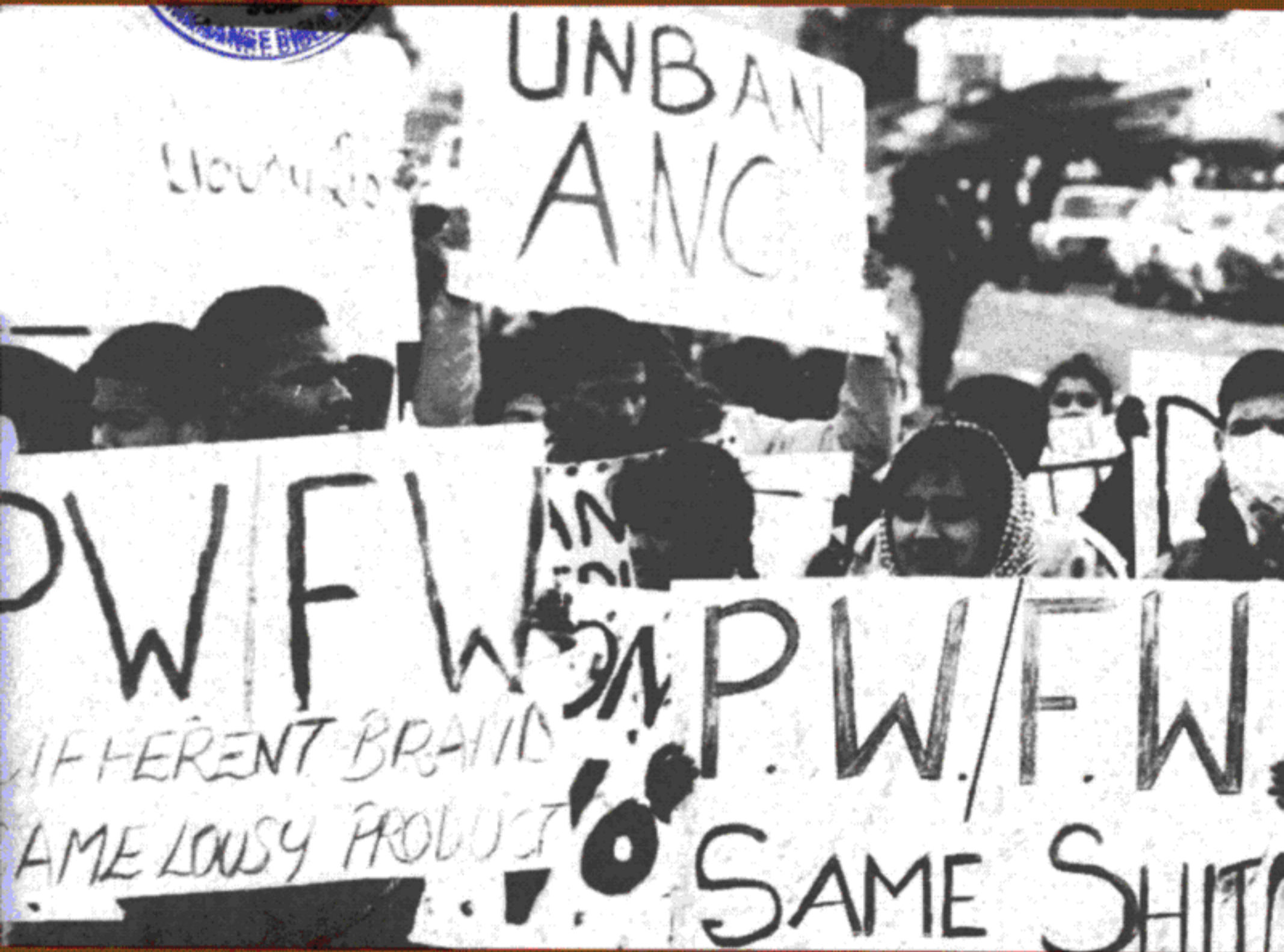


OCTOBER 1989



SECHABA

official organ of the african
national congress south africa



DEFIANCE CAMPAIGN

OCTOBER 1989

ISSN:0037-0509

SECHABA

Volume 23 No 10

CONTENTS:

EDITORIAL

The Flood of Resistance 1

OAU HARARE DECLARATION 2

SWAPO STATEMENT 6

ELECTIONS NEITHER FREE NOR FAIR
From the Namibia Support Committee 9

SOUTH AFRICA'S DEBT CRISIS
AAM—ELTSA background paper 14

ANC INTERNATIONAL
International Mayors—Canada—Denmark 19

THE APARTHEID STATE AND THE CHURCHES
Michael Lapsley speaks to Eric Singh 20

A NEW ROLE FOR SPORTS ORGANISATIONS
By Alan Player 23

PRISON REMEMBERED
Interview with Helene Passtoors 26

LETTER TO THE EDITOR 29

BOOK REVIEW 30

FILM REVIEW 31

Graphic design by Hylton Alcock and Khwezi Kadalie

Pictures on pages 8, 10 and 12 from the Namibia Communications Centre

LISTEN TO RADIO FREEDOM

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

Radio Lusaka

Daily 7.00 pm:
Wednesday 10.15-10.45 pm:
Thursday 9.30-10.00 pm:
Friday 10.15-10.45 pm:
Short wave 31mb 9505 KHz
Sunday 8.00-8.45 am:
Short wave 25mb 11880 KHz

Radio Luanda

Monday-Saturday 7.30 pm:
Sunday 8.30 pm:
Short wave 31mb 9535 KHz
and 25 mb

Radio Madagascar

Monday-Saturday 7.00-9.00 pm:
Sunday 7.00-8.00 pm:
Short wave 49mb 6135 KHz

Radio Ethiopia

Daily, 9.30-10.00 pm:
Short wave 31mb 9595 KHz

Radio Tanzania

Monday Wednesday Friday 8.15 pm:
Tuesday Thursday Saturday 6.15 am:
Short wave 31mb 9750 KHz

The above are South African times

EDITORIAL

THE FLOOD OF RESISTANCE

Never before has South Africa seen anything like the great Defiance Campaign of 1989. With revolutionary determination and a creative revolutionary vision, people everywhere in the country have risen to sweep repressive laws aside.

Indian and Coloured voters demonstrate their contempt for the futile 'parliaments' of the apartheid regime. Hospital patients, mineworkers, bathers on the beaches, all assert their equal right to the services and facilities of life. Students march for equal education and against overcrowding in Black schools; teachers in schools and universities demonstrate in support of the students. People restricted by the regime refuse to accept their restrictions any longer, while others declare that banned organisations have been unbanned by the people.

Those who defy the state include religious leaders and their congregations. Doctors, and even a lieutenant of police, have refused to keep silent about police brutality. Some White parents refuse to register the birth of their new babies, since registration would imply recognition of the racist Population Registration Act. The Mass Democratic Movement, the churches and the Mayor of Cape Town all supported a huge march and rally, where the flags of the ANC and the UDF were unfurled in the centre of the city, and where speakers on the platform cried defiance aloud.

There is not the space here to describe the diversity and variety, the tremendous multiplicity, of mass action that has been taking place.

Where has it all come from?

It has been growing for a long time. Our people have a tradition of determined and courageous resistance over the years and over the generations. The struggle of the present draws on struggles of the past.

In the first Defiance Campaign, led by the Congress movement in 1952, thousands defied the segregation laws and filled the prisons. This was a forebear of present action, but not by any means the only one. The people's positive demands at Kliptown in 1955 went to form the Freedom Charter, which still guides us today. Stayaways, boycotts, pass-burnings in the past made threads of history that we are still unwinding.

The strength of the organised mineworkers goes back a long way in struggle, through the strike of 1987 to the strike of 1946. 1946 was also the year of the Passive Resistance Campaign the Indian Congress led against Smuts' Ghetto Act — for the Indian Congress has a history of struggle going back almost to the beginning of the century. The Port Elizabeth Community Organisation, formed just over ten years ago, was the first of the community organisations which have since become an important part of the struggle for freedom.

The fight against inferior education began in the 1950s, with the ANC boycott of Bantu Education. It was expressed in Soweto in the uprising of 1976, and again in the Cape in 1980. Today, in the Cape, students are in the forefront of resistance.

No campaign takes place in isolation, and no revolutionary action is ever lost to history. The campaigns of past years were streams that ran into each other and then into the river.

Now that river is a flood that overflows its banks. The regime can't contain this flood, can't put up dams against it, because it is spreading everywhere.

DECLARATION OF THE OAU AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON SOUTHERN AFRICA ON THE QUESTION OF SOUTH AFRICA

I PREAMBLE

1.0 The people of Africa, singly, collectively and acting through the OAU, are engaged in serious efforts to establish peace throughout the continent by ending all conflicts through negotiations based on the principle of justice and peace for all.

2.0 We reaffirm our conviction, which history confirms, that where colonial, racial and apartheid domination exist, there can neither be peace nor justice.

3.0 Accordingly, we reiterate that while the apartheid system in South Africa persists, the peoples of our continent as a whole cannot achieve the fundamental objectives of justice, human dignity and peace which are both crucial in themselves and fundamental to the stability and development of Africa.

4.0 With regard to the region of Southern Africa, the entire continent is vitally interested that the processes, in which it is involved, leading to the complete and genuine independence of Namibia, as well as peace in Angola and Mozambique, should succeed in the shortest possible time. Equally, Africa is deeply concerned that the destabilisation by South Africa of all the countries in the region, whether through direct aggression, sponsorship of surrogates, economic subversion and other means, should end immediately.

5.0 We recognise the reality that permanent peace and stability in Southern Africa can only be achieved when the system of apartheid in South Africa has been liquidated and South Africa transformed into a united, democratic and non-racial country. We therefore reiterate that all the necessary measures should be adopted

now, to bring a speedy end to the apartheid system, in the interest of all the people of Southern Africa, our continent and the world at large.

6.0 We believe that, as a result of the liberation struggle and international pressure against apartheid, as well as global efforts to liquidate regional conflicts, possibilities exist for further movement towards the resolution of the problems facing the people of South Africa. For these possibilities to lead to fundamental change in South Africa, the Pretoria regime must abandon its abhorrent concepts and practices of racial domination and its record of failure to honour agreements, all of which have already resulted in the loss of so many lives and the destruction of much property in the countries of Southern Africa.

7.0 We reaffirm our recognition of the right of all peoples, including those of South Africa, to determine their own destiny, and to work out for themselves the institutions and the system of government under which they will, by general consent, live and work together to build a harmonious society. The Organisation of African Unity remains committed to do everything possible and necessary to assist the people of South Africa, in such ways as the representatives of the oppressed may determine, to achieve this objective. We are certain that, arising from its duty to help end the criminal apartheid system, the rest of the world community is ready to extend similar assistance to the people of South Africa.

8.0 We make these commitments because we believe that all people are equal and have equal rights to human dignity and respect, regardless of colour, race, sex or creed. We believe that all men and women have the right and duty to participate in their own government, as equal

members of society. No individual or group of individuals has any right to govern others without their consent. The apartheid system violates all these fundamental and universal principles. Correctly characterised as a crime against humanity, it is responsible for the death of countless numbers of people in South Africa. It has sought to dehumanise entire peoples. It has imposed a brutal war on the whole region of Southern Africa, resulting in untold loss of life, destruction of property and massive displacement of innocent men, women and children. This scourge and affront to humanity must be fought and eradicated in its totality.

9.0 We have therefore supported and continue to support all those in South Africa who pursue this noble objective through political, armed and other forms of struggle. We believe this to be our duty, carried out in the interests of all humanity.

