

gruesome torture. Our political prisoners have been found dead in their cells. This applies to prisoners and detainees in South Africa and Namibia.

That is why the decision of the Municipality of Rome to proclaim Nelson Mandela a Citizen of this great City of Rome is not only timely but is also a great act of solidarity with the people of Africa, an historic expression of support for all the political prisoners and detainees held by the South African regime, both South African and Namibian, at a time when these detainees are being tortured and even killed in the process, with the knowledge and authority of the South African regime.

The decision of the Municipality of Rome will be conveyed to Nelson Mandela in Robben Island.

The latest of these crimes is the dastardly case of Dr. Neil Aggett, a young white medical doctor, who devoted his life to serving the people both as a medical practitioner and as an organiser for the Food and Canning Workers Union. Dr Aggett was murdered by the racist Security Police because he sought justice for his countrymen. His wife, who like himself was detained, and several other trade unionists, black and white, have been moved from their cells to prison psychiatric wards where they are now being held. The criminal action of the racists in murdering this youthful white patriot is indicative of a significant current that is making itself felt in South Africa today, the movement of numerous whites, especially the young, away from support of apartheid and towards the programme and policies of the ANC.

Apartheid reforms are hollow

The racist regime has tried a number of devices to unravel the crisis in which it is presently embroiled. Its tactics, presented to the world as efforts at reforms, have oscillated between brutal repression and cosmetic superficial changes that have no effect on the substances of apartheid and racist domination. To the insurgent working class it has offered a system of legalised but state controlled union registration. For the most part black labour has rejected these so-called concessions; our working class does not want corporate

and company unions but free independent worker-controlled unions.

To the Indians and Coloured people it has offered a few poisoned crumbs in the shape of "power sharing" in an attempt to enroll new forces into the ranks of its supporters from amongst the oppressed.

It has tried to win over strata of the black middle class. But this action of co-optation has failed; there is no strata of the African population, with the exception of the small clique of Bantustan rulers, which has spoken up for the apartheid system.

It has tried to train black labour in industrial skills and to promote an upper layer of black workers in the factories. But African workers want not only industrial skills, and a living wage, but also political rights in the country of their birth.

The regime's cooptation exercise has not worked. The order of the day is not cooptation by the regime but resistance! It is clearly understood by the mass of our people that the racist regime cannot and will not reform itself. We must not accept the rival claims of the conservative and so-called reformist wing of the dominant racist party on their face value. The split in the ranks of this criminal cabal is over the question of how best to achieve objectives they hold in common and is occasioned by the bitter struggles of the oppressed.

The racist regime cannot be judged on the basis of the rhetoric of self-seeking politicians and their foreign friends. It must be judged by the existence of nine million Africans who have been forcefully deported from their homes in the urban and industrial centres to resettlement camps in the Bantustans; by the millions who are annually criminalised because of some minor infraction; by the thousands of innocent babies who die each year before they reached the age of four!

Apartheid is not merely segregated sport, separate facilities for education, culture and recreation. It is a brutal system of national oppression, embedded in economic exploitation and institutionally entrenched by a monopoly over the political process by a small white minority. Apartheid is neither dead nor dying. It will and must be put to death by the power of the oppressed people.

Reagan Policy legitimises Apartheid

There is a new tide running in international politics since the advent of the Reagan administration in the United States. This policy disguised behind a catchy phrase — "constructive engagement" — is explicitly aimed at ending the South African regimes international isolation and restoring it to a position of respectability as a legitimate power in Southern Africa. To this end the United States government has encouraged a more active investment policy in South Africa, is orchestrating a conspiracy to patch together a so-called South Atlantic Treaty Organisation between the Pretoria regime and Latin American dictatorships, and is trying to foist cold war issues on the national liberation struggle in Southern Africa.

We look to the democratic forces of Europe to prevent this attempt at legitimising racism. More than this: we have to prise away the international support on which the apartheid state relies. Sanctions are not yet in full force. Multinationals are still shoring up the apartheid's economy. United Nations resolutions are stronger in words than in effect. There are serious and disquieting moves to emasculate the force of UN resolution 435 on Namibia: to permit South Africa to improvise new ways in which to entrench her rule in that territory, even after independence. Namibia is a direct EEC responsibility, for where does the Contact Group derive its influence?

The International Community must Act

1982 has been designated by the ANC as the Year of Unity in Action, involving not only the people of South Africa but also all opponents of apartheid, colonialism and racism in the international community. 1982 has also been proclaimed the International Year of Mobilisation for Sanctions Against South Africa. This is a task which must be accomplished this year, by the people of this country, the peoples of Europe and the rest of the world. It is for this reason that we welcome the participation at this conference of representatives from the United Nations and the European Economic Community.

The ANC once again affirms its support for the people of Namibia in their legitimate

struggle for national independence under the leadership of SWAPO. We recognise the heroic actions of the People's Liberation Army of Namibia in pursuance of the democratic rights of the people of Namibia.

The apartheid regime must be encircled by your struggles, and by your actions; by our struggles, our actions. These struggles we pledge to you. We are resolved to intensify the struggle for the liberation of our country. Together with you we shall be unconquerable and irresistible.

