



ANC: The writing is on the wall

South Africa's Hope

1987 celebrates a 75-year record of struggle for self-determination by the African National Congress (ANC). Founded in 1912, the ANC was the first indigenous political organisation of resistance to colonial conquest on the African continent; it is one of the ironies of South African history that here, where political-ly organised national resistance first began, liberation has yet to be won. Yet the long history of the movement places it today in a unique position from which to challenge an increasingly polarised minority white regime. Mature and consolidated, with a broad popular base, the ANC looks, in 1987 more than ever, like the next government of a free, democratic, non-racial South Africa. Below Joanna Coakley presents a factsheet on the history of the ANC and a diary of forthcoming events.

1910 Act of Union between the British and the Boers
1912 The ANC is formed by black professionals and intellectuals, together with the chiefs of the main tribal groupings, to continue the 250 year struggle against conquest. Overwhelming British milit-

ary superiority means that armed struggle has to be replaced by political and cultural struggle.

1913 The Native Land Act leaves Africans only 13% of the total land mass while retaining 87% exclusively for whites. This, and the threatened introduction of pass laws for women, becomes the focus of ANC activity.

1921 Formation of the South African Communist Party. This joins the issue of class to that of race and begins a long association between the party and the ANC.

1940-48 Increase in union activity and radical politics. Peaceful compliance gives way to a more militant stance. Foundation of the ANC Women's League and Youth League. Largest ever strike called by miners.

1948 National Party takes power on a ticket of anti-communism and apartheid. White minority power is entrenched and apartheid institutionalised.

1950 Suppression of Communism Act closes down all avenues of political protest. Defiance of Unjust Laws campaign brings together the ANC and the Indian and coloured congresses.

1953 ANC adopts the People's Charter. This remains today the blueprint for a new order in South Africa.

1956 Women's March in Pretoria. 20,000 women converge on the union building.

1960 Sharpeville Massacre. 69 people on a peaceful anti-pass law demonstration shot dead and 178 wounded. ANC goes underground.

1961 Acts of sabotage organised against government installations. Emergence of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the ANC.

1962 ANC leaders, including Nelson Mandela, captured and, after a four year trial, sentenced to life imprisonment. Rivonia Trials used by Mandela as a platform for the ANC.

1972-73 Student and trade union organisations formed. Boycotts and strike actions. Black consciousness movement grows.

1976 Soweto massacre. 900 schoolchildren killed in the biggest protest ever. Disturbances spread nationally.

1984 Beginning of the present unrest. The 1980s have seen a tremendous upsurge of black resistance, with a state of emergency being declared by the regime in 1986. The government is being engaged on all fronts - through the trade unions, with the women's campaign and the school boycotts, in religious organisations, in the rural areas, the Bantustans and the townships - under the ANC umbrella. If their call to isolate South Africa by sanctions succeeds, and is coupled with internal efforts to create instability and insecurity, un-governability will, they assert, finally give way to people's power. ●

Isolating Apartheid

It has long been argued that economic sanctions and disinvestment would seriously damage the present regime in South Africa. Yet Margaret Thatcher insists that 'trade and economic sanctions would only serve to entrench apartheid, increase the risk of bloodshed and inflict severe hardship on black South Africans without bringing a settlement any closer'.

British trade unions are in the forefront of the campaign for the imposition of sanctions and for disinvestment. At the Transport and General Workers' Union conference general secretary Ron Todd called for mandatory sanctions, but also encouraged his members to take the matter into their own hands.

The June conference of the General Municipal & Boilermakers Union passed a special motion condemning Britain's disgraceful sabotaging of international efforts to isolate South Africa economically, and calling for a trade union ban on South African gold and fruit products.

South Africa's own biggest labour federation, COSATU, has adopted a new strong stand on economic pressure for political change and called for an international embargo on foreign loans. ●

A Symbol Of Resistance

The ANC emblem has been re-designed for the 75th anniversary of the movement and now represents in symbolic form its history and central tenets. It incorporates the ANC flag, coloured black for the people, green for the fertility of the earth and yellow for the mineral wealth beneath. The device of the wheel dates from the drawing-up of the Freedom Charter in 1955, with the four spokes representing the four main national groupings; and its motion, rolling to freedom, symbolises the ANC's goal of a united people developing a new South African nationhood in the process. The fist signifies a fighting people. The spear and shield recall earlier wars of



resistance, a tradition continued into the present by Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the people's army founded in 1961. ●

tain rent and consumer boycotts, and protect communities from state vigilantes.

The ANC Women's League, established in 1943, was a key element in building the ANC as a mass-based popular movement in the 1940s and 1950s and, as the largest organisation in the Federation of South African Women (FSAW), led the campaign against the imposition of passes on African women, which reached its high point in the march of 20,000 women on Pretoria on August 9 1956, a day commemorated ever since inside and outside the country as South African Women's Day.