10.0 While extending this support to those who strive for a non-racial and democratic society in South Africa, a point on which no compromise is possible, we have repeatedly expressed our preference for a solution arrived at by peaceful means. We know that the majority of the people of South Africa and their liberation movement, who have been compelled to take up arms, have also upheld this position for many decades and continue to do so.

11.0 The positions contained in this Declaration are consistent with and are a continuation of those elaborated in the Lusaka Manifesto two decades ago. They take into account the changes that have taken place in Southern Africa since that Manifesto was adopted by the OAU and the rest of the international community. They constitute a new challenge to the Pretoria regime to join in the noble effort to end the apartheid system, an objective to which the OAU has been committed from its very birth.

12.0 Consequently, we shall continue to do everything in our power to help intensify the liberation struggle and international pressure against the system of apartheid until this system

is ended and South Africa is transformed into a united, democratic and non-racial country, with justice and security for all its citizens.

13.0 In keeping with this solemn resolve, and responding directly to the wishes of the representatives of the majority of the people of South Africa, we publicly pledge ourselves to the positions contained hereunder. We are convinced that their implementation will lead to a speedy end of the apartheid system and therefore the opening of a new dawn of peace for all the peoples of Africa, in which racism, colonial domination and White minority rule on our continent would be abolished for ever.

II STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

14.0 We believe that a conjuncture of circumstances exists which, if there is a demonstrable readiness on the part of the Pretoria regime to engage in negotiations genuinely and seriously, could create the possibility to end apartheid through negotiations. Such an eventuality would be an expression of the long-standing preference of the majority of the people of South Africa to arrive at a political settlement.

15.0 We would therefore encourage the people of South Africa, as part of their overall struggle, to get together to negotiate an end to the apartheid system and agree on all the measures that are necessary to transform their country into a non-racial democracy. We support the position held by the majority of the people of South Africa that these objectives, and not the amendment or reform of the apartheid system, should be the aims of the negotiations.

16.0 We are at one with them that the outcome of such a process should be a new constitutional order based on the following principles, among others:

16.1 South Africa shall become a united, democratic and non-racial state.

16.2 All its people shall enjoy common and

equal citizenship and nationality, regardless of race, colour, sex or creed.

16.3 All its people shall have the right to participate in the government and administration of the country on the basis of a universal suffrage, exercised through one person one vote, under a common voters' roll.

16.4 All shall have the right to form and join any political party of their choice, provided that this is not in furtherance of racism.

16.5 All shall enjoy universally recognised human rights, freedoms and civil liberties, protected under an entrenched Bill of Rights.

16.6 South Africa shall have a new legal system which shall guarantee equality of all before the law.

16.7 South Africa shall have an independent and non-racial judiciary.

16.8 There shall be created an economic order which shall promote and advance the well-being of all South Africans.

16.9 A democratic South Africa shall respect the rights, sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries and pursue a policy of peace, friendship, and mutually beneficial co-operation with all peoples.

17.0 We believe that agreement on the above principles shall constitute the foundation for an internationally acceptable solution which shall enable South Africa to take its rightful place as an equal partner among the African and world community of nations.

III CLIMATE FOR NEGOTIATIONS

18.0 Together with the rest of the world, we believe that it is essential, before any negotiations can take place, that the necessary climate for negotiations be created. The apartheid regime has the urgent responsibility to respond positively to this universally acclaimed demand and thus create this climate.

19.0 Accordingly, the present regime should, at

the very least:

19.1 Release all political prisoners and detainees unconditionally and refrain from imposing any restrictions on them;

19.2 Lift all bans and restrictions on all proscribed and restricted organisations and persons;

19.3 Remove all troops from the townships;

19.4 End the state of emergency and repeal all legislation, such as, and including the Internal Security Act, designed to circumscribe political activity; and,

19.5 Cease all political trials and political executions.

20.0 These measures are necessary to produce the conditions in which free political discussion can take place — an essential condition to ensure that the people themselves participate in the process of remaking their country. The measures listed above should therefore precede negotiations.

IV GUIDELINES TO THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATION

21.0 We support the view of the South African liberation movement that, upon the creation of this climate, the process of negotiations should commence along the following lines:

21.1 Discussions should take place between the liberation movement and the South African regime to achieve the suspension of hostilities on both sides by agreeing to a mutually binding ceasefire.

21.2 Negotiations should then proceed to establish the basis for the adoption of a new Constitution by agreeing on, among others, the Principles enunciated above.

21.3 Having agreed on these principles, the parties should then negotiate the necessary mechanism for drawing up the new Constitution.

21.4 The parties shall define and agree on the role to be played by the international communi-

ty in ensuring a successful transition to a democratic order.

21.5 The parties shall agree on the formation of an interim government to supervise the process of the drawing up and adoption of a new constitution; govern and administer the country, as well as effect the transition to a democratic order including the holding of elections.

21.6 After the adoption of the new Constitution, all armed hostilities will be deemed to have formally terminated.

21.7 For its part, the international community would lift the sanctions that have been imposed against apartheid South Africa.

22.0 The new South Africa shall qualify for membership of the Organisation of African Unity.

V PROGRAMME OF ACTION

23.0 In pursuance of the objectives stated in this document, the Organisation of African Unity hereby commits itself to:

23.1 Inform governments and inter-governmental organisations throughout the world, including the Non-Aligned Movement, the United Nations General Assembly, the Security Council, the Commonwealth and others of these perspectives, and solicit their support.

23.2 Mandate the OAU Ad-Hoc Committee on Southern Africa, acting as the representative of the OAU and assisted by the Frontline States, to remain seized of the issue of a political resolution of the South African question.

23.3 Step up all-round support for the South African liberation movement, and campaign in the rest of the world in pursuance of this objective.

23.4 Intensify the campaign for mandatory and comprehensive sanctions against apartheid South Africa: in this regard, immediately mobilise against the rescheduling of Pretoria's foreign debt; work for the imposition of a mandatory oil embargo and the full observance by all countries of the arms embargo.

23.5 Ensure that the African continent does not relax existing measures for the total isolation of apartheid South Africa.

23.6 Continue to monitor the situation in Namibia and extend all necessary support to SWAPO in its struggle for a genuinely independent Namibia.

23.7 Extend such assistance as the Governments of Angola and Mozambique may request in order to secure peace for their peoples; and

23.8 Render all possible assistance to the Frontline States to enable them to withstand Pretoria's campaign of aggression and destabilisation and enable them to continue to give their all-round support to the people of Namibia and South Africa.

24.0 We appeal to all people of goodwill throughout the world to support this Programme of Action as a necessary measure to secure the earliest liquidation of the apartheid system and the transformation of South Africa into a united, democratic and non-racial country.

Harare, Zimbabwe, August 21st 1989

SWAPO PRESS STATEMENT

President Nujoma of SWAPO made this statement at a press conference in London on August 9th 1989.

Both the registration of voters and the election campaign have been going on for more than a month now. Our movement, SWAPO, has established a strong organisational presence throughout the country and has widely disseminated its policy position as contained in its election manifesto. The masses of our people are responding positively to our election manifesto. Even the business community, which has in the past taken a rather sceptical view of SWAPO's intentions, has reacted with an impressive degree of understanding concerning our economic policy position.

Our people are happy for the historic opportunity to exercise their long-denied right to self-determination and independence. They are, therefore, pouring forth throughout the country in their tens of thousands to register for the November elections.

It is important, however, to inform you that, notwithstanding our people's burning desire to see United Nations Security Council Resolution 435 being implemented without disruption, the prospects for a genuinely free and fair transitional process to Namibia's independence hangs in the balance. The process is facing many disturbing difficulties.

Intimidation by murder

To begin with, there is a campaign of intimidation by the notorious Koevoet paramilitary killer unit. This campaign is going on without abatement, especially in the remote rural areas of Namibia. Koevoet and other South African security agents are driving around the Namibian countryside in the dreaded Casspir armoured troop carriers. They go from village to village, and sometimes from house to house, asking for the whereabouts of Namibians who have just

returned from exile. They harass and intimidate the population. Of late, they are acting more and more with the desperation of the doomed, as the election campaign moves into a full gear, with SWAPO occupying the strategic political high ground.

For example, last week, on August 2nd, Koevoet elements shot and killed a SWAPO election official, Joseph Petrus, aged 34, in the Okavango area in the north-eastern part of Namibia. On July 31st, a group of DTA and Koevoet elements attacked SWAPO supporters at the Ongwediva reception centre, in the northern part of the country, stabbing Mrs Dorothea Shinana, a recent returnee to Namibia from exile. On August 7th, Koevoet elements abducted W Kaveshikuru, recently returned from exile, and a SWAPO election campaign officer in Kaokoveld, in the north-western corner of Namibia.

Further afield from Kaokoveld, in the Caprivi strip, six Koevoet and DTA elements armed with firearms laid an ambush and attempted to abduct Reinhold Matongo, a SWAPO driver, but he narrowly managed to escape.

Still more, on August 7th, a White Koevoet officer made an assassination attempt on the life of Jerry Ekandjo, Deputy Head of Voters' Registration at the SWAPO Election Campaign Headquarters in Windhoek. Other targets in this assassination attempt were Otniel Kazombiaze, Head of the Okakarara SWAPO election campaign centre, and Gerson Kamaazei, a SWAPO driver. The three SWAPO activists' car was fired upon three times as they were carrying on their campaign activity in the north-central town of Okakarara.

These are only a few examples of the generalised campaign of intimidation being conducted by Koevoet and other South African terror agents.

UN resolutions not observed

It is highly regrettable, however, that the United Nations Special Representative is failing to stop such acts of intimidation in Namibia. In its Resolution 632 of February 16th 1989, which authorised the implementation of Resolution 435, the Security Council specifically called upon South Africa to dismantle and dismiss the Koevoet paramilitary troops. But today, Koevoet makes up 70% of the police force in northern Namibia, and has at its disposal more than 400 Casspir armoured troop carriers. These facts are known by the Secretary-General and his Special Representative, as well as by all the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. The conspiracy of silence on this violation of a key provision of the implementation is in itself a proof that the prospects for a free and fair election in Namibia are indeed hanging in the balance.

Besides acts of intimidation, there is yet another serious problem that is affecting the implementation process; and this is the massive registration of foreign nationals, namely White South Africans, mercenaries and UNITA bandits from Angola.

South Africa rigs the system

This came about as a result of a deliberate loophole in the Voters' Registration Proclamation, which South Africa drafted and the United Nations approved. According to this unfair law, all South Africans who have lived in Namibia as seconded civil servants, soldiers, police personnel and their children, who, by virtue of historical accident, happened to be born in Namibia, are all free to cross the border into Namibia and vote. Consequently, the right-wing elements in South Africa are now busy mobilising buses, car pools and train tickets to transport thousands of South Africans to the Namibian borders. It is estimated that up to 150 000 South Africans and their mercenaries would probably register to vote in an attempt to deny SWAPO a two-thirds majority.

Also for this purpose, South Africa has set up

permanent voters' registration centres on the border of South Africa and Namibia at Ariamsvlei and Noordoewer. Reports from these areas indicate that Whites from South Africa are indeed crossing the border daily in big numbers to register.

The same pattern of border crossing for registration is taking place in Okavango, where South African police trucks are ferrying people at night from Angola, to come and register during daytime on the Namibian side, and back again at night to Angola after registration. These people are UNITA supporters and will come back to vote for the pro-South African groups in November.