We take this opportunity to register our support for the legitimate struggle of the Palestinian people, the people of East Timor, Western Sahara, the democratic forces in El Salvador and all the opponents of fascist dictatorships.

Once again we call upon the international community to take positive action to isolate the racist apartheid regime. We call for the complete diplomatic isolation of South Africa and the countering of any actions which attempt to block this effort.

More than declarations and diplomacy: we call for actions and support in as many diverse forms as your political experience and strength can devise.

We ask for political and economic support for the countries of Southern Africa and massive material assistance for SWAPO and the ANC.

We call upon the world community to demand the release of all political prisoners and detainees held by the South African racist regime.

A LUTA CONTINUA!



WALTER SISULU:



birthday of an outstanding revolutionary leader

On May 18, Walter Sisulu celebrated his 70th birthday in prison. As we go to press news was received that he together with Nelson Mandela, Raymond Mhlaba and Andrew Mlangeni have been removed from Robben Island to Pollsmoor Prison. SECHABA celebrates his 70th birthday by reviewing the political activity and contribution of Walter Sisulu to our liberation struggle.

Walter Sisulu, was at the centre of the ANC's struggles from the 1940's until his arrest at Rivonia in 1963. He acted as guide and mentor to Nelson Mandela when he first came to Johannesburg and worked closely with Mandela, Tambo and others in the ANC Youth League whose ideas were a spur to the development of the ANC into the militant revolutionary force it is today.

Walter Sisulu was born at Engcobo in the Transkei on May 19, 1912. He was brought up by his mother and an uncle. Coming from a poor family, he was unable to go far with his formal education and left school at the age of 15 in order to look after the family's affairs when his uncle died.

Sisulu began work on the Johannesburg gold mines working at the rock face thousands of feet underground. When he had completed his contract he did not return, but found work in East London as a "kitchen boy" working for a white family. Here was his first insight into the life of the white minority. This job did not last long either, and soon he was back in Johannesburg, this time working in a bakery for 18 shillings a week.

In his spare time Sisulu sometimes attended meetings of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union (ICU) and was enthralled with the fiery speeches of its leader Clements Kadalie, but did not join the organisation. He learnt his first political lessons in the arena of practical struggle when he led the workers in the bakery out on strike for higher wages. Sisulu was sacked as an 'agitator'.

His streak of personal rebellion and resistance to white domination grew from strength to strength. One evening while travelling home on the train, he saw a white ticket-collector confiscating an African

child's season ticket. He asked the official why he had done this, but instead of an answer, he became the victim of assault. Sisulu fought back and was arrested and imprisoned. This was his first of many experiences of prison.

As he went from job to job, Sisulu studied for his Junior Certificate and also took part in music and debating clubs. He continued his search for a political outlet and joined the ANC in 1940 after hearing a speech by Dr. A.B. Xuma, who became ANC President in December of that year. However, Sisulu was to become increasingly critical of Dr. Xuma's moderation.

At first active in the ANC Youth League, working with Oliver Tambo, Nelson Mandela, Govan Mbeki, Anton Lembede and others, Sisulu was elected to the Youth League at its opening meeting held at the Bantu Men's Social Centre.

It was in Sisulu's office that the Youth Leaguers met to discuss their strategy and tactics. One of those who took part in the discussion, Albertina, a nurse, married Sisulu in 1944. At the wedding, Mandela was best man.

It was at the historic 1949 Conference of the ANC, where a new militant leadership was elected, that Sisulu became the movement's first full-time Secretary-General. His wife, Albertina, wholeheartedly endorsed his decision and from this time the family would depend on her earnings as a nurse.

As the ANC grew in the next decade, so did Walter Sisulu. He began to see the relationship between national and class struggles in South Africa, to understand that the apartheid state was based on the exploitation of the mass of the people both as Blacks and as workers or peasants. He worked closely with the organisations of the Indian and Coloured people, as well as progressive whites, in the united and common struggle against apartheid oppression and for national liberation. Recognising the need for a new theoretical approach, he began to read and study, to plan new forms of struggle.

The increasing mobilisation of the mass of the working people was to lead to a wave of repression by the Nationalist government. In 1950 the Suppression of Communism Bill was published, proposing to give the



Mandela and Sisulu on Robben Island

government the power to ban, not only the Communist Party, but any organisation or individual opposing their policies.

At the national day of protest against the act, on June 26 (South Africa's first Freedom Day), Walter Sisulu declared:

"The African people should not be bluffed by the title of the Bill. It will leave no chance for them to protest and fight for the interests of all oppressed people ... Although the Unlawful Organisations Bill purports to be directed against Communism in general and the Communist Party of South Africa in particular, the ANC Executive is satisfied that it is primarily directed against Africans and other oppressed people, and designed to frustrate all their attempts to work for the fulfilment of their legitimate demands and aspirations".

