the ANC on 'violence,' which was explained again, this time by Zuma and Kasrils. It needs to be said again that men like Ebrahim, Maseko and Dladla are heroes, not criminals, and that the violence in South Africa has not been created by fighters for freedom, but by the regime itself.

OUR REVOLUTION IS NOT YET WON, OUR TYRANT STILL OCCUPIES THE THRONE

By Mendi Msimang



Comrade Mendi Msimang, ANC Chief Representative in the United Kingdom and Ireland, delivered this address to the National Summit of the Historic Black Churches in Washington DC on January 10th 1989. ▶

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African Americans — greetings from the African National Congress! We are truly honoured to be asked to be with you today. Long ago, your ancestors and mine came from the soil of the same continent. And now, here we are, you and I. You are citizens of a great country, with the wars of independence and the emancipation of slavery and the mighty struggle for civil rights behind you. No doubt, you still have a few problems left!

At this historic conference, when you recall the epics of your past, and in this month, when you recall the 60th anniversary of Dr Martin Luther King, we count it a great privilege that you should invite us to discuss with you the struggle in Southern Africa. Our revolution is not yet won, our tyrant still occupies the throne, our people have no rights at all.

This is a church conference, and I am a politician, not a preacher. But I am told that a good American sermon has an introduction, three points, and a conclusion.

You have had the introduction. For my three points I shall speak about:

- The nature of our struggle,
- The violence of our struggle,
- The legitimacy of our struggle,

And in conclusion we must consider your response.

It has often been noted that the nature of our struggle is really a matter of faith. Apartheid Pretoria asserts that its policies and practices are to preserve Christian civilisation upon the African continent. We believe such claims are patently false: Christianity has to be liberated from this corrupt caricature that masquerades in its name.

Fallacious Theology

23.4 of our population adhere to Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian or traditional religion, or specify no religious adherence: they show no sign of being converted to apartheid Christianity.

20.4% belong to African independent churches; 23% to the main line Protestant churches which are members of the South

African Council of Churches (SACC); 9.5% are Catholic; 7.5% belong to smaller Christian groups (Orthodox, Mormon, Seventh Day Adventist, Salvation Army); and all of these specifically reject the claim of the regime that its policies represent Christian truth.

15.9% of the population belong to the Dutch Reformed Churches, but nearly half of these are members of the Black 'daughter churches' which maintain, with the endorsement of the world Reformed Church community, that the moral and theological justification of apartheid is heretical, a direct negation of Christianity.

Thus, the apartheid policies are accepted by only 8.3%, belonging to the White Dutch Reformed Churches.

The ANC totally refutes this imposition of a fallacious theological authority for the oppressive apartheid regime. Religious people are not called to protect the White South African way of life, but to reject it.

When the South African constitution talks of an almighty God who has blessed and protected those who have killed and conquered to enforce a racist supremacy, it is promoting an idol which does not exist. When people thank God that guns have a longer range than spears, that god is a false image. The Kairos Document states:

"The god of the South African State is not merely an idol or false god, it is the devil disguised as Almighty God — the anti-Christ."

In the ANC we recognise that many of us were born into a situation of religious antagonism and exclusivity, a type of spiritual apartheid, from which we have been painfully liberating ourselves. South Africa has left behind the missionary era, when many equated Christianity with a form of ecclesiastical colonialism.

No one denies that devout exponents of apartheid may display charitable personal attitudes: tyrants can be charming persons. It is their practice of injustice that is wrong, their promotion of oppressive policies enacted by violence that is evil, and their claim to do it in the name of God that is blasphemous.

Pretoria has constantly attacked the ANC for being ungodly and in religious, as is seen in P W Botha's letter to Archbishop Tutu of March 16th 1988:

"You are no doubt aware that the expressed intention of the planned revolution by the ANC/SACP alliance is to ultimately transform South Africa into an atheistic marxist state, where freedom of faith and worship will surely be among the first casualties."

This is simply rubbish: ridiculous, fallacious sloganism. The ANC is a liberation movement (not a political party) which has always recognised that the liberation struggle takes place in a religious context, and is specifically committed to religious freedom.