The FSAW drew up a women's charter, some of whose clauses were incorporated into the Freedom Charter. When the ANC was banned in 1960 it was impossible for the Women's League to organise openly. Some of its leading members were detained, banned or forced into exile. Within the external mission of the ANC the women's section continued to campaign against apartheid and for the emancipation of South African women.

The mass democratic women's organisations inside South Africa, which have rebuilt themselves over the last decade, share many of the same aspirations. Both look forward to what the ANC president in his address to the South African nation on January 8 1987 called: 'one of the greatest prizes of the democratic revolution... the unshackling of the women'. ●

Calendar Of Events

Sunday August 9: South African Women's Day All day festival in Finsbury Park, London N4, 11am onwards, with Angela Davis from the USA, ANC Women's Committee members from Africa. Creche, stalls, live music, food, bar, videos, entertainment. Admission £2. Details 01 881 3000 x3286.

Wednesday August 26: Namibia Day Anniversary of the launch of SWAPO's armed liberation struggle in 1960.

Monday 7 - Sunday September 13: Satis Week of Action Events around the country to draw attention to increasing apartheid repression. Key dates are:

Thursday September 10: Save the Sharpeville Six Date of the appeal by Theresa Ramashamola and her five companions against their death sentences in South Africa.

Saturday September 12: Tenth anniversary of the murder in detention of Steve Biko Memorial service in London on Sunday September 13, Westminster Cathedral Conference Centre, Morpeth Terrace, SW1, followed by a vigil for the Sharpeville Six. For full details contact Clive Nelson at AAM. Tel: 01 387 7966.

Friday September 11: Local authority seminar on Namibia, Edinburgh Hosted by Edinburgh district council for the national steering committee on local authority action against

apartheid. Details from Mick Flynn at AAM. Tel: 01 387 7966.

Saturday September 10: Stop apartheid coal conference, Sheffield Organised by the AAM and the National Union of Mineworkers to press for sanctions against South African coal imports. Details from Colin Adkins at AAM. Tel: 01 387 7966.

Saturday October 24: AAM national demonstration for sanctions, London. Assemble 12 noon Embankment. March to Hyde Park for 3pm rally. Chief speaker: Sam Nujoma, President of SWAPO. Details 01 387 7966. Wales AAM support demo in Cardiff, contact 0222 499769 for details.

November 3 'Apartheid - I won't buy it' The Communist Party's contribution to the boycott.



'Sanction Pledge' signatures will be presented to MPs at a lobby of parliament. Details from Dave Cook. Tel: 01 251 4406.

Saturday 7 - Saturday November 14: International Week of Action on Shell Special emphasis on the role of local authorities in the shell boycott, with disinvestment appeal from mayors around the world. ●

Maria Lauret is writing a book on contemporary political women writers.

Cora Kaplan writes on culture and feminism.

Paul Allen is a broadcaster and playwright.

Joyce McMillan is a freelance journalist and critic based in Edinburgh.

Nigel Billen is editor of *The List*. **Richard Eyre** takes over as director of the National Theatre next month.

David Edgar is a playwright and a member of *Marxism Today's* editorial board. His recent play, *That Summer*, is running at the Hampstead Theatre in London.

Frances Rose is a freelance journalist based in Glasgow. **Andy Pollak** is co-author of a recent biography of Ian Paisley and a journalist on *The Irish Times*.

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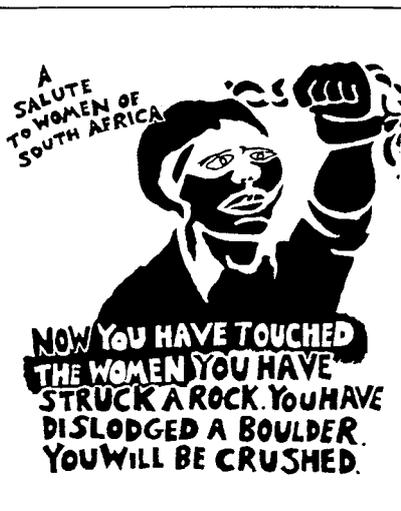
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Peter Glotz was until recently general secretary of the German SPD.

Donald Sassoon is the author of *Contemporary Italy* (Longman) and is currently working on a book on the European Left for IB Taurus.

Robin Cook is Labour MP for Livingston. He has recently been elected to the Shadow Cabinet.

Marge Piercy is a novelist.



The Long Road To Pretoria

For 75 years the African National Congress has led the struggle for national liberation in South Africa, and women repressed and exploited by apartheid, have made an important contribution to its work. Today women defy the presence of troops in the townships to demonstrate against continuing detentions, and stage strikes in protest at sexual harassment and the way the police ignore the activities of rapists, yet arrest children; they build up alternative structures in women's committees and street committees, to sus-