The obvious intention of the South Africans is to inflate the votes for the favoured political groups in Namibia in the hope of tipping the balance against SWAPO. It is a sinister rigging of Namibia's independence elections, which is being conducted with the tacit approval of the international community.

Considering the smallness of Namibia's population, it is not difficult to understand that an influx of foreign voters is bound to influence Namibia's independence election in South Africa's favour. Anticipating this possible loophole for South Africa to rig the Namibian elections, SWAPO submitted to the United Nations Secretary-General a memorandum dated September 26th 1988, stating:

"The UN Secretary-General and his Special Representative should ensure that under no circumstances whatsoever would foreign nationals be permitted to vote in elections for the establishment of a Constituent Assembly ... This prohibition applies, in particular, to the South African civil servants, army, police and those employed in postal services, railways, harbours and so on."

This view was subsequently put forward again by the Political Bureau of SWAPO in our official response to the Draft Registration of Voters' Proclamation, dated May 12th 1989. In this second memorandum to both the United Nations Special Representative and the South African Administrator-General, we sought to condition the participation of the offspring of Namibians

in the elections on their pledges to renounce their loyalty to countries other than Namibia.

Furthermore, the registration of voters is being marred by a host of irregularities. These irregularities range from incorrect filling of registration cards to deliberate negligence by South Africa registration officers. Every day, many people who cannot read and write are coming back with registration cards which are either unsigned by the registering officers, names misspelled or other essential particulars omitted.

In the rural areas of northern Namibia, there are, moreover, long and frustrating queues resulting from the fact that the South African registration officials are deliberately keeping the registration process moving at a snail's pace. It is for instance common to find a situation where up to 300 people will queue up for the whole day in the hope of registering. But the South Africans will arrive late and knock off very early after registering just about 100 out of the 300. This is done to wear out the patience of the people so that after two or three days the potential voters will give up the effort to register.

Demand for justice to be done

All in all, the cumulative effect of intimidations, participation of foreigners in Namibia's independence elections, and the many irregularities taking place in the registration process, is that our country's transitional process is already being rigged. It is not being free and fair.

And apparently the world is eager to have an end to the Namibian independence problem, however unfree and unfair the circumstances under which it is being brought about. Hence, the silence of the world media and many governments about all I have attempted to explain here.

SWAPO would therefore like to appeal to you, people of the media, to expose South Africa's manoeuvres and intrigues to rig the Namibian independence election. You should demand for justice to be done. The United Nations Security Council must see to it that Koevoet is removed from the local police in Namibia and that intimidation is stopped and the registration of White South Africans and UNITA mercenaries is halted. There should be no conspiracy of silence on these issues of justice and fairness.



Exiles return to temporary tent camp near Windhoek, June 1989

NEITHER FREE NOR FAIR ELECTIONS IN NAMIBIA

This article was written for *Sechaba* by a member of the Namibia Support Committee in London.

The latest bid to turn Namibia's independence off its course led recently to a mission for a senior legal advisor, when Mr Paul Szasz was sent to Windhoek to sort out the election fiasco proposed in the draft laws from Pretoria's man in Namibia, Administrator-General Louis Pienaar.

Draft Election (Constituent Assembly) Proclamation No 90, dated July 21st and published a few days later, outlined a whole range of election measures guaranteed to cause distrust, and even making it possible for South Africa to declare any result it wants. It completely undermined the United Nations' attempt to follow its mandate of supervising and controlling the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 435 of 1978, leading to real independence for Namibia.

Faced with this open challenge to the credibility of the United Nations, Secretary-General Dr Perez de Cuellar felt he had no option but to tackle Pretoria head on. At stake was the whole process of 'free and fair elections' as a part of the road to freedom. Mr Szasz is to boost the hand of UN Special Representative Martti Ahtisaari, who so far has met widespread criticism for his

loose and compliant approach to ending Pretoria's brutal and illegal occupation.

Since the very first moments of the peace process, on April 1st, South Africa has been doing its best to sabotage and distort that process, and to snatch away the freedom earned by the Namibian people in their long liberation struggle under their organisation, the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO).

Future constitution at stake

Bitter arguments have arisen over the release of political prisoners and repeal of discriminatory legislation. International observers have complained long and loud over the incorporation of ruthless killers of the paramilitary unit, 'Koevoet,' into the civilian police. But South Africa's latest bid to distort these elections, elections to a national assembly which will determine the constitution of independent Namibia, show Pretoria still as determined as ever not to leave the country.

The result of the elections, for which polling is due in early

November, will determine the future of Namibia. According to the international peace plan, all decisions in the constituent assembly need a two-thirds majority, so every vote will count, as the colonisers struggle to keep control over their former colony.

Necessary prerequisites for normal free and fair democratic elections include:

- ★ that every qualified voter can vote;
- ★ that no one not qualified can vote;
- ★ that the ballot should not only be secret, but should be seen to be secret, for there will be many opportunities to intimidate voters;
- ★ that the vote count should be valid, with a count as soon as possible and at the points where voting takes place, checked by agents of the political parties with a simple procedure that limits the chances of fraud or loss, while minimising the discretion left to officials.

However, Pienaar's system includes the following key elements:

- ★ a voter is identified as the person whose registration card he or she presents;

- ★ fingers of the voter are checked for election dye, which is used for those who have voted;
- ★ the registration card is signed, or marked with a fingerprint;
- ★ the ballot paper is put in a numbered envelope and then into a ballot box, to be transported, 'unopened,' to Windhoek;
- ★ the ballot boxes are then opened three times to allow fingerprint or handwriting experts to disallow votes, which are then discarded, and to enable the votes to be counted, once the ballot papers have been removed from their envelopes.

The United Nations is supposed to be supervising and controlling

the process leading to independence, according to Resolution 435. So far, there has been insufficient international support for a tough line, particularly among members of the Security Council itself, and South Africa has been given a great deal of leeway to run the process in its own future interests.

Pretoria supervises and controls

Many teams of expert observers have gone to Namibia in recent months, to try and help put pressure on the United Nations

and on Pretoria, through publicity. Many have already voiced strong objections to the draft election law, and these objections no doubt contributed to the decision to send Mr Szasz. A number of points were raised in briefings and reports prepared by the United States Lawyers' Committee on Civil Rights under Law, by the Namibia Support Committee based in Britain, and by British lawyer, John MacDonald QC.

Far from giving the United Nations its proper role of supervising and controlling the elections, all the powers are vested in staff chosen and appointed by Pretoria's man, Louis Pienaar.



Voters registering at Eenhana, Eastern Ovamboland, August 1989

Few can believe that appointees of the colonial administrator will be the best qualified to organise an election which will help to replace that administrator with a democratic government.

A particularly strong point is that this system of putting ballot papers in numbered envelopes, with frequent handling of the envelopes and a long delay before the result is announced, has led many Namibians to fear that their votes would not be secret. Even before the Administrator-General's proclamation, he admitted that 30% of Namibians did not believe the ballot would be secret; and it is clear that this seriously undermines the effectiveness of the election.

No secret ballot, but a secret count

The proclamation also restricts United Nations officials to merely checking ballot boxes before and after voting. Although members of UNTAG are not specifically excluded from polling stations, the wording leaves the situation unclear enough for an electoral officer to be able to tell them to go. Meanwhile, locally-recruited United Nations staff, such as interpreters, are specifically excluded.

This problem is particularly obvious when it comes to illiterate voters, who form a large proportion of the electorate after decades of South African neglect of their own bantu education system in Namibia. Under the provisions of the Administrator-General, a blind or illiterate per-

son is not allowed to take a friend in for advice. Instead, the presiding officer, appointed by the Administrator-General, marks the ballot paper for the voter. The officer is allowed wide powers to question voters about their intentions, and to take other initiatives.

These same electoral officers, chosen by the South Africans, have many other powers. They can allow someone to vote who does not have a registration card or whose hands are already marked with election ink. Without visible and effective supervision at all points by the United Nations, many Namibians will suspect the worst.

The Administrator-General has proposed a system where voters mark a registration card with their thumbprints or signatures. Copies of these are kept centrally, and when voters come to the polls they must sign, or put a thumbprint on, another card, which is then sent with the ballot envelopes to Windhoek. Here, teams of experts check the original card against the one sent in with the vote, to determine which votes should be disallowed.

The number of voters is estimated to be between 550 000 and 800 000, of whom a high proportion are expected to be illiterate. According to estimates prepared after consultation with fingerprint experts, even if there were only 600 000 voters, of whom 360 000 were illiterate, it would take a team of 50 experts five weeks just to check all the thumbprints, even if they worked 48 hours a week with no delays. The delay between poll-

ing day and the day when the results are announced already stretches for over a month, because of this unacceptably slow and complex procedure.

Voters disqualified in secret

No agents of local parties are allowed to be present at the polling stations to challenge people to prove their identity. If they were there, under United Nations supervision, challenged voters would have the chance to prove their right to vote. Under the Administrator-General's checking system, those whose vote is disallowed by the teams of experts would not be able to defend themselves, or even to know that their votes had been disallowed.

This complicated registration process is a direct result of the Administrator-General's refusal to establish a computerised central electoral register. This had been widely called for after accounts of South African soldiers noting down names on gravestones, and other practices suggesting that false registrations would be made. A centralised list, organised alphabetically and by address, is the only satisfactory method of checking against false registrations. Instead, there is not even a requirement for Namibians either to register or to vote in the place where they live or work, making centralised counting difficult to avoid.

Under the Administrator-General's proclamation, voting will also be difficult in practice.



Demonstration at Ongwediva reception centre as Malaysian UN soldiers look on, June 1989

Many of the polling stations would be mobile, particularly in the north, where most of the population lives, and where support for SWAPO is particularly strong. The Administrator-General also retains the power to determine on which days and at what times voting takes place, and to alter these for any region, or indeed for any polling station. This could make it very difficult for a voter even to track down a place to vote, giving any voter who has extra knowledge an unfair advantage. In Antigua, when polling hours had been extended without warning, the courts found this enough to upset the results of the general election there.

Teams of observers predict failure

The predictions of teams of observers that the elections would fail were no doubt part of the pressure that involved Mr Szasz' airlift in, to strengthen Martti Ahtisaari's grip on the situation. The United States Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights under Law states that the officials, appointed by the outgoing South African colonisers to run the election under a chief electoral officer picked by Pretoria, are very interested in the outcome. The Committee warns sombrely:

"It is imperative to prevent them from, in fact, trying to

manipulate the election as well as to prevent a popular perception that they are so acting. If it is generally believed that the election was not fair, Namibians will not accept the results, regardless of certification by the (United Nations) Special Representative. In that case, the ultimate results are likely to be civil war rather than independence, the disgrace of the UNTAG mission, and a general disillusionment with the United Nations and international law."

British human rights lawyer John MacDonald QC is even more damning, and concludes:

"There is no way in which it would be possible to hold free and fair elections under the proposed rules. They should be abandoned, and, as time is short, the Special Representative should propose new rules."

These new rules should make the times and places of voting clear, should allow a secret ballot, allow friends to accompany voters who cannot read. Agents of all parties should be allowed full access to polling stations and vote counts, and the rules should make it clear that the election is being conducted under the supervision and control of the United Nations.

Pretoria plans future destabilisation

This latest attempt to influence the election must also be seen in the light of South Africa's many other bids to twist the independence process to allow as much power as possible to fall to its puppet political party, and to sow dissent and make openings for future destabilisation. These tactics are similar to those used in Mozambique, Angola and other independent countries on the front line against apartheid.