Based on the Programme of Action of the 1949 Conference, the ANC became more and more involved in leading the militant mass struggles of the time. Along with Dr. Moroka, J.B. Marks, Dr. Dadoo and Yusuf Cachalia, Walter Sisulu was appointed to the Joint Planning Council for the "Campaign of Defiance of Unjust

Laws". The campaign was launched on June 26, 1952, and in all about 8,000 people went to jail for defying apartheid laws. Sisulu himself was a member of a group of 52 Africans and Indians who entered Boksburg location with out permits. Arrested, he told the court:

"As an African and national secretary of the Congress I cannot stand aside on an issue which is a matter of life and death to my people. My duty is perfectly clear — it is to take the lead and to share with the humblest of my countrymen the crushing burden imposed on us because of the colour of our skins.

"In conclusion, I wish to make this solemn vow and in full appreciation of the consequences it entails. As long as I enjoy the confidence of my people, and as long as there is a spark of life and energy in me, I shall fight with courage and determination for the abolition of discriminatory laws and for the freedom of all South Africans irrespective of colour or creed".

Later that year Sisulu and 19 others were rearrested and charged under the Suppression of Communism Act for their

part in organising the Defiance Campaign. They were sentenced to 9 months imprisonment, suspended for 2 years. Sisulu was subsequently banned from meetings and confined to the magisterial district of Johannesburg.

The moment his ban expired, Sisulu was back at work, addressing meetings, travelling, organizing, inspiring. But immediately after the observance of June 26, 1954, the authorities once again used the Suppression of Communism Act to attempt to decapitate the ANC. President Lutull was confined to the Tugela district of Natal and Sisulu was banned from gatherings for two years and ordered to resign as Secretary-General of the ANC within 30 days.

Sisulu was one of the 156 arrested on December 6, 1956, in the treason trial and was one of the key accused who endured the full agony of that ordeal up to the moment of acquittal on March 29, 1961.

After constant harassment and arrests, Sisulu was again picked up by police in August 1962 (a year after the launching of the armed struggle) and eventually charged with incitement arising from the country-wide strike which had been organised from May 29 to 31, 1961, in protest against the inauguration of the racist "Republic". Nelson Mandela, who had gone underground after the strike to organise the resistance, had been arrested in Natal on August 5 and was charged with a similar offence.

The opening of the trials of Mandela and Sisulu in October 1962 was marked by bomb attacks in Natal and the Western Cape and demonstrations by thousands of supporters in the main centres of the country.

Although Mandela and Sisulu faced charges arising from the same strike, their trials were separate, Mandela appearing in Pretoria and Sisulu in Johannesburg. Mandela faced two charges — incitement to strike and leaving the country without permission — and was eventually sentenced to five years imprisonment. Sisulu's second charge related to documents found in his home by the police which were held to show that he was promoting the aims of the ANC.

Sisulu was released on bail of R6,000. In October, he was placed under house

arrest and ten days later, following the death of his mother, Sisulu was arrested at his home for attending a "gathering" created by the mourners who had come to pay their last respects. All this took place during the proceedings of the incitement trial. At the conclusion of the case, Sisulu realised that time had run out for him and on April 20, 1963, he went underground to join the High Command of Umkhonto we Sizwe.

On July 11, Sisulu and other leaders of Umkhonto we Sizwe were arrested at their Rivonia headquarters. For months they were held in solitary confinement, ceaselessly and often brutally "interrogated" by the security police. Some were viciously assaulted. Nelson Mandela was brought from Robben Island to join them in the dock when their trial finally got underway on December 3.

At the Rivonia Trial, Sisulu was in the box for five days. From the outset he made it clear he would say nothing and answer no questions which might lead to the identification and prosecution of others, and he calmly and firmly refused to be provoked by the prosecution. Sisulu demonstrated that a man who is clear in his ideology and convinced of the logic and justness of his cause, is more than a match for his enemies.

During his detention, Sisulu revealed, he was told he faced the death penalty, but could avoid being hanged if he gave information to the police. He refused to cooperate. The authorities could do what they like.

Finally life sentences were passed on Walter Sisulu and his fellow accused. At the time of writing, Sisulu has been behind bars for almost 19 years, Mandela for nearly 20. For them, and others, life imprisonment means that the regime intends to keep them in prison for the rest of their natural lives.

The Rivonia men on Robben Island, who were the leaders outside prison, are also the leaders inside prison, of the daily struggle the prisoners have had to wage against an administration determined to break their spirits.

Sisulu, at 70 years of age, is the man he always was — older and wiser, still as positive in his thinking and acting, optimistic and forward-looking, as convinced as ever that

he will see freedom in his lifetime. His influence on his comrades is immense. His peers always seek his agreement, the youth look upon him as a father figure. He is still the rock of the ANC. In all his struggles Walter Sisulu has had the firm backing of his wife Albertina, who has been under a longer period of continuous banning than any other person in South Africa and who to this day continues to play a major role in the freedom struggle. Since the expiry of her banning order at the end of July 1981, she has been a speaker at public meetings throughout the country, agitating amongst other issues,

for the release of all political prisoners, protesting against detention without trial and the torture and murder of political detainees.