When the people formed the African National Congress in Bloemfontein in 1912, South Africa was a predominantly Christian country and their commitment to a united quest for a liberated society was fired by their faith.

From Rev John Dube, the first President, who opened the ANC in prayer, to S M Makgatho, Rev Z R Mahabane, Rev W B Rubusane, J T Gumede ... right down to Chief Albert Lutuli, Oliver Tambo, and Nelson Mandela today, our leadership has been strengthened by religious conviction. O R Tambo said in May 1987:

"Our founders were church men and women. Throughout our 75 years that link has never been broken."

Today, the ANC embraces within its membership a wide variety of believers. The varying symbols and practices through which we focus our faith bring to our culture a wealth of values which enrich us all, and display a unanimity of theological, ethical and political priorities which confirm and guide our struggle to a liberated South Africa.

From the beliefs and experiences within its own ranks, the ANC knows that adherents of all faiths have contributions to make to the concept of justice and peace, and the practice of democracy, from which caring and competent communities are emerging to comprise our new society. O R Tambo said:

Ours is a national liberation movement which contains within it different philosophical and religious tendencies, but all of which adhere to a common resolve to bring about a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa on the basis of the Freedom Charter ... As in the past, we shall resist all attempts to inject any anti-religious notions into our midst."

The Freedom Charter, devised and accepted in 1955 after a nation-wide consultation, is the main focus of ANC policy. It declares that:

"The law shall guarantee to all their right to speak, to organise, to meet together, to publish, to preach, to worship and to educate their children.

All laws which discriminate on grounds of race, colour or belief, shall be repealed.

Only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birthright, without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief."

This commitment to religious pluralism in the Freedom Charter has two aspects. It is a political statement that democracy preserves religious freedom, and a theological statement that religious pluralism is essential for democracy.

When he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Oslo in 1961, Chief Lutuli said in his lecture:

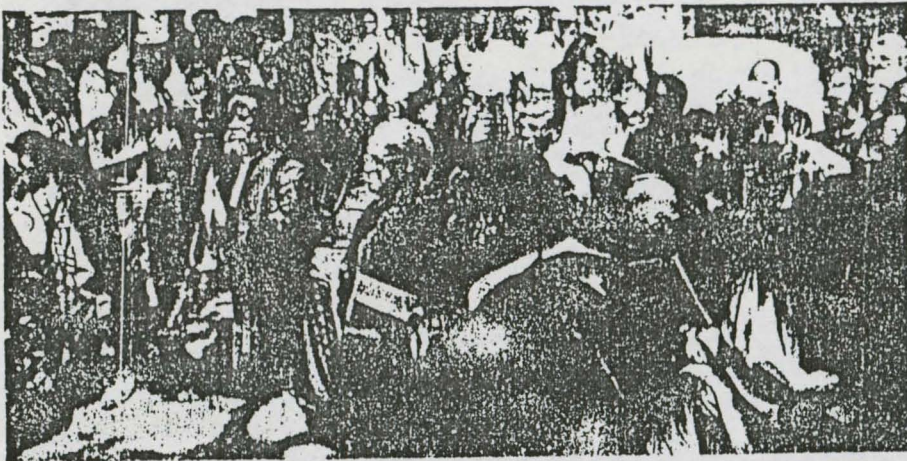
"I also, as a Christian and patriot, could not look on while systematic attempts were made in almost every department of life to debase the God-factor in man, or to set a limit beyond which the human being in his Black form might not strive to serve his creator to the best of his ability. To remain neutral in a situation where the laws of the land virtually criticised God for having created men of colour was the sort of thing I, as a Christian, could not tolerate."

I quote Shaikh Abdul Hamid Gabier:

"The Freedom Charter, to which the ANC is committed, provides the surest guarantee of the preservation of our Din and culture in a liberated South Africa."

And I quote from Professor Lourens Du Plessis, speaking in Dakar in 1987:

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Religious leaders kneel to pray during a march in Cape Town, February 1988

"The Freedom Charter still remains the basis of the ANC programme. It gives me hope. On the basis of this remarkable expression of the aspirations of the people of South Africa ... the ANC perception of the struggle provides room for me and other Afrikaners who despise apartheid to also make a particular contribution."