The criteria for eligibility put forward by Louis Pienaar have allowed many thousands of South Africans living in South Africa with full loyalty to Pretoria, to register as Namibian

voters. Newspaper advertisements in South African papers, combined with easy transport to special border registration points, make it possible for former civil servants, and even soldiers who served in the brutal military occupation, to register, and later to vote on the future of those they repressed.

South Africa has long maintained in Namibia thousands of UNITA personnel from Angola, using military bases there as supply, training and back-up depots. Thousands of these Angolans, who brought death and destruction in their homeland on the orders of the racists, are now being registered as Namibians, in another bid to swing votes away from SWAPO and create future instability.

SADF has a hand in the elections

The South African Defence Force, and its local surrogates have long had a significant role in election campaigning and intimidation.

In eastern Bushmanland, for instance, heavily armed South African soldiers in Casspir armoured cars, handed out T-shirts earlier this year, for the South African surrogate party, the DTA. They also handed out election posters depicting SWAPO as a hyena being chased by San people with bows and arrows, while the DTA stood by

as a virtuous eland, an animal associated with purity and integrity. This patronising attempt to sway voters with misleading symbolism and intimidation seems to have been counter-productive, according to leaders of farmers' co-operatives and other organisations in the area.

Soldiers of the South African-led army of occupation still seem to be active. When convoys of pickup trucks arrive bearing DTA supporters to intimidate and disrupt SWAPO rallies, the military bearing of so many of their supporters is obvious. Even more sinister, beatings and murder are becoming an element of the campaigning. A unit known locally as 'DTA security police,' and comprising ex-members and off-duty members of Koevoet is feared, for it has severely beaten, kidnapped and even murdered SWAPO election activists.

A firm line must be taken on all the malpractice and continuing attempts to deny Namibians their right to freedom, fair elections and independence. It is essential that Mr Szasz of the United Nations is given full support, especially in the Security Council, first to draw up and then to implement a just and fair system of electoral law in Namibia. The international community needs to stand firmly beside SWAPO, who face this assault on the victory they won with such determination, unity and personal sacrifice.

SOUTH AFRICA'S DEBT CRISIS

The financial and economic crisis the South African regime is in now has been brought about by the struggle within the country and pressure for sanctions and disinvestment overseas. We give here a slightly shortened version of a paper which was prepared in Britain by the Anti-Apartheid Movement and the End Loans to Southern Africa (ELTSA) as a background to the No Debt Rescheduling Campaign, and which provides an insight into the state of the South African economy.

South Africa's economy lurches from crisis to crisis. Introducing the 1989 Budget, Finance Minister Barend Du Plessis spoke of a scenario of:

"economic survival in the face of an internationally organised assault on the economy."

Yet the sanctions measures that have been applied against South Africa have been extremely mild. In themselves, they do not explain the depth of South Africa's economic crisis.

The truth is that South Africa's back is against the wall because the costs of sanctions have compounded the costs of apartheid, which are rising to unsustainable levels as popular resistance is met with ever-harsher repressive measures.

Public expenditure has spiralled to such an extent that even the government no longer believes that it can be controlled. In particular, defence spending has more than doubled since 1986, a testimony to the regime's failure to quell popular resistance in the townships, and to the costs of occupying Namibia (estimated at a million pounds a day) in the face of SWAPO's armed struggle. The mounting burden of military expenditure, combined with the impact of international sanctions, were major factors in bringing the apartheid regime into negotiations during 1988 over withdrawal from Angola and Namibia.

Against this background, increased economic pressure from outside the country has had a substantial impact. The financial sector is one of the most vulnerable to sanctions pressure. It is

an area where South Africa has experienced growing difficulties, and is a key to understanding South Africa's vulnerability to more widespread sanctions.

Until 1985, South Africa was able to borrow from Western banks to meet the rising costs of maintaining the apartheid system. But the township rebellion from 1984 onwards escalated the pressures on banks to cease lending to apartheid, and in 1985 the banks called in their loans. An unprecedented financial crisis followed, which was alleviated only when South Africa struck deals with the banks, first in February 1986 and again in March 1987, which effectively rescheduled its debts.

Source of funds for the regime

These rescheduling agreements ensured that money owed by South Africa remained inside the country. They also allowed loans to be redirected from the private sector to the government, and thus to the military budget. Under the terms of the 1987 agreement, the borrowers, mainly South African banks, pay their debts into a government fund instead of repaying the Western banks to whom they owe the money. The government then makes small payments to creditors, leaving the bulk of the fund for its own use. With military spending growing out of control, this has provided a desperately-needed source of funds for the regime.

South Africa still faces severe financial difficulties. Continuing unrest in the country has eroded business confidence in the future of apartheid to the point where access to new investment funds has almost entirely been blocked. Political pressures on banks in the United States and Europe have further created a climate in which lending is unacceptable. Without fresh funds, South Africa has faced grave difficulties meeting even the modest debt repayments due under the 1987 agreement.

Export earnings in South Africa are derived from primary goods — minerals (over 80%) and agricultural products. Gold alone accounts for over 40% of export earnings. Imports are primarily of manufactured goods and strategic items such as oil, and those arms South Africa cannot produce for itself. Since its own economy is unable to generate sufficient capital to meet its needs, South Africa has depended on foreign investment in order to promote industrialisation and economic growth. Economists generally agree that 10% of all South Africa's investments must come from abroad if the South African economy, under its present structure, is to grow at the minimum 5% a year required to keep pace with the employment needs of its population.

Gold prices bring a reprieve

The Soweto uprising of 1976 brought a virtual end to foreign direct investment. But the increase in unrest compounded by the effects of the mandatory arms embargo of 1977, and the voluntary oil embargo, vastly increased the costs of maintaining apartheid, so increasing the need for foreign capital. South Africa was granted a reprieve by the soaring gold price, which reached \$850 an ounce in 1980.

The apartheid regime took the opportunity to embark on an ambitious spending programme, designed to buy off Black dissent and insulate the economy from the effects of international isolation. The SASOL oil-from-coal conversion plants, for example, are one of the largest industrial projects in the world, yet oil experts say that they can never be profitable. Their purpose is solely to reduce the impact of the oil embargo

and guarantee supplies to the military.

As the gold price fell from its 1980 high, shortfalls in government revenue and the balance of payments were made up by borrowing from international banks. Much of this went to parastatals such as the Electricity Supply Commission (ESCOM) and South African Transport Services (SATS), freeing government revenue for spending on the military, oil imports and the burgeoning apartheid bureaucracy. Increasingly active in the capital markets were South African banks, which borrowed overseas to onlend to South African clients.

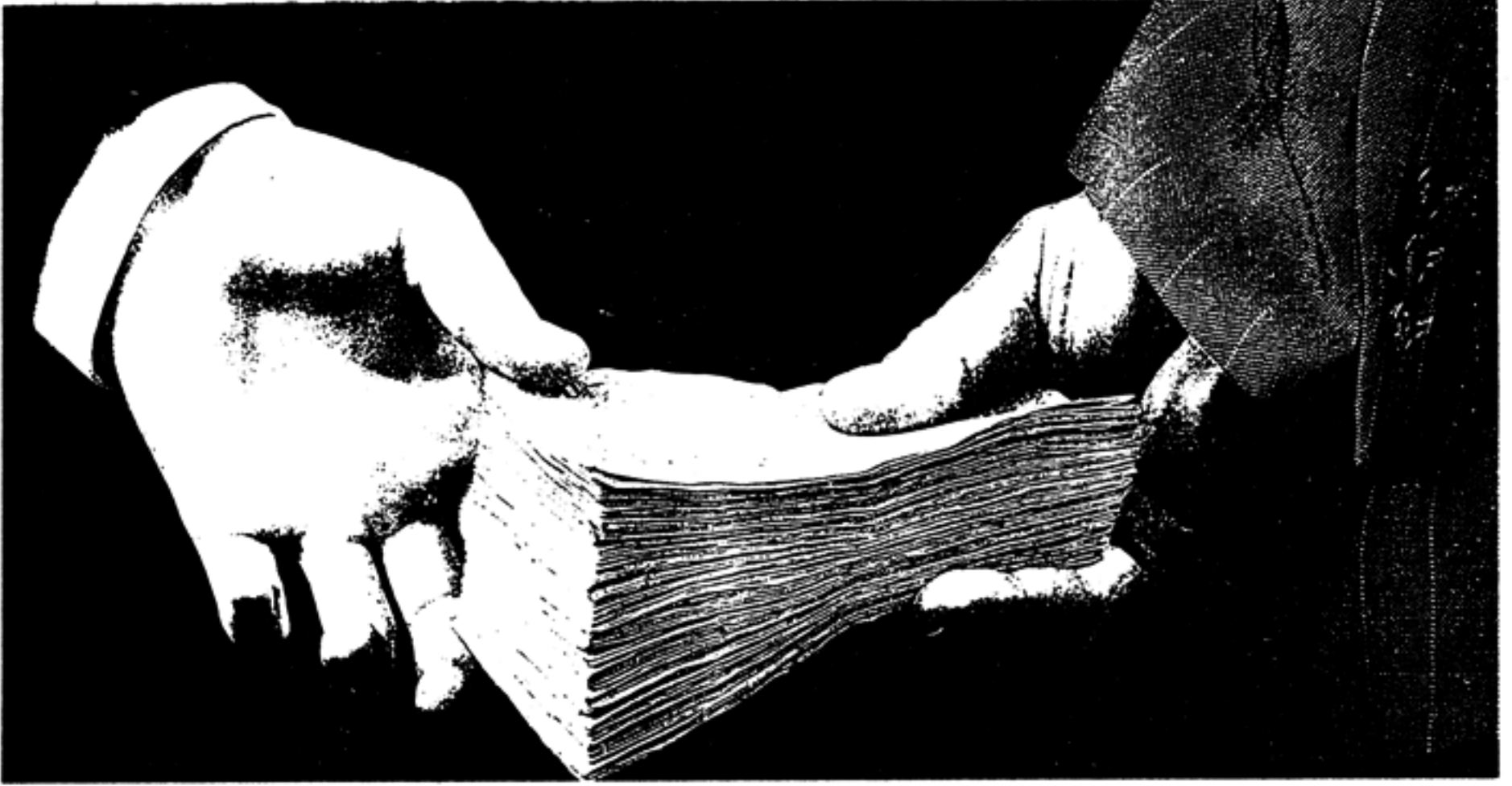
The crisis of 1985

By 1985, South Africa's foreign debt had reached \$24 billion, ranking it ninth in the league of international debtors. While the total in itself was not excessive, the structure of the debt left South Africa vulnerable to a withdrawal of goodwill by lender banks. Short-term debt (repayable within a year and often less) made up a large proportion of the total. South African banks had borrowed short and lent long, confident that foreign banks would renew or 'roll over' their short-term loans when they fell due. This led to a severe bunching of debt due for repayment in 1985, and set the scene for the impending crisis.

The underlying weakness of the South African economy and the dramatic impact of the township rebellion had begun to seriously erode the confidence of international investors by 1985. Long-term finance became harder to obtain, increasing South Africa's dependence on short-term loans.

It was the declaration of the partial state of emergency on June 20th 1985 that triggered the crisis. The rand plummeted from \$0.53 to \$0.35 in one month, and anti-apartheid pressure for banking sanctions became irresistible, especially in the USA. On July 31st, Chase Manhattan, America's second largest bank, halted all new lending to South Africa and refused to renew existing loans as they fell due. This made South Africa an even worse credit risk for other banks, and precipitated similar actions by other US and European banks.