In observing the 70th birthday of this outstanding revolutionary leader, the best tribute that our people and democratic humanity can pay him is to intensify support for the liberation struggle on every front. Most important his birthday should be an occasion when each of us undertake to do all in our power to work for the release of all South African political prisoners and detainees.

"SOUTHERN AFRICA - THE TIME TO CHOOSE"

Below MIKE TERRY, Executive Secretary of the Anti Apartheid Movement assesses the significance of a recent Conference held in London and discusses the need for a greater level of commitment in the drive for the total isolation of South Africa.

There is every prospect that March 1982 will prove to be a turning point for the entire liberation struggle in Southern Africa. As the Heads of State and Government of the Frontline States together with the Presidents of the African National Congress and SWAPO of Namibia concluded their historic Summit meeting from 6-7th March with the adoption of the Maputo Declaration final preparations were being made for the Anti-Apartheid Movement's "Southern Africa: The Time to Choose" Conference in London.

The Conference opened on the evening of 11th March at the headquarters of the British Trades Union Congress, Congress House. The Opening Session, itself, was a vivid expression of the growing and powerful international solidarity with the national liberation struggle in South Africa and Namibia. The key-note address from His Excellency Dr Alex Ekwueme, the Vice-President of the Federal Republic of

Nigeria set the tone of the Conference. The international community was represented at its highest level by H.E. Alhaji Yusuff Maitama-Sule, the Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid and H.E. Mr Shridath Ramphal the Secretary General of the Commonwealth. British contributors at this opening session were Michael Foot, leader of the Labour Party, David Steel, leader of the Liberal Party and Tom Jackson, Chairman of the International Committee of the Trades Union Congress.

South Africa's aggressive character was brought home dramatically by Mr Jacques Hodoul the Foreign Minister of Seychelles whose state had been the recent victim of a South African planned attempted mercenary coup. From the heart of the struggle were David Meroro, Chairman of SWAPO and Alfred Nzo, Secretary General of the ANC.

Participants were welcomed to the Conference by Archbishop Trevor Huddleston, the President of the Anti-Apartheid Movement who was an inspiring force throughout the Conference.

The Conference was organised by the Anti-Apartheid Movement in cooperation with the UN Special Committee against

Apartheid from 11-13 March. It was intended to consider, above all, as the Declaration of the Conference explained:

"the responsibility of Britain in relation to the grave situation in southern Africa resulting from escalating repression and aggression launched by the apartheid regime, of South Africa, the ominous implications of its nuclear plans, as well as the advance of the struggle of the oppressed people, including armed struggle for liberation."

As the President of the ANC, Oliver Tambo declared in a message to the Conference:

"Because of the unavoidable intensifying liberation struggle in Namibia and South Africa, the apartheid regime is waging an undeclared and escalating war throughout southern Africa. Britain stands at the centre of the history of this situation."

The Conference proved to be the most representative gathering ever held in Britain to consider the situation in Southern Africa. All the British parliamentary parties were represented including members of both the Houses of Commons and Lords. Altogether 122 different British organisations were represented including the TUC as well as national and local trade unions; the British Council of Churches, representatives of 6 Anglican Bishops, and many different denominations and other Christian organisations; a very wide spectrum of youth and student organisations as well as all the major bodies concerned with and campaigning on Southern Africa.

The international dimension of the Conference was equally significant with representatives of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid, the UN Council for Namibia, the ILO, UNESCO as well as the Commonwealth Secretariat. Twenty-eight member states were represented primarily from Africa and Non-aligned states. In recognition of the importance of the Conference and as further proof of Nigeria's commitment to the liberation of Africa, the Vice-President brought with him H.E. Chief Patrick O. Bolokor, Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs, Senator S.A. Akintoye of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Hon Alhaji

Sani Abubaker, Chairman of the House of Representatives Foreign Relations Committee.

All the major anti-apartheid and solidarity movements from western Europe were represented as were movements from Africa, the Caribbean, New Zealand and the socialist countries. Twelve international non-governmental organisations were represented.

Significance of the Conference

However the significance of the Conference was not simply its representative character but of equal importance was its content. There were four plenary sessions, but the main work of the Conference was in the Three Commissions which considered the themes:

† South Africa's Military and Nuclear Build-up

† South Africa's War against Independent Africa

† Southern Africa: British, European and Western policy

The highlight of the opening session was the pledge of the leader of the Labour Party, Michael Foot, to a dramatically new policy towards Southern Africa:

"I pledge the support of the Labour Party as a whole in the country. There are two pillars of our approach; to isolate apartheid and to strengthen the forces of those fighting against it by every measure in our power.

Our first priority is to work for mandatory economic sanctions against South Africa. This approach may take time and I know there have been arguments about it in the past but the British Labour Party is committed to that cause and when we assume power once again to govern this country we shall seek to take all the steps we can to carry that view into action."

Warning to the West

From the 12th March the Conference was based at the Wembley Conference Centre in north London. The Main Plenary Session on the morning of 12 March was addressed by the Nigerian Vice-President,



Speakers at the AAM National Demonstration

Mozambique's Ambassador to the United Nations, on behalf of the Front Line States, Alfred Nzo, David Meroro and Archbishop Huddleston.