The faith which underlies the Freedom Charter supersedes the false claims of religious apartheid, and the Charter ends with a declaration to struggle together until liberation is wrought: for faith grows in action:

"These freedoms we will fight for side by side throughout our lives until we have won our liberty."

The Maulana Farid Esack said in Cape Town in August 1984:

"They did not ask us if we were Muslim or Christian when they declared Constantia White. They did not ask us if we were Hindu or Muslims when they tear-gassed us; nor do they enquire about our religion when they kill our children on the streets. Side by side apartheid has sought to dehumanise us, and side by side we shall work to destroy it and create a new South Africa."

Our struggle is a matter of faith; our faith is confirmed in our struggle.

The Violence of Our Struggle

Violence rules Southern Africa. It is a function of government by coercion instead of government by consent, and the system is bound by it. It cannot establish the apartheid policy except by violence. It cannot counter the liberation struggle and the Freedom Charter except by violence. It cannot answer the moral appeal of non-violent resistance except by violence. It cannot prevent justice being done except by violence.

Millions have suffered under racist rule from structural, social, judicial or military violence. Infant mortality, preventable disease, starvation, poverty, deliberate homelessness, industrial and agricultural neglect, detention, imprisonment and the calculated killing of thousands throughout the subcontinent verges on genocide. The blood lies warm across Africa today because apartheid is a killing culture.

The liberation struggle is not an academic debate in gracious surroundings, but gas and guns and bloody guts, dogs' teeth in your children's legs and electrodes on their testicles. Apartheid is violence unto death in the name of Jesus Christ.

And it goes on. Do not be misled by the talk of reform: repression is as strong as ever today. The South African Catholic

Bishops' meeting with the ANC in Lusaka recognised that apartheid cannot be reformed, but must be ended in its entirety.

Talk of releasing Mandela from prison conceals the hundreds now being consigned to prison. The Sharpeville Six were saved from the gallows because of the threat of sanctions, but the judgment in the Delmas trial makes any quest for peaceful political change into treason. "If these four men have committed treason," says Archbishop Tutu, "then I have committed treason as well." Pik Botha shook hands with Chester Crocker in Brazzaville on the day his colleagues were banning four more organisations at home. The brutality never stops.

Those who denounce the ANC for 'practising violence' or being 'a terrorist organisation' forget that for nearly 80 years our struggle has used non-violent direct action against the apartheid regime. It did not stop when the Passive Resistance Campaigns were crushed after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960, but continues today at a higher level than ever. Boycotts of schools, shops and buses abound. Last month the regime's Soweto City Council wrote off R167 million lost by the rent boycotts; despite fearsome repression, 1988 saw the greatest three-day national strike in South African history; sit-ins and stayaways continue; bans on peaceful funerals, meetings and marches are defied; there is persistent non-co-operation with officials appointed by the regime, rejection of the South African Defence Force and the South African Police, and continuous defiance of the Special Branch and its tactics of intimidation and destruction. Church leaders, gaol'd whilst marching in peace to protest to the State President, are committed to making non-violent action work.

Injustice Breeds Violence

The ANC has deep sympathy with those who find the use of force difficult; it causes us much anguish too. The addition of the strategy of armed struggle to liberation tactics came after 46 years of non-violent endeavours. All peaceful means had been exhausted, the appeal for a National Con-

vention rejected, and the existence of the ANC as a passive resistance organisation summarily banned, before military methods were used.

When the ANC speaks of turning to armed struggle as a last resort, it means we have tried every sort of non-violent resistance and found it blocked by violence. The pursuit of peace means that warmongers who cannot be won by conversion must be restrained by compulsion. (Many of those who criticise the ANC for taking up arms have not tried anything.)

After World War II, Christians in many colonial countries found that, because violence was a structural function of oppressive societies, the removal of such regimes was the only way to secure justice and peace. Political and economic systems which established the rich and exploited the poor had to be changed to remove both the injustice and the violence which ensured it, and this was brutally apparent in South Africa, which defined and defended oppression on racist grounds.

Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus and agnostics in the ANC were in the forefront of those who debated this question, and when the ANC was banned in 1960 they could no longer escape a decision. Nelson Mandela told the court in 1963:

"At the beginning of June 1961, after a long and anxious assessment of the South African situation, I, and some of my colleagues, came to the conclusion that, as violence in this country was inevitable, it would be unrealistic and wrong for African leaders to continue preaching peace and non-violence when the government had met our peaceful demands with force. This conclusion was not easily arrived at. It was only when all else had failed, when all channels of peaceful protest had been barred to us, that the decision was made to embark on violent forms of political struggle, and to form Umkhonto We Sizwe. We did so, not because we desired such a course, but solely because the government had left us with no other choice."

Criminals and fascists and tyrants have to be restrained, and when persuasion fails to reform them force is necessary to remove them. Oppressors who exterminated those who sought justice and peace had to be

removed from power, and, like the struggle to remove the Nazis, this necessitated the use of arms.

The bland statement that "the Church does not agree with violence," requires closer examination.

The ANC has great respect for those who hold deeply 'pacifist' beliefs yet commit themselves to the liberation struggle by taking non-violent action against the regime. But those who use an appeal to pacifism to cloak their racism, imperialism or cowardice, or use their rejection of armed struggle as an excuse to avoid the struggle altogether, are supporting the regime. In the judgment of Mahatma Gandhi, if cowardice is the only alternative to violence, it is better to choose violence.

"I would rather have blood on my hands than the water of Pontius Pilate,"

said Archbishop Trevor Huddleston.

History reveals several traditions about violence. I quote Herbert McCabe, OP:

"There is probably no sound on earth so bizarre as the noise of clergymen bleating about terrorism and revolutionary violence whilst their cathedrals are stuffed with regimental flags and monuments to colonial wars. The Christian Church, with minor exceptions, has been solidly on the side of violence for centuries, but normally it has been the violence of soldiers and policemen. It is only when the poor catch on to violence that it suddenly turns out to be against the gospel."

But there is another tradition, which has accepted the use of armed struggle for righteousness' sake. Those who protect the poor and oppressed, stand up against tyranny, fight to preserve justice and seek peace, have been praised. The ANC hates violence, but is proud that thousands of men and women and boys and girls are willing to give their lives to defend our people against aggression.

There is a fundamental difference between force and violence, and the words should be used correctly. Force is used by legitimate rulers to restrain wickedness and vice and protect their citizens, and is quite acceptable. Violence describes the aggressive acts of illegitimate oppressors and criminals, and is repulsive.

Defence of Justice

Most churches accept that force is sometimes necessary to defend justice and withstand the violence of oppressors; so does the ANC. The Church advocates non-military force; the ANC has practised it for decades. Side by side with such strategies, the Church supports the use of military action where necessary; so does the ANC.

Neither the South African regime nor Western governments have moral or theological objections to the use of force; they enrol thousands of people to the 'Defence Force' every year. The issue is not the use of force, but the legitimacy of the user; not their militancy, but their morality.

The National Executive Committee of the ANC is extremely concerned at the recent spate of attacks on civilian targets. While the great majority of these have been mounted by the regime, on August 17th 1988, the NEC noted that:

"Some of these attacks have been carried out by cadres of the people's army, Umkhonto We Sizwe ... and in certain instances operational circumstances resulted in unintended casualties. It has also come to their notice that agents of the Pretoria regime have been detailed to carry out a number of bomb attacks deliberately, to sow confusion among the people of South Africa and the international community, and to discredit the African National Congress. The ANC hereby underscores that it is contrary to our policy to select targets whose sole objective is to strike at civilians."

In an interview with the Afrikaans newspaper, *Beeld*, in December 1988, Margaret Thatcher spoke of the ANC and said:

"The question is how to get it to give up the politics of violence. The best approach is by offering the possibility of negotiations."

The ANC has always sought to talk rather than fight, and the regime has always responded with violence. When Lutuli and Mandela sought a round table conference in the 1950s, when Sharpeville residents sought to talk to the Bantu Education

authorities in the 1970s, and when the mourners of Uitenhage and the clergy in Cape Town sought to talk in the mid-eighties, the response was brutal — armed rejection. Thousands are dead today because they sought to talk to the racist regime.