APARTHEID IS BANKRUPT.



NO DEBT RESCHEDULING!

It rapidly became clear that South Africa, starved of new foreign credit, would not be able to meet the repayments on its short-term debt. On August 28th, Gerhard de Kock, Governor of the Reserve Bank, left on a tour of European and American financial centres in a vain attempt to secure new finance, having already decided to freeze debt repayments. The Johannesburg Stock Exchange and foreign currency markets were closed for three days. On September 1st, South Africa announced a freeze on capital repayments on \$13.6 billion of short-term debt which was most urgently due to be repaid.

Within days, South African business leaders

flew to Lusaka to meet the ANC.

Agreements for rescheduling

Initial attempts by South Africa to secure a rescheduling agreement to spread the burden of its repayments over a longer period were a disaster. With the country in turmoil, massive political pressures meant that the banks could not be seen to be soft on apartheid. South Africa was forced to act through a Swiss mediator, Dr Fritz Leutwiler. Without political change in South Africa, the banks could not afford to strike a deal

with South Africa, as they feared the loss of business that would result. In December, South Africa was forced to extend its debt freeze until March 1986 to allow more time to find a solution.

On January 31st 1986, the regime promised a package of 'reforms' designed to placate the banks. South Africa adopted a conciliatory attitude to world opinion, and co-operated with the Commonwealth Eminent Persons' Group. A few weeks later, Leutwiler met the banks to propose a deal, which he claimed was the best South Africa could afford. An immediate payment of 5% of the frozen capital was to be made, and interest rates on the rest of the frozen amount were to be increased by 1%. Other repayments would cease until June 1987.

The 30 major creditor banks, to whom 70% of the debt was owed, and 230 of the smaller creditors, agreed to the deal. In effect, the banks had re-lent money that should have been repaid, ensuring that South Africa retained the financial support to maintain apartheid.

Church leaders oppose rescheduling

South African church leaders Desmond Tutu, Allan Boesak and Beyers Naude had called on Dr Leutwiler to demand the resignation of the South African government as a precondition of any negotiations, and had called on the banks to seize South African assets. Speaking after the deal, Archbishop Tutu said:

"We were done the dirty, as it were, by the international bankers ... because, you know, nothing seems to have concentrated the minds of people quite as much as a run on the rand."

The second rescheduling agreement, known as the Second Interim Arrangements, reached in March 1987, was negotiated on much smoother terms. Harsh press restrictions had removed South Africa from the world's TV screens, and the imposition of the state of emergency in June 1986 had dealt a harsh blow to democratic organisations within South Africa. Banks felt themselves to be under less political pressure.

The agreement they reached provided for a

repayment of 3% of outstanding debt in July 1987, 2% in December 1987 and in June 1988, and 1.5% in December 1989 and in June 1990. The increased interest rate provisions were to continue under the second settlement. According to Finance Minister Barend du Plessis, South Africa will have paid back a total of \$1 420 million of frozen debt by the middle of 1990.

This second accord was welcomed in South Africa as "taking the sting out of the most damaging sanction yet." The three-year period covered by the agreement was seen as giving South Africa a breathing space in which to try to attract new loans.

Impact of financial sanctions

These deals with its creditor banks have only ameliorated the predicament of the apartheid regime; they have not solved its problems. South Africa has been almost entirely excluded from international capital markets since it froze debt repayments in 1985. The existence of this financial sanction has been the single most significant influence on the apartheid economy.

Two factors have contributed to South Africa's financial difficulties: its inability to raise new loans, and the need to pay back debt not covered by the rescheduling agreement.

Crucially, South Africa has had to run a sufficiently large trade surplus to ensure it can meet the repayment due under the settlement. This necessity has coloured its whole economic policy.

As noted above, with its present apartheid structure, the South African economy needs to expand by at least 5% a year, in order to keep pace with the employment needs of its growing population. But South Africa has found that any growth rate greater than 3% triggers an import boom, diverting foreign currency needed to repay foreign debt into paying for imports. Without renewed lending, the apartheid regime must choose between reducing its military spending or restricting growth. Predictably, it has chosen the latter.

The withdrawal of foreign lending and investment has also had a critical effect on the economy

by further undermining domestic confidence already shattered by popular resistance to apartheid. This has led to drastic reductions in domestic investment, a process sometimes referred to as 'internal disinvestment.' Gross Domestic Fixed Investment fell in real terms in every year from 1981 to 1987, though there was a slight recovery during 1988. By 1985, levels of investment had fallen so far that they were not sufficient even to maintain capital stock. Company disinvestment has similarly damaged confidence. As the president of the South Africa Foundation stated at the the end of 1987:

"lack of confidence is again and again emerging as the most important single factor inhibiting growth."

The apartheid regime has found that its political and economic priorities are in conflict. The need to 'buy votes' in the October municipal elections led the government to reflate the economy in the first half of 1988, triggering an import boom which seriously threatened to undermine the balance of payments surplus, so endangering South Africa's ability to meet its debt repayment commitments.

Patching up the situation

The response of the regime was twofold. First, it sought new finance to cover the crisis. In October 1988, State President P W Botha and Foreign Minister Pik Botha engineered a visit to Europe on the pretext of attending the funeral of Franz Josef Strauss, in order to engage in extensive talks with bankers, especially in Switzerland. Following this visit, one new loan, the first since the moratorium, was made in December. The Swiss Volksbank acted as paying agent for a SFr55 million (£20.3 million) direct to the South African government. Furthermore, in January 1989, an existing SFr70 million loan, not covered by the 1987 deal, was renewed, this time with the Union Bank of Switzerland acting as agents. While these were signs that South Africa had managed to restore some financial credibility, the sums involved were minimal and provided South Africa with no

real financial relief.

The use of trade credits also provided some short-term alleviation of South Africa's financial problems. In addition, South Africa has also been able to raise around \$600 million through gold loans, mostly arranged with Swiss banks. These enable it to use its gold reserves as collateral for foreign borrowing that boosts its hard currency reserves at the expense of reducing its gold reserves, currently worth \$1.5 billion. None of these sources are, however, viable alternatives to the renewal of long-term lending.

Economic brakes slammed on

Second, it has taken drastic economic measures. Foreign currency reserves fell from \$3.4 billion in August 1987 to \$1.2 billion in October 1988, equivalent to only six weeks' import cover. It also appears that the strategic oil reserve has been run down from about 15 to eight months' supply to save on purchases of South Africa's most expensive import. Immediately after the October elections, the economic brakes were slammed on. Interest rates rose 2% on November 3rd, and a further 1.5% to 16% on February 22nd 1989. Import duties of up to 60% have been imposed on a wide range of goods. The crucial mining sector has already complained that its costs are being affected by these controls. As a result of these measures, South Africa managed to make its repayments for 1988, though not without difficulty.

A current account surplus of R4-5 billion is being officially predicted for 1989, which will cover repayments for 1989. However, this relies on a gold price of \$400 an ounce, an optimistic assessment, and a growth rate of only 2%. With high interest rates and import duties, even this may not be reached.

South Africa's economic equation is extremely finely poised. In meeting even the current level of repayments, the apartheid regime has been forced to make economic and political sacrifices designed to improve its international image and maintain the goodwill of banks. These efforts will only intensify as the negotiations become more imminent.

WORLD MAYORS REJECT APARTHEID COLLABORATORS

As a result of the intervention of representatives from the ANC and the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM), South African mayors were expelled from the annual congress of the World Conference of Mayors in Paris on August 18th.

The Mayor of Tuskegee, Alabama, is President of the Conference, and the Vice-President, elected at last year's congress in Washington, is Derek Watterson, Mayor of Durban, known for having used his casting vote in favour of retaining petty apartheid restrictions in that city.

The South African delegation of some 26 mayors was the largest at the congress, and among those invited were Tom Boya, President of United Municipalities of South Africa.

Before the congress, Comrade Solly Smith, ANC Chief Representative in France, together with a representative from the MDM, attended a press conference given by the World Conference of Mayors, and made clear that the ANC and the MDM were opposed to the recognition being given to collaborators with the Pretoria regime. The ANC, the MDM and the French Anti-Apartheid Movement then called their own press conference, where they demanded that the South African delegation be expelled

from the congress.

Mayors from African countries like Liberia, Mauretania, Senegal, Zambia and Zimbabwe were present. The ANC protested to their embassies, pointing out that the policy of their governments was to isolate apartheid and its institutions.

It was put to the South African mayors that before they could be entitled to represent the people of their towns, they should:

- ★ Withdraw from the convention.
- ★ Return to South Africa immediately.
- ★ Resign immediately from all local authorities and other government-appointed institutions.
- ★ Publicly adopt the Freedom Charter.
- ★ Immediately align themselves with the MDM.
- ★ Participate fully in the defiance campaign, in the spirit in which it is being run.

The South Africans finally withdrew from the congress, and a resolution sponsored by Senegal was passed, rejecting their participation in the future.

CANADIAN HONOUR FOR MANDELA

York University in Toronto became the first Canadian in-

stitution to honour Nelson Mandela when, at its graduation ceremony on June 16th, it made him an honorary Doctor of Laws. The list of honours conferred on Mandela throughout the world can now cover more than three pages.

DENMARK HOST TO ANC

The ANC office in Copenhagen is maintained by the Danish Government. This year, a Women's Section was formed in Denmark and August 9th was celebrated.

The Communist Party of Denmark invited the ANC to take part in the solidarity section of the *Land og Folk* Festival, on August 19th and 20th. Comrade Aaron Mnisi, ANC Chief Representative in Denmark, presided over a stall where members of the ANC and of the South Africa Committee, the Danish solidarity organisation, sold ANC literature, badges and T-shirts. The festival was a memorable occasion, colourful and rich with music, and the Thami Mnyele Quartet from Lusaka made a contribution by singing South African songs of freedom in an open-air arena. They drew large and interested audiences.

THE APARTHEID STATE AND THE CHURCHES

So strong has the resistance of the churches become that the racist regime has openly threatened to take action against certain churches and their leaders. In this interview with Eric Singh, Father Michael Lapsley, a member of the religious department of the African National Congress, discussed the situation. The interview took place before the Defiance Campaign of 1989, when a number of church leaders were repeatedly arrested.

Comrade Michael, the South African Minister of 'law and order,' Adriaan Vlok, has issued a threat to the church inside the country. What, in your opinion, has prompted him to tackle the church so openly?

I think we have to see the threat by Vlok, which I think he will carry out, in an historical context. There is a sense in which Christian gospel has always been used as a tool by the apartheid regime to oppress people. On the other hand, the oppressed people have always seen the content of the Christian gospel as having a commitment to social justice, and the contemporary period has seen the content of the Christian gospel as liberation.

Because the regime has always described itself in Christian terms, it has been difficult for it to act openly against the churches. As the people have become more committed to doing away with their repression, the regime in response has become more repressive, so that, since the banning of the 17 organisations in February 1988, we have reached a period when the church is in the front line of opposition to apartheid.

The regime seeks the solution to its problems with ever more repression. It unmask itself even further as being both un-Christian and anti-Christian, by threatening to act directly against Christian organisations.

In 1982, at its congress in Canada, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches declared that apartheid is a heresy. Other statements have gone further, and said that the regime itself is anti-God. The Kairos document makes the point that apartheid has become the embodiment of evil. Now, when the regime says it is going to act directly against the church, it exposes itself to a degree it has never done before.

When we talk about the regime acting against the church, we do not mean the church generally, but the progressive church, the Black church. Am I correct?