Addressing this Session H.E. Dr Alex Ekwueme gave a powerful warning to Britain and other western states:

"We in Africa feel that the time has come when we shall no longer tolerate the disregard which some Western nations display at issues that affect us seriously, and when we can no longer continue to ignore the action of these Western nations in the Southern African region in our respective bilateral relations with them. In other words, there must be a clear linkage between what is happening in Southern Africa and our relations with these Western nations."

Assessing the critical role that Britain plays in sustaining the apartheid regime, he continued by forcefully pointing out:

"We believe that the United Kingdom, faithful to her best tradition of freedom and justice, can, if she has the political will, bring sufficient pressure to bear on the South African regime to compel her to reverse the repressive and dehumanizing system of government which she practises and which goes by the name of apartheid."

The Nigerian Vice-President's challenge was echoed by Alfred Nzo, the Secretary General of the ANC in his appeal to the British people:

"The British Anti-Apartheid Movement, which draws its strength from the democratic forces of this country, has worked tirelessly for over two decades to get the people of this country to help to undo the disaster imposed on us by the policies of the British ruling class over a period of nearly two centuries as far as South Africa is concerned. After all this effort, it is surely time that we saw a little more decisive action on the part of the British people, their political parties, the trade union movement, the youth, the women, the churches and so on — a little more decisive action against the continuing economic,

sporting and other links between this country and apartheid South Africa".

It was however in the Special Plenary Session "Africa Under Attack" on the Friday evening that the war in Southern Africa was brought home most dramatically. The main contributor at this Session was Lt. Col Ngongo of the General Staff of FAPLA, the People's Army of Angola. He gave a comprehensive account of South African aggression against Angola in particular since South Africa's occupation of southern Angola, since August 1981. His contribution was backed up with photographic and film evidence. The following day a special show was arranged at which the film Cahama was screened for the first time outside Angola which depicted the war in Angola in the most dramatic form.

Substance to the issues discussed in the Conference was provided in the Commissions where the opportunity was provided to discuss and consider matters in depth. The Conference, benefitted from a wide range of experience and expertise. In Commission I on South Africa's Military and Nuclear Build-up, the key note address was presented by Alhaji Matitama-Sule, the Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee against Apartheid. Other contributors were Ruth Mompoti of the ANC, Hidipo Hamutenya, Secretary of Information and Publicity of SWAPO. Frank Barnaby, former Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute and Abdul Minty, Director of the World Campaign against Military and Nuclear Collaboration with South Africa.

Commission II was presented with evidence of South African aggression by representatives of Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, as well as the chairman of its first session Lord Hatch who is currently lecturing at the University of Zambia. However perhaps the most fascinating contribution was that by John Stockwell who had headed the CIA operation in Angola from 1975-76.

Commission III tackled the most serious issue; British, European and Western policy. A powerful critique of US policy was presented by Ramsey Clark the former US Attorney General who as a member of the International Commission of Enquiry into the Crimes of the Racist Regimes in



Dr Alex Ekwueme, Vice President, FR Nigeria with Maitama-Sule, Chairman UN Special Committee

Southern Africa had visited the war zone in southern Angola last year. Alan Sapper the current Chairman of the British TUC argued effectively for a fundamental change in British policy whilst representatives of the western European anti-apartheid and solidarity movements gave assessments of their governments policies.

Last phase of the Conflict

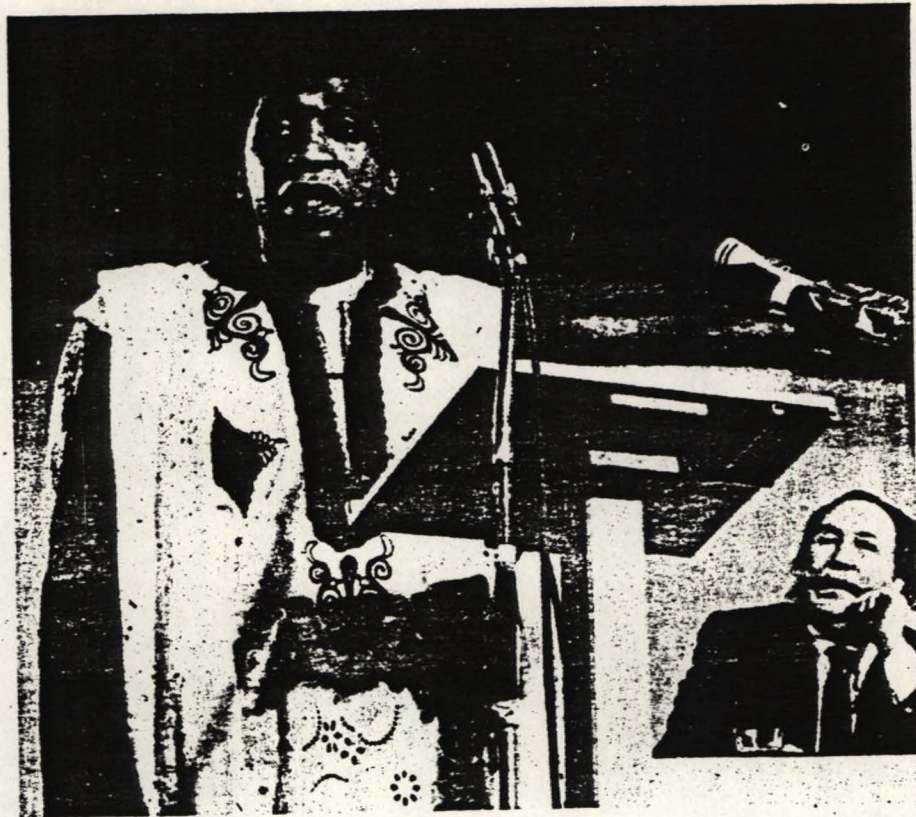
The three days of intense work, discussion and debate culminated in the Final Plenary Session on the evening of 13th March during which participants sought to overcome the deep depression caused by the defeat of Spurs in the League Cup a few hours before and in particular the author who had lost a heavy bet!