No one has died by seeking to talk with the ANC. Students, politicians, businessmen, Pope and archbishops, women and men, Black and White, Afrikaner and English, Sotho and Zulu, rich and poor, the world's leaders and oppressed children ... they all talk to the ANC. What is this politics of violence we must give up before they will talk to us?

The Legitimacy of Our Struggle

The South African regime contends that it alone may make decisions for our country. All must obey without question, because government is instituted of God to be the authority in matters of state. Minister J G Heunis wrote to the church leaders of Thaba'Nchu, who requested reconsideration of a compulsory removal:

"I have no doubt that you, being men of the cloth, will not object to the Government expressing its view on non-governmental institutions meddling in affairs of state. I earnestly and with reverence must request the signatories not to become involved in the matter ... which is a decision of the highest government authority in the country, but rather to confine themselves to the matter for which they have been called, namely service to the Lord."

There is international unanimity that people have the right to determine their own governments and their own future, which is enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, and because apartheid violates this it constitutes a crime against humanity:

"All people have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."

In 1971, the International Court of Justice declared:

"To establish ... and to enforce distinctions, exclusions, restrictions and limitations exclusively based on grounds of race, colour descent, or national or ethnic origin, which constitute a basic denial of fundamental human rights, is a flagrant violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter."

By its violent subjugation of its own citizens, the South African regime violates international law and would be subject to international exclusions and sanctions were it not for the protection of the United Kingdom or United States veto on the Security Council. The Declaration of Human Rights reads:

"The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of the government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and general elections."

The only legitimate basis for the authority of any government is the consent of the people, and thus the regime has no right in international law to speak in the name of South Africa and no right to assure its own survival. This judgement is endorsed by the World Council of Churches and the South African Council of Churches. The statement made by the WCC in Lusaka in 1987 reads:

"It is our belief that civil authority is instituted of God to do good, and that under the biblical imperative all people are obliged to do justice and show special care for the oppressed and the poor. It is this understanding that leaves us with no alternative but to conclude that the South African regime and its colonial domination of Namibia is illegitimate."

We affirm the unquestionable right of the people of Namibia and South Africa to secure justice and peace through the liberation movements. While remaining committed to peaceful change, we recognise that the nature of the South African regime which wages war against its own inhabitants and neighbours compels the movements to the use of force along with other means to end oppression. We call upon the Churches in the international community to seek ways to give this affirmation practical effect in the struggle for liberation in the region and to strengthen

their contacts with the liberation movements."

The words of South African church leaders to their own White members, given in an SACC statement in February 1988, should be heeded by the whole Western world:

"To the White voters of South Africa we must say that you are being deceived by the government. Your fellow South Africans want nothing more than to live in a just and peaceful country. Your position is becoming untenable and we believe you must dissociate yourselves from this government. Apartheid is a heresy. You cannot reform a heresy. If you are to assure your future you must pull out of 'White politics' and join the real struggle for democracy."

Another question on the legitimacy of our struggle, which is frequently raised in the West, concerns our relations with the South African Communist Party and the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union. It can be answered directly by our President, Oliver Tambo:

"We must state clearly that we consider all these forces as firm and reliable allies in the common struggle for the liberation of our country and our people. Instead of being criticised and denounced for involving themselves in the struggle against apartheid, they should rather be congratulated as should people of other political persuasions, such as social democrats and liberals who have also joined the fight against White majority domination ..."

The ANC ... is not in the least interested that elements of the East-West conflict should be introduced into our situation. It would therefore help a great deal if the same spirit that inspired both East and West in the struggle against Hitler Germany should once more prevail, enabling the great powers to act in concert, with the common objective of seeing South Africa transformed into a non-racial, non-aligned and peaceful entity."

No one can validate apartheid by criticising communism. Our problems in South Africa are not caused by commissars who claim to be atheists, but by capitalists who claim to believe in God. The challenge is not how

to evangelise Eastern Communists, but how to liberate Western Christians.

Those who afford the South African regime recognition and claim they are 'seeking positive change' must realise this is not the way to deal with international criminals. Humanity does not ask those condemned for committing mass murder and wholesale robbery to be a little kinder; it deposes them and appoints legitimate rulers instead.

In February 1988, Dr Alan Boesak said:

"Let us no longer pussyfoot around this issue. This is an illegitimate government that deserves no authority and does not have it ... that deserves no obedience and must not get it."