I think it is more accurate to say it is the progressive church. As the struggle in South Africa has gone on, the question that has become ever clearer is: Which side are you on? — more than, What colour are you? The regime is all White and the oppressed are mainly Black, but there have always been people in the White community who have supported the liberation struggle. The regime, on the other hand, has sought to co-opt people from amongst the oppressed to serve its interests, and that has been true not only in the arena of society in general but also within the ranks of the church. That is why I believe the racist regime is going to act against the progressive church.

It is important to realise that a growing majority in the church accepts, not only that apartheid does evil things to people, but that the regime itself, in a moral sense, is il-

legitimate. It is significant that 13 church leaders broke an apartheid law by calling for a boycott of the local elections in October 1988. Never before has such a range of church leadership been willing to openly defy the regime. These are not political radicals. They are respected leaders of the mainstream churches, who, through their experience, have come to the conclusion that the regime itself is illegitimate, and that it is an issue of faith to obey God and disobey the regime because of its unjust laws.

This confirms my belief that church leaders in South Africa are not going to accept the threat of Vlok lying low. I am thinking of people like Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Dr Allan Boesak and other such leaders. How do you think the regime will respond to such personalities? Surely the regime is not going to stand idly by?

I think the regime will think twice about touching somebody like Archbishop Tutu. But we do know that he has been arrested in the past. The same applies to Dr Boesak, and there is no reason why the authorities should not do the same again. As the regime becomes more desperate to survive, it keeps crossing the threshold of what it is willing to do against the people of South Africa and against the churches. In the repression of the past two or three years we have seen countless church workers, including heads of churches, bishops, secretaries-general of Bishop's Conferences, detained and even tortured.

I think it is less important to say what might happen to Archbishop Tutu than to say what is happening to countless ordinary people. From the perspective of the Christian, the issue is not whether or not church leaders are attacked, but what is done to any human being. From our perspective as Christians, every human being is a child of God, is made in the image, the likeness, of God. So, for us, the people of South Africa are being crucified today, and it is an issue of faith for Christians throughout the world to stand with all the people of the land of apartheid who are being crucified because of their sacrifice for liberation and for the cause of justice, which is the cause of God in South Africa.

In the past, the churches were vehicles of the policies of apartheid, though individual church

leaders openly opposed them. Today, the churches are playing a leading role in fighting apartheid. How do you explain this?

I think it is a long, historical process of reflection; but a particular contribution to our situation in South Africa came from the Latin Americans. They taught us the importance of social analysis. They also taught us to analyse the church as a social institution, and then analyse the church in relation to society.

They taught us to begin to understand the dynamics in society; the role the church as an institution can and could play; the way in which the politics of apartheid has underneath it an economic structure; that apartheid is not simply a matter of Blacks and Whites disliking each other, but is an international economic system with apartheid as a manifestation of policies that enable White people in South Africa to have one of the highest living standards in the world and also enable super-profits to go to people in the western countries.

Christians have begun to read the Bible in the light of their experience of oppression, from the perspective of people being oppressed, and have begun to resist a gospel which is only good news after you die. People have rediscovered the revolutionary and liberatory content of the gospel of Jesus Christ. They have reclaimed God, not as a neutral God but as a God who takes sides, a God of the oppressed. Perhaps Black Christians, because of their colour and oppression, struggled against apartheid in the past; but more and more we see people, as an expression of their faith, participating in the struggle.

I think that, while the liberation theologians of Latin America taught us to analyse and understand the structure of our society, we have realised in South Africa that, even after we have analysed, if we don't have hope, faith, commitment or ability to sacrifice ourselves, then our analysis is of no avail. We are, seeing that spiritual values are as fundamental to the struggle for liberation as scientific tools of social analysis.

Michael Lapsley, you were not born a South African. In fact, you are a New Zealander. What made you join the ANC?

I am a member of an Anglican religious order, and was sent to study at a university in South Africa. I became a chaplain to both Black and White universities.

My experience in South Africa caused my understanding of the gospel to disintegrate. I had to rethink my whole understanding of God, of Jesus Christ, of the message of the gospel. The Christian gospel commits us to being internationalists. My experience in South Africa made me feel that I had been robbed of my humanity, that apartheid forced me to be a White man and stopped me being a human being.

One of the few things I agree with the Boer regime about is that they object to priests who involve themselves in the struggle and keep their passports in their pockets. My position was to say to the South African authorities, "Give me citizenship. I am willing to accept fully what I am doing." I was expelled from South Africa in 1976, after the the Soweto uprisings. I said to the ANC, "I am applying for membership, by which I understand I am taking full citizenship in a country which we are still struggling to create." I would say my participation in the ANC is the arena, the context, in which I live out my priesthood and Christian faith. That is how I come to be a member of the ANC.

It was Brecht who said, "there are those who struggle for a day, and that is good," and went on to say, "there are those who struggle for their whole lives, and they are the ones whom we cannot do without."

Mike, what do you think could be the contribution of the international community to help the progressive churches in their hour of need?

It is important that Christians all over the world pray for people in South Africa as a whole; that they send messages of demand to their governments, forcing them to come out in support of the Christian community and the liberation movement inside and outside South Africa. It is important at this time for churches all over the world to send messages of solidarity and support

to the South African Catholic Bishops' Conference and to the South African Council of Churches, making clear that there is an unbreakable bond between Christians in South Africa and all people of faith in the world who believe — because we are human — we have a dignity that must be protected. Now is the time for the people of the world to stand as never before with the people of South Africa, and to help the churches to know that, while the regime attacks them, it does so precisely for doing what is just and right.

Would this be an answer to those who are opposed to isolating the racist regime?

Yes. There are voices in the international community that speak of dialogue. But the dialogue must be with those fighting for human justice. No one in the western world seriously argues that a prolonged dialogue with Hitler was fruitful, yet there are voices suggesting an ongoing dialogue with the Boer regime. The western countries have been having dialogue with Pretoria for many years. What has been the fruit of this dialogue? The shooting of children in the streets; the detention of thousands of people, many of them under the age of 18. It is time for an end to dialogue with the devil. A continuing dialogue with all those forces struggling for national liberation is the kind of dialogue we need.

The point about the economic boycott was made quite clear by Chief Lutuli in the early 1960s, when he said:

"Our people are already suffering, but we are willing to struggle and we are willing to sacrifice in the cause of our liberation. The question to the international community is not that they can take away our dying, but they can shorten it."

This is within the power of the international community. It is the function of the economic campaign, which has to be tied to positive support for the forces of national liberation led by the African National Congress.

A NEW ROLE FOR SPORTS ORGANISATIONS

By Alan Player

Four years of the state of emergency has left its mark on people's organisations within South Africa. New strategies and approaches need to be examined, and can be used. One such possibility is the use of community-based sports organisations.

Following mass mobilisation around organisations such as the United Democratic Front and its numerous affiliates, the Pretoria regime tried to cripple the opposition by restricting the organisations. The restrictions are an effective banning order, intended to stop the organisations from operating.

These organisations have been forced to operate underground. They have taken time to consolidate their position and adapt themselves to a new phase of the South African revolution. At the same time, the communities are still faced with bread-and-butter issues, such as high rents, a high unemployment rate and a shortage of housing, which previously would have been taken up by the organisations now restricted, and which still need to be addressed. Similarly, special days on people's calendars — Sharpeville Day, May Day, Soweto Day and so on — need to be remembered and commemorated.

The release of leaders from detention has not dramatically affected the situation. Most of them have been severely restricted in their personal capacity; and they should also have the opportunity to adapt themselves to a changed situation.

Vacuum to be filled

Something new needs to be found to take up community issues. Here sports organisations can be called upon to take on a new role.

Some sporting bodies affiliated to SACOS, and some non-SACOS bodies, too, have not remained politically neutral over the last few years, but most have shied away from taking on an overtly political task. Sports bodies in the Eastern Cape have on occasions come out with political statements, to condemn yet another rebel tour or to

issue a statement condemning the harassment of a sports official, but they are still a long way from being as political as the situation of the communities requires them to be, and as the rank and file membership wants them to be.

Spectators singing songs of liberation in the Dan Qeque stadium in Port Elizabeth during a Kwazhakele Soccer Board match are a common occurrence every week-end. Soccer teams refusing to participate in tournaments, because of policemen playing in opposing teams, surely show that the members no longer see their sporting activities in isolation from the overall struggle.

In fact, I remember a day two years ago, while I was driving to the Qeque stadium to play a match there, accompanied by a White comrade, a security police car started chasing us. As we turned into the street adjoining the stadium, they followed. When they saw we had stopped at the entrance to the stadium, they, too, stopped. They were too frightened to come nearer, sensing that the people who had come to watch the game were not only soccer fans, but first and foremost members of their respective communities.

The reason community-based sports organisations have failed to take a more political role in the struggle lie, not with the membership, but with the leadership. Too often, the executive members of sports organisations consist of sports officials who see their task solely in organising sports. Where this is not the case, the sporting bodies themselves have been able to fulfil a political role which previously would have been that of community organisations.

Soccer association takes the lead

The soccer association in an Eastern Cape town, severely affected by the spate of repression

unleashed on the area, has taken such a role. Executive members of the association spoke at a May Day rally in their capacity as soccer officials; messages of support from the association were read at a June 16th commemorative meeting. The association was instrumental in organising a united community approach towards a major arts festival in the area, when the danger arose that this festival could split the community in half. Organisers of the Grahamstown Arts Festival claimed they had consulted various community organisations and received their go-ahead for this year's festival. Even though this was not true, the local civic association was not in a position to challenge the statement, and it was left to the soccer association to call a meeting to define the position of the community.

There are numerous reasons why this association took such a stand. Its leadership consists of sportspersons who see beyond the simple task of organising other sportspersons. The association provided a home for a highly conscientised and politicised community, frustrated at having no means to give vent to its political aspirations. The association has provided these means.

A number of factors suggest that conditions are now favourable for sports organisations to shift their emphasis from being mainly sports-oriented, towards a community orientation.

Isolation of South African sport

An international campaign has led to the virtual isolation of South Africa from international sport. The campaign has gained momentum, and the racist sporting bodies still representing South Africa in the international field (in sports such as golf, boxing and tennis) are under constant threat of expulsion. Very few international teams are prepared to come to South Africa, and virtually no countries are willing to issue invitations to South African teams. It is also increasingly difficult to lure foreign mercenaries to South Africa to compete in pseudo-international games. The Kallicharans and Eusebios of the world are finding the trouble they get for playing apartheid sport no longer worth the money; in August, Butcher and De Freitas withdrew from the 'rebel'

tour of South Africa planned for January 1990.

Starved of international competition, South African sports officials belonging to racist bodies have had to look at new strategies. This has led to changes. Big business and sports officials are ploughing millions into sport in an attempt to fool the international community into believing that the time is right for international tours to and from South Africa. Where sports officials have realised that this is foolish, because futile, millions are being spent in organising 'rebel' tours in White-dominated sports.

It is in this light that one must view the highly publicised meeting between rugby boss Danie Craven and the ANC. Whereas he would have refused to meet even with internal rival rugby unions a few years ago, Craven is now prepared to take on his masters' wrath by meeting with the ANC in an attempt to get his beloved rugby back on the tour agenda.

The isolation has caused other developments within the country. The regime and numerous sports organisations have encouraged sporting contacts on a certain level, and they have, in most cases, tolerated this contact at a lower level. Omar Henry and Errol Tobias have been welcomed with open arms into provincial teams. Gone are the days when the regime would encourage policemen to harass White sportspersons entering the townships for *bona fide* sports activities. Lately, fewer officials of non-racial sports bodies have borne the brunt of the state attack on opposition.