The Conference Declaration drawn up by the Steering Committee was presented to the Session by H.E. Alhaji Yussuf Maitama-Sule and adopted by acclamation. Reports from the Three Commissions were presented by Abdul Samad Minty (AAM), H.E. Luis de Almeida (Angola) and Senator Akintoye (Nigeria). Zimbabwe's High Commissioner

to the UK, Dr Zwinoira, delivered a speech on behalf of Dr Witness Mangwende the Foreign Minister of Zimbabwe and there were concluding statements by H.E. Dr Alex Ekwueme, Vice President of Nigeria; H.E. A.B. Nyakyi, High Commissioner of Tanzania, on behalf of the Frontline States and Archbishop Huddleston.

The culmination of the Conference as a whole was the Anti-Apartheid Movements National Demonstration in London the following day, Sunday 14th March. A huge crowd estimated to be up to 15,000 marched through London to Trafalgar Square where an enthusiastic response was given to the platform of speakers, in particular to the representatives of the ANC, SWAPO and Angola. The spirit of the demonstration reflected a new sense of unity and determination amongst the British people to put an end once and for all to Britain's sordid record of collaboration with apartheid South Africa.

It was no coincidence that as demonstrators gathered in Hyde Park news was received that the ANC office in London had been bombed.



Al Haji Yusuff Maitama-Sule at the Opening Session

South Africa's escalating pattern of international terrorism had reached beyond the borders of Africa into the heart of London.

The message of the Conference, the Demonstration and the whole new movement of solidarity in Britain was summed up most clearly by Archbishop Trevor Huddleston who proudly wore his Isitwalandwe medal as he led the demonstration:

"First: to assert once again and unequivocally that we are in the last phase of the conflict between those who believe in human dignity and the rights of man and those who support and sustain a racist ideology which totally denies these things.

"Secondly: to warn Britain and the

West that their choice at this moment will be decisive in terms of our relationship with the great continents of Africa and Asia. A choice against an effective sanction policy is a choice for 'apartheid' and can be nothing else.

"Thirdly: to show that if the West cares about peace in our world, it must act now to root out the cancer of racism represented in its most extreme form by apartheid and that such action is within our competence ...

"If we choose rightly, and if we choose now, we can be certain that we shall be contributing to a future for our world in which justice and peace will be infinitely more secure. But we cannot avoid the choice.

"And we dare not delay to make it."

BOOK REVIEW — ROBBEN ISLAND AN "ISLAND IN CHAINS"

Island in Chains, Ten years on Robben Island by Prisoner 885/63; as told by Indres Naidoo to Albie Sachs, Penguin Books, London 1982. (Also distributed by the International Defence and Aid Fund, 104 Newgate Street, London EC1 7AP)

For those of us emersed in the struggle for the liberation of Southern Africa, the fortitude and example set by the political prisoners of the apartheid regime, serve as a constant inspiration and spur to greater efforts. At last here is a book which chronicles the day to day struggles of these imprisoned patriots, and exposes the brutal and inhuman treatment they undergo on Robben Island and other maximum security prisons in South Africa. 'Island in Chains' tells the story of Prisoner 885/63 who served 10 years on the Island for his membership of the People's Army Umkhonto we Sizwe.

The story begins in 1963, two years after the decision to wage armed struggle. The opening chapters which deal with the arrest and interrogation of Indres Naidoo and his comrades, are a sober reminder of the savagery of the racist South African state in its efforts to crush the militants of the revolutionary struggle. Faced by his interrogators, Naidoo recalls:

"My arms were stretched out at my sides and I was held down from behind, and then I saw the main lead running to a dry cell battery, a very crude-looking instrument, just a battery and wires, and as they attached the lead to the battery I felt a dreadful shock pass into my body. My whole being seemed to be in shock — I learned afterwards that it was only for a few seconds, but at the time it seemed like five or ten minutes." (p.23)

More frightening still for the reader is the knowledge that in the last two decades, the South African security police have 'perfected' their torture techniques, and



since 1963, 54 people have been murdered in detention.