In conclusion, you did not ask the ANC to come here to tell you that apartheid is wrong: we won that battle years ago. You want to know how you can help to pull the tyrant from the throne, how you can stand in solidarity and support with these people who seek to build a new society on the other side of earth.

Expose False Theology

You will not expect me to ask you to take the matter lightly. You are too nurtured in the words of Scripture, and too reminiscent of your own struggles, to imagine that 'taking up your cross' is an undemanding matter, or that 'laying down your life for your friends' will not hurt. We share together in the struggle of all God's people on earth for their inheritance.

North America is largely Christian, and the fallacies and heresies which infect the religious perceptions of many South Africans affect you too. Because apartheid is theologically false its removal is a duty upon Christian people everywhere.

The US church, the US people, and the US government, must be brought to realise that apartheid cannot be reformed but must be removed and replaced. The right-wing sects which seek to justify right-wing policies, the evil arguments which excuse racist genocide, and the heretical voices which worship the idols of anti-communism and the apostasy of affluence, must be confronted and silenced.

We need you to make it clear to every US citizen that the liberation struggle is theologically sound; that the quest for a new united nation, with a mandate to establish a free, non-racial non-sexist democratic society, can be embraced wholeheartedly by the people of faith. Let the climate of conviction become so strong that no one can claim to belong to Christ in the US without supporting the liberation struggle in South Africa! Who will take on that theological task for us?

Support Sanctions

Secondly, the tyranny of Pretoria cannot continue to exist without the support of the Western world, and the imposition of total mandatory sanctions in every sphere is the crucial political objective. Some of you have made magnificent efforts over the years to promote this policy, but we need to confirm that call. Sanctions are working.

Sanctions are designed to hit full pockets, and hit them first, and they do. Those who are squealing about sanctions are Whites, not Blacks; the wealthy, not the impoverish-ed; those with work, not those without work. Sanctions are designed to make those who consort with the apartheid regime to tremble, and as the democratic movement grows those who are not aligned with that movement fear sanctions more and more.

The arms embargo was a vital factor in the military defeat of the South African forces in Angola. Sporting and cultural boycotts have been major elements in undermining White South Africa's ability to live with itself. Financial sanctions are proving a crucial influence in making apartheid too expensive to sustain. That is politics.

But if the political will of America is to be aroused by her politicians, it will be because the conscience of America has been aroused by her people. Who will take on that political task for us?

Financing The Struggle

Thirdly, there is the task of financing the liberation struggle. Despite divestment, US

business is making millions through the exploitation of the human and natural resources of our country. Despite the public protestations of peaceful intent, US dollars feed the political and military disturbances which plague our subcontinent.

Is it not time for you to come in on our side, by direct financial support for the work of the African National Congress? We do not ask you for equipment to assault the military might of the racist regime; we believe that is the work of God; but it is not the role of churches.

Most of our work falls in direct response to the word of the Prophet Isaiah which Jesus of Nazareth took to himself:

"... to bring the Good News to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives, to give the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free, and announce that the day has come when the Lord will save his people."

To the African National Congress this vision means not only evangelical zeal, but conscientising the world to win commitment to the political objectives of liberation; it means structuring and directing the quest for a new community; it means ministering to thousands of exiles with the essentials of healthy living and an education in which struggle can emerge in true democracy; it means our schools and hospitals and settlements; it means research and training to prepare to constitute a democratic South Africa; it means enabling our people to turn the hopes of the Freedom Charter into the experience of liberated living. And that means money.

This is what we need from you, Christian comrades: theological partnership, political collegiality, and financial solidarity.

We have always had support from Christian individuals within our ranks, but it is only in recent times that church bodies such as you have begun to reach out their hands to us. African Americans, you will understand the particular poignancy, the deep sense of gratitude and greeting, which enables me today to reach out my hands to you in the name of, and on behalf of, my leadership and the entire membership of the African National Congress and the oppressed and fighting people of South Africa.

Collection Number: AK2117

Collection Name: Delmas Treason Trial, 1985-1989

PUBLISHER:

Publisher: Historical Papers Research Archive, University of the Witwatersrand

Location: Johannesburg

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