The regime fights sanctions

All possible ways are being tried to lure international competition back into the country. Whether this is through rebel tours, meetings or any other way, does not seem very important. What is important is to realise that it is happening, and why. What could the reasons be for a regime that prohibited an All Black rugby tour from coming to South Africa because it included a number of Maoris, to change its tune so drastically as to allow a bunch of mercenary West Indian cricketers to tour the country?

The answer to this question lies in the isola-

tion South Africa is facing in all spheres. It is short-sighted to view sporting isolation out of context; it must be viewed in a context of sanctions, of campaigns to isolate South Africa in total, of international boycott. Sport must be seen as a tool used by the multinationals and the regime to break this isolation and the call for boycott. In the light of recent developments, this is the most plausible explanation.

By becoming a fully-fledged member of the international sporting community, South Africa can attempt to use this fact to fight against its isolation in other spheres. The country would very much like to lure foreign capital. For this to be done, foreign investors must be given the impression that all is well there; that South Africa is a 'normal' society. One thing that makes a 'normal' society is the existence of normal sport.

Another reason why South Africa is making efforts to get back into international sport is the internal factor. The racist regime has been losing credibility among its own voters. The White South African community has always been very sport-loving; its pride is hurt by not being allowed to measure its strength against that of other countries. If South Africa were back in the international fold, it would go a long way towards taking some of the internal pressure off Pretoria.

The regime is unwilling to hit down hard on opposition from within the progressive sports movement. This has opened a number of possibilities, which should be used.

A new approach

In some cases, sports organisations have filled the vacuum left by the changing nature of the mass-based organisations. The time for progressive sports organisations to take on this role

is as favourable as ever. Faced with internal and external pressures, the regime is making efforts to get the country back into international sport, and even though these efforts have, by and large, failed, the regime is pressing ahead. This has necessarily widened the parameters within which progressive sports organisations can operate.

Sports organisations must not be afraid to mobilise the community around issues. A sports organisation is just as entitled as any other to call a mass meeting, issue a pamphlet or take part in mass campaigns. There are no issues that a sports organisation should not tackle. After all, when sportspersons leave the playing fields they once again become workers, unemployed, students. Issues affecting them in one area of their lives affect them in other areas too.

Sports organisations should not commit the mistake of believing their constituency consists only of active sportspersons. All sectors of the community need to be organised, and there are many roles within sports organisations that can be filled by non-active members.

The role of progressive sports organisations can therefore be defined in this way:

- ★ To organise all sectors of the community;
- ★ To mobilise the community round issues the community considers important.
- ★ To challenge the state, and state power, in many different areas, not only on sports issues.
- ★ To facilitate contact between communities.
- ★ To take a stand on all issues involving any sectors of the community.

This article is not intended to heave sportspersons into a leadership role in the struggle, but to point out the existence of new possibilities created by a new situation within the country. Some sports organisations have already taken up the challenge. Others should follow.

PRISON REMEMBERED

CONDITIONS FOR WOMEN POLITICAL PRISONERS

A former political prisoner in South Africa spoke to Sechaba about her time in gaol.

Helene Passtoors is a Belgian citizen, and had been living in South Africa for four months when she was detained in June 1985 under the Internal Security Act. Brought to court in April 1986, she was faced with charges of "terrorism," to which she pleaded not guilty. She made a statement to the court, admitting that she supported the aims of the ANC; had known the whereabouts of certain arms caches, though not what was kept in them; had learned secret ANC codes, and investigated a route enabling a member of the ANC to leave the country illegally.

She was given a ten-year sentence, but, after intervention by the Belgian government, was released early, in May 1989. We interviewed her in August.

When were you arrested, and what were the circumstances?

I was arrested on June 28th, 1985, in Johannesburg, on the corner of Pritchard and Von Wielligh Street. I knew that I had been followed for quite some time. I was in Maputo before I came to South Africa, and since late 1981 I had worked for MK. It seems they had picked up my trail, probably as being friendly with ANC people.

They took me to John Vorster Square. I stayed for exactly eight months at John Vorster, for interrogation, till February 28th 1986.

What was it like when they were interrogating you? What questions did they ask? Did they torture you?

First, they wanted some evidence against me, and I learned later that they tried to connect me with all the military attacks that had taken place at the time I was in the country. So that was one part. But most important for them was information about the movement, and what they especially wanted from me was information that would help them to assess people outside the country, in exile — like addresses, composition of family, habits. I just never answered those questions.

Then they took me to rot in a cell, to do nothing, for three and a half months. I was under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act, in isolation and incommunicado for interrogation.

I was in a special cell, the only women's cell like that. They were observing me with a video camera; the constables had a screen in the office, and they were told to watch 24 hours a day. Those girls went mad

themselves; they got depressed within weeks, just with the strain of watching. If ever there were funny movements, they would give the information to the security police, and the security police would come and check what I was doing. That was very intensive visual surveillance — you couldn't go to the toilet or anything without being watched all the time.

When I knew a bug, a microphone, had been placed in my cell, I first thought I'd just ignore it, but then they started reacting to anything I'd said, and I realised that every day they were listening; that any noise I made, any movements I made, anything I did, was watched and listened to.

There was no daylight; there were slatted blinds at the windows. They had built a casing around the window, so you couldn't look out. They had put plates of perspex over the window, so it was sound-proofed as well; you could hear the traffic, but it was just a mumble, and no one could hear you. They kept saying, "You can scream for anything you want, but no one will hear you." There was no daylight, no nothing.

There is no ventilation in these special cells equipped with perspex plates. In fact, after I had lived there for a



Helene Passtoors

while, the air was so foul that it looked downright foggy. Even insects, like the small flies that sometimes flew in inadvertently, couldn't live in that atmosphere, and quickly made their way out at the next opening of the doors.

I had a mattress and some of those blankets, and that was all. No reading material, and nothing to write on. They took away my reading glasses. Much later, I got the Bible. It was very difficult, right through the eight months. Even if I got books, then they would take them all away again and I'd be another five days or so without books. When I was allowed to write a letter home, they'd give me a piece of paper and a pen, and take it away again. But that was much later. In the beginning, there was absolutely nothing.

At the bottom of the door there was a hole, where they

shoved the food through, as if for some kind of animal. There were no forks, no spoons. They call that 'suicide prevention.'

You go mad; you go insane. They threatened to assault me physically, but they didn't do that. It was psychological torture. After a while, the body starts reacting. You get sick; not just headaches. I ended up in hospital in January 1986, with a very bad depression.

First, I was alone in this section, but later on there were some other people, also in isolation, women from FEDTRAW. We managed to have a little contact by writing on the wall in the shower section.

One of these women was physically tortured there. She was taken to Protea police station for the torture, and then back to John Vorster, with the interrogation team which included a security policewoman who tried to suffocate her with

a wet bag. But she did that at Protea station.

The moment you're sentenced, suddenly they are absolutely different. OK, they let you out of your cell from time to time; they let you play ping-pong; but they take everything away from you, strip-search you. I was lucky in that I was transferred to Pretoria Central Women's Prison, where the other White women political prisoners were. For some reason, they let me join the others, which was wonderful.

Barbara Hogan was there, convicted of treason; Jansie Niehaus was there — she was married to Karl Niehaus, who was also in prison; Trish Hanekom was there — she was married to Derek Hanekom, who was in prison; and there was Ruth Gerhardt, Dieter Gerhardt's wife — she was the only non-ANC person there. After me, Marion Sparg came. She was sentenced in November 1986, but they kept her another three months in isolation — 'observation' they call it — before she could join the other prisoners.

What was the attitude of the prison authorities towards you?

Over the last years, political hostility towards us within the prisons has increased considerably. White prison personnel are the fringe of the Afrikaner workers, and often (like the police) still come straight from *die plaas*, and the Conservative Party has considerable support among them. Some openly support the extreme right. As women political

prisoners are always such a small group, comrades have often expressed deep apprehension about the forms this hostility will take as we approach liberation — that is, when White insecurity and political hostility towards us reach their peak.

The practice of prison censorship from 1987 to 1988 is but one example of a sharp turn towards open expression of vindictiveness. Newspapers are regularly cut to ribbons; more and more papers and magazines are simply banned by the Prison Service, the last victim being *Vrye Weekblad*. Then, if complaints begin to annoy them, issues of newspapers simply get 'lost,' like all issues of *The Citizen* at the time of mitigation and sentence in Ebrahim's trial. In the last resort, they demote the prisoners to a group without newspaper privileges.

What do you think are the particular hardships suffered by political prisoners?

Communication with family and friends has not improved with the 1986 rules. The number, length and delays of letters, and, of course censorship (another area of dirty games) together with the policy of keeping politicals in the lowest groups as long as possible, causes a breakdown in communication with family and friends even in the first year after sentence. Add to that a few visits behind sound-proof glass, where the visitor is also locked up — unless one has to do with exceptionally articulate adults, these means of communication

are by themselves inhibiting enough. Many families cannot visit regularly — this was the case with my family and those of many others. Add to that, neither size nor composition of the family is taken into account.

In short, when one is finally granted 'A group' privileges, with 40 letters of 500 words a year and 30 'contact visits,' it is far too late. This is all done on purpose, of course. In the enemy's view, people like us are not to play any meaningful role in our families, and especially not in our children's growing up. For nearly two years, they made all visits by my children impossible.

On top of all that, while in Western countries, weekly family visits are a right by law, and letters are unrestricted in number and length, in South Africa these are all 'privileges' which can be withdrawn at any time summarily or even surreptitiously. There were many letters sent to me I simply never received, and my letters often didn't reach their destination; I am only now discovering the extent of the persecution and lies.

So we are not just fighting for more letters and visits, as the Prisons Service chooses to interpret our ongoing struggle; we are fighting for quality of communication with our family and friends, or rather for meaningful communication. We are fighting for the very right to mean something to our children and parents. As we kept complaining to the authorities, this is a case of flagrant victimisation of our

families, our children.

I found this the most unbearable aspect of my imprisonment. No other hardship could really compare to this wholesale cruelty.

Do you think women political prisoners suffer particular hardships?

The particular hardships of women politicals as compared to those suffered by our men is that we are such very small groups, kept in a very cramped physical space, with no possibility of real sport or anything like that. Imagine a husband and wife locked 24 hours a day in a house for years — and then, of course, husbands and wives are supposed to have a very special relationship. Remember also that 'security' prisoners are kept strictly to their section and are not allowed to walk around in the prison as 'criminal' prisoners do.

In short, the conditions we live under are real hardship and extremely hard to handle. The only thing that makes life possible is comradeship. Comradeship, and all that goes with it, such as discussions, rights and duties, and so on, provide the bottom line of our relations.

If there is no comradeship — that is, if people do not belong to the same movement or at least to the same political line relations are always and inevitably tentative, or even, practically speaking, doomed. This is our experience, and, as far as we heard, it is similar for our Black women.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Comrade Editor

The ANC Constitutional Guidelines merit the broadest possible discussion among all South Africans. We should ensure that all shades of political, social, cultural and religious commitment should talk about, and put forward, their views. Broad mass participation in the development of ideas will provide a solid basis for the principles of the fundamental law of our future non-racial and democratic South Africa.

Space in this letter prevents a thorough look at this important document. There are other forums available for such thorough discussion. However, I would like to make a few remarks arising from Comrade Zola Skweyiya's contribution published in your June issue.