Arriving on the Island, Prisoner 885/63 and his comrades were met by shouting warders. Their greeting: 'Dis die Eiland — this is the Island. Hier julle gaan vrek — here you will die'. Adapting to survival on the Island is a long process and the book describes the problems facing the prisoner in learning to deal with the violence of this desolate prison camp where life mirrors the worst excesses of apartheid brutality and oppression. Hardening to the conditions of prison 'work' is shown to be a gruelling ordeal. The reader, aided by a clear and simply worded narrative, is able to get some grasp of the kind of suffering involved in toiling in the Island quarries:

"My whole shoulder was collapsing on me, my back was weakening, I had cuts on my arms and feet from the stone debris, the blood on them was mixed with sand, sweat and powder." (p.77)



The violence that is daily routine is described not only by the accounts of brutality of the warders which fill the book, but also in the relations between common-law prisoners organised into gangs such as 'Desperadoes' and the 'Big Five'. The narrator's clear insight into the behaviour of the groupings that constitute prison society is one based on the political consciousness associated with membership of the ANC.

Indeed, the most inspiring feature of the book is the spirit and comradeship displayed by the 'ANC prisoners'. Their unity and determination is depicted most clearly through the constant struggles they wage. The book deals with their hunger strikes in protest against their treatment and it also contains the less dramatic but equally important actions they undertook. Their fight to get handkerchiefs for example, is one such story recounted: "I followed the warder to the office. On the table was a coarse piece of red cloth, the result of two weeks campaigning". (p.151)

The mentality of the prison authorities is treated with humour. Prisoner 885/63 goes on to recall:

"...at times they could be seen hanging out to dry: patches of coarse bright red material lodged between the bars of every cell, rows and rows of them stretching throughout the prison. The authorities accused us of flying the Red Flag and recalled every one of the red hankies, giving us soft khaki ones instead, and at last we could blow our noses in peace." (p.152)

Although separated from the other prisoners, the ANC leaders like Mandela, Sisulu, Mbeki, as well as Ja Toivo of SWAPO, are shown to be the guiding light for all the ANC cadres, continuing to exercise their leadership role, a constant source of support to the militants of their movements. Their stature and strength is movingly portrayed in the book.

The most important message that 'Island in Chains' brings to the reader is the value of the international campaign to free South African and Namibian political prisoners:

"Our morale was greatly boosted to know that we were not being forgotten; that the names of our leaders, like comrades Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki and Ahmed Kathrada, as well as comrade Toivo Ja Toivo of SWAPO, were known and honoured throughout the world." (p.189)

The book also shows how these campaigns have led to an amelioration in conditions for the political prisoners.

'Island in Chains' is an extremely readable book, its story told with warmth, sensitivity and compassion. It is highly recommended to SECHABA readers not only as a literary work but perhaps more importantly as a weapon to be used to lift the campaign for the release of all political prisoners to a new and more effective level.

H.R.



STOP PRESS... U.N. ACTION

On 7th April 1982 the Appeal Division of the Supreme Court, Bloemfontein confirmed the death sentences imposed on three ANC freedom fighters Johnson Lubisi, Naphtali Manana and Petrus Mashigo.

Within hours the ANC mission to the United Nations moved into action to secure the mobilization of the international community to save the lives of these three young patriots.

An immediate appeal was made to the UN Special Committee against Apartheid and its Acting Chairman, Vladimir A. Kravets (Ukraine) issued a statement on behalf of the Special Committee the same day appealing "to all governments and organisations to take urgent measures to stop the imminent execution of these young South African patriots".

The following day 8th April the National Executive Committee, of the ANC, recalling the Statement issued by the President of the UN Security Council on 5th February expressing concern at the death sentences, formally requested a meeting of the UN Security Council.

The African members of the Security Council, Togo, Uganda and Zaire, responding positively to the ANC's request moved into action and on the afternoon of 8th April it was announced that emergency consultations would take place amongst members of the Security Council the following morning April 9th, Good Friday.

These consultations in turn led to agreement that the UN Security Council should formally convene on the afternoon of Good Friday.

This was the background to the unprecedented meeting of the Security Council. It was called to order by the President of the Council Kamanda wa Kamanda, Zaire's Permanent Representative of the UN at 4.31pm and Ambassador Olara Otunnu of Uganda introduced the Resolution on behalf of the three African members, Uganda, Togo and Zaire. Within minutes Resolution 503 (1982) had been unanimously adopted.

This decision of the Security Council is without precedent. Never before has the Security Council met formally and adopted a Resolution in an effort to stop the execution of ANC freedom fighters.

The resolution called upon "the South African authorities to commute the death sentences" and also urged "all states and organisations ... to take urgent measures ... to save the lives of these three young men".

Many governments as well as numerous organisations responded promptly to this appeal and that from the Secretary General of the ANC for international action.

* * * * *

On 7th April the 7 African members of the World Medical Association (WMA) announced their withdrawal from the international doctors organisation. This decision was a direct response to the admission of the racist Medical Association of South Africa and the so-called Transkei Medical Association to the WMA at its Assembly in September 1981.

The announcement was made by Dr O.O. Adekunle of the Nigerian Medical Association in New York to a meeting of the UN Special Committee against Apartheid where he was leading a delegation from four African Medical Associations, Nigeria, Ghana, Tunisia and Liberia.