It is made clear that the constitution for the new South Africa to come can be democratically formulated only by all our people. In this connection, I would like to comment that the shaping of a new constitution is unthinkable without taking into account the Freedom Charter. With the passing of time, the demands and aspirations of the vast majority of our people, as embodied in the Freedom Charter, have not changed at all. The Freedom Charter is as valid today as it was when it was representatively adopted 34 years ago.

Several interpretations can be placed on Comrade Skweyiya's view:

"Powers will be delegated by the central authority to subordinate administrative units for the purpose of more efficient administration and democratic participation."

Does this envisage an edict and command structure? Does it imply that the central legislature, the executive and administration will delegate nominees to exercise regional and local power?

Ideas on regional government, modelled on the central authority, must be clearly spelt out. In accordance with the laws of the country, democratically adopted by the central legislature, representatives to local authorities will be elected by the communities they serve. Through the central legislature, regional governments and local authorities should be accorded wide powers to blend with the broad national interests — that is, such powers must conform to the overall character and laws of the people's democratic state. Regional and local government with wide powers would in practice be real organs of people's power,

corresponding to the progressive traditions and wishes of the people of each area.

Comrade Skweyiya speaks about the qualities and moral standards expected of the leader in the democratic state. Why only the head of government, or the state or the ruling party? The best of qualities and high ethical standards must be expected of all those serving the people at all levels of public and social life. Ethics expected of the people's elected representatives must be written into the law.

I think it is wrong to speak of **the** leader. We should rather speak of the leadership — and collective leadership at that. Of course, one expects that in the democratic process the most gifted in the leadership would emerge as heads of government and state.

It should be stressed that the law, as adopted by the central legislature, shall be supreme. No person, not the state, not the government, nor its organs, not the security, the police nor the army, shall be above the law. The elected people's representatives at all levels of state and government shall be accountable to the people through the central legislature, regional governments and local authorities.

I look forward to reading in *Sechaba* other views on the Constitutional Guidelines.

Amandla! Matla!

Arnold Selby
Berlin, GDR

June 25th 1989

BOOK REVIEW

And Still They Dance: Women, War and Struggle for Change in Mozambique by Stephanie Urdang (Earthscan Publications 1989, £12.95 h/b £5.95 p/b).



Stephanie Urdang, an exile from South Africa, gives an illuminating and touching account of her experiences in Mozambique in 1980, her first visit since Independence in 1975.

In 1987, Urdang returned to observe the government's efforts to change women's lives. She found to her horror that refugee camps had sprung up and realised that as long as the war continued, there would hardly be any hope for development nor the emancipation of women.

Her main aim was to record the progress of women. But the book also deals with the entire spectrum of post-colonial advance, tragically hampered by South African destabilisation and MNR sabotage. The women of course mainly bear the brunt of it all; they are the main food producers, rearers of children and carers for the sick and the aged.

Under Frelimo leadership women's liberation was taken up very seriously. One man told Urdang very sincerely, "Frelimo has taught us something we did not know, that women must be respected. We never used to value women. Now they must stand up and speak up."

In many spheres the women have indeed made tremendous progress towards changing the roles imposed on them by the peasant society and the colonial system. A new phase has begun as many women eschew marriage and work independently to maintain themselves and their children. Marriage for most would mean subjection to the will of a husband, and the indignities of polygamy or lobolo (bride price). They are also setting up organisations to promote their struggle, such as the Organisation of Mozambique Women (OMM) which aims to politicise women.

President Samora Machel in his opening address to the founding Conference of the OMM in 1973 said, "The emancipation of women is not an act of charity." The liberation of women is a fundamental necessity for the revolution and the precondition for its victory.

The themes of the UN Decade for Women are Equality, Development and Peace. Peace is still far away in Mozambique and equality

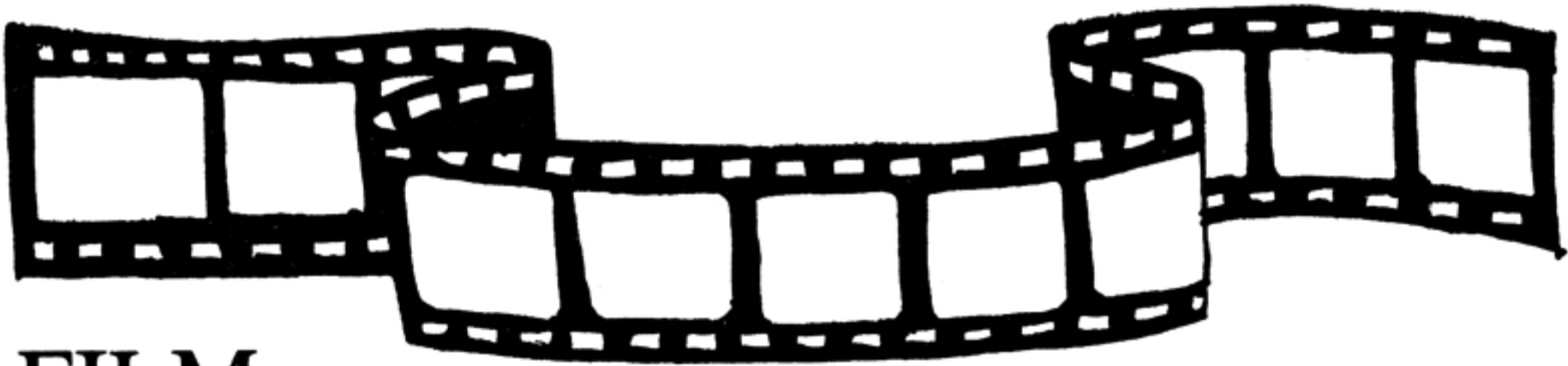
not yet achieved in all the homes but development includes the forming of co-operatives, day-centres and communal villages. Some women are truck-drivers and others hold senior posts of responsibility. Urdang describes some advances she witnessed within the households, but points out that among other things, men had to be forced by law to take over some responsibility for child support. There is still little progress towards achieving their social and domestic emancipation. Patriarchal attitudes still prevail in many homes.

The gender struggle has been made even more difficult because most Mozambican women are still uneducated and untrained for better-paid jobs.

Stephanie Urdang interviewed many women during her visits and she vividly describes their distress, grief and fear, because of MNR terrorism. It is they who have watched their children starve and die. Many are refugees, crippled, sick or bereaved. But Urdang pays tribute to their shining courage — they danced at Independence, thinking their sufferings were over, but they can still dance now against the background of war, grinding poverty and their long gender struggle. This is truly an inspiring book about women of almost incredible courage.

The sheer brutality of the South African backed MNR policy will continue. These atrocities will only end when South Africa is liberated bringing stability and peace to the entire region.

— SN



FILM REVIEW

Cry Freedom,
directed by
Richard Attenborough

The film, *Cry Freedom*, directed by Sir Richard Attenborough, generated a measure of interest among sympathisers overseas, and much of that was curiosity to know the reaction of South Africans to it. This discussion does not pretend to convey a collective opinion of South Africans on the film. It can, however, take the liberty to state that the film will contribute greatly to the ongoing process of educating a complacent world about the atrocities that are the order of the day in South Africa. Not the least effective is the ingenious device of a long list of prison murder victims in the closing sequence, an emotive roll-call of Blacks whose deaths were officially explained away as suicides — by hanging or self-strangulation. Any film that tells the story as it should be told should be applauded. Richard Attenborough's *Cry Freedom* does that. It's a powerful indictment

of a world steeped in hypocrisy.

The narrative depicts a friendship that developed between a newspaper editor who fitted the tag, 'White liberal,' and a Black radical politician; the consequences of that friendship, and how it ended by 'suicide.' Steve Biko, the radical Black, is active for less than an hour of the 158 minutes of the film, after which the romanticising of the struggle of the Blacks is supported by archive film material.

The story is mainly about Donald Woods, the White liberal, who decided to investigate the possibility that there might be something, after all, in the idea that Blacks are also actually human beings who ought to be listened to, and not merely seen, like caged animals in a zoo. He went out to investigate, and very unexpectedly found that on one side he was not treated with distrust and hatred, and the people he met were not overawed by him. On the other side, he found himself being hindered, told lies and deceived by a top government official, and harassed by the system he had never seriously scrutinised.

Then his journalistic instincts rebelled against the regimentation. He did not like to be told what to write and what not to. Because he had been living under

a delusion that South Africa was a free country with all the freedoms of expression, association, worship, etc, the contrary picture that was unfolding jolted him out of his complacency, especially when the clothes of one of his five children were liberally laced with a poisonous chemical. He learned that you were free as long as your writings ran parallel with apartheid ideology. As soon as you veered away, you were hounded and persecuted like a criminal if you were White, or physically eliminated if you were Black.

So we get a picture of a naive man doing his work without any emotional attachments. That is what we are actually meant to believe, and indeed the film reflects this cavalier attitude. To outsiders, however, it is incredible that a man can be born, grow up and be exposed to university education without ever having to ponder and examine his own conscience against the background of institutionalised racism that pervades all aspects of South African society, especially a man brought up in the Transkei in the midst of deprivation.

Yet that is the effect (and strength) of apartheid, that it effectively compartmentalises and isolates the racial groups from one another, that even this film

is banned in South Africa.

Technically, the film follows the same old political genres borrowed from the United States, of vast expanses of land with half-naked people running about aimlessly, and picturesque scenarios, balanced against claustrophobic confines of she-beens in inadequately lit shanty towns; but in *Cry Freedom* there take place some purportedly political activities that do not identify the political affiliations of the indifferent characters, except that they are priests and community workers who are astonished at what is befalling them — raids on the self-help community centre.

It is a professional production, as should be expected of anything that comes from the hands of Sir Richard Attenborough. Unfortunately, that perfectionist professionalism denied the film the grit it should have had, had it been acted by South African actors. Sir Richard's excuse is that he sought everywhere, and failed to get South African actors. He was looking for highly trained professional actors, but those he got were not able to evoke South African atmosphere and reality as did the unprofessional actress who plays the character of the Woods' housemaid.

That is a basic factor producing the weakness which dogs the performance of foreign actors playing South African characters: they just can't assimilate and convey the parts convincingly.

This is not to disparage the acting abilities of the actors and actresses in the film, but no non-



A still from the film

South African Black can ever be able to portray a South African Black because, in the first place, he or she cannot master enough conviction to be able to convey it convincingly. There is always a lingering doubt at the back of their minds — a "can this really be true?" sort of hesitation.

We could have been spared the lifeless and dismal spectacle of Americans and Zimbabweans giving an idiotic imitation of rugby performance, with a huge crowd of spectators as throaty in cheering as a collection of birds hovering above a beehive. School games produce a better and gustier response than we see in *Cry Freedom*.

If Black non-South Africans fail to portray Black South Africans, not so with White non-South Africans. White South Africans, that is, those who socialise with Blacks, approach the townships as from another continent: ignorant, starry-eyed and over-curious, and sometimes asking idiotic questions like, "Do you people cook rice?" Kevin Kline, who plays the character of Donald Woods, gives a passable performance. He moves in the townships like any White in Britain moves among Blacks, not ill at ease, but also not belonging.

— *Ralph Mzamo*

Sechaba and other ANC publications are obtainable from the following ANC addresses:

Annual Subscriptions:

USA and Canada (air mail only): institutions \$30; individuals \$25

All other countries £12

Please make cheques payable to:

Sechaba Publications c/o ANC PO Box 38 London N1 9PR

ALGERIA

5 Rue Ben M'hidi Larbi