In January 1982 the World Health Organisation took the unprecedented step of terminating the non-governmental consultative status of the WMA and severed all relations with it.

The WMA's action to admit South Africa and the so-called Transkei was in the face of the persistent and implacable opposition of African and non-aligned members of the WMA as well as others including the British Medical Association. However the undemocratic structures of the WMA means that it is controlled by the American Medical Association and a handful of other reactionary Medical Associations such as

Taiwan, "Free Cuba", El Salvador, and Chile. The USA alone has 35 votes compared with 11 votes for the entire African and Asian regions. Even all the European Associations have only 30 votes.

The African Group have therefore decided to lead a mass withdrawal from the World Medical Association in a dramatic

condemnation of the admission of South Africa and to create the basis for a new and democratic international body.

Already a meeting has been convened for August 1982 to discuss the founding of a Confederation of African Associations and Societies with nearly 20 countries expressing interest in participating.

STOP APARTHEID EXECUTIONS



NAPHTHALI MANANA



JOHNSON LUBISI



PETRUS MASHIGO



ANTHONY TSOTSOBE



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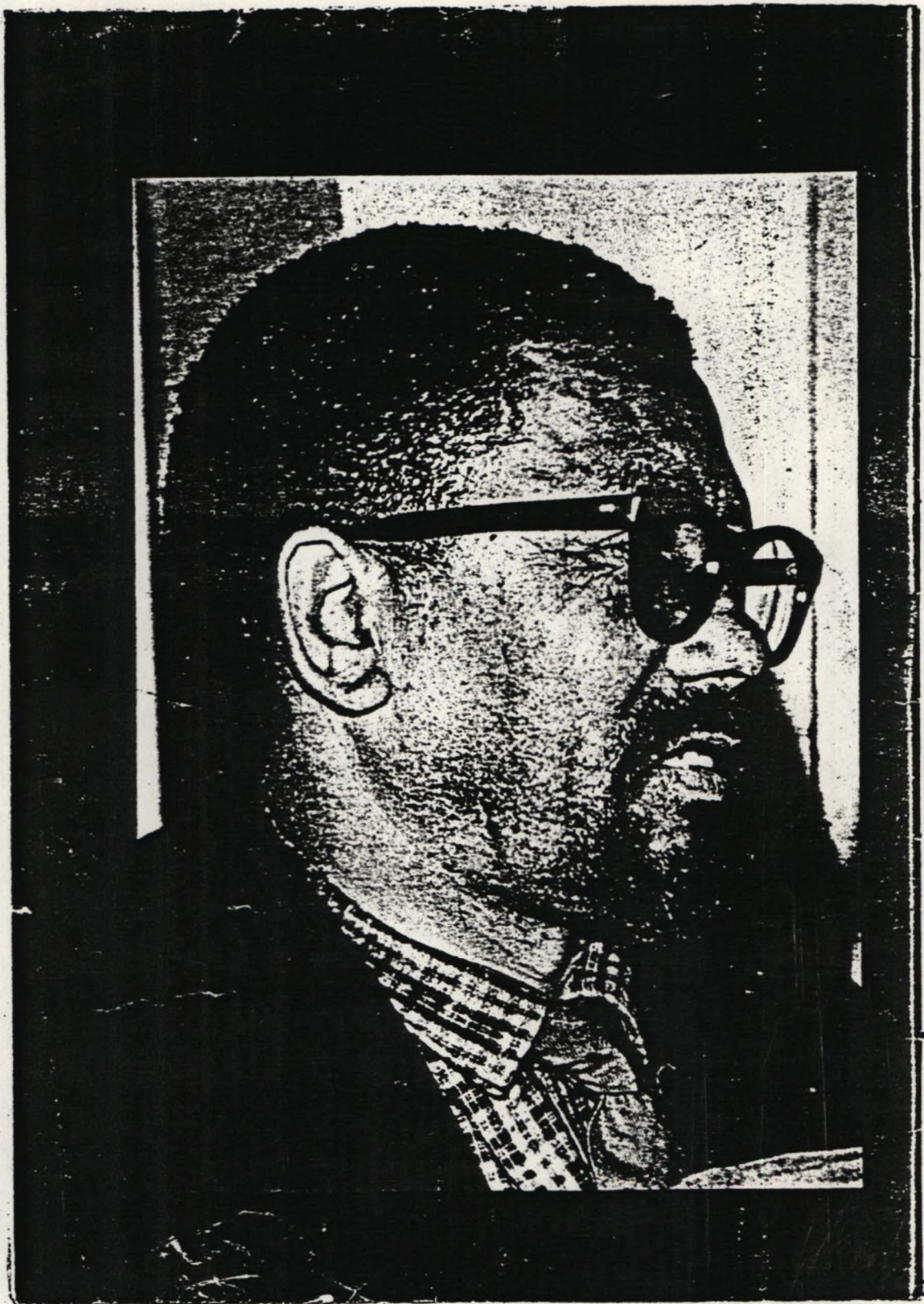
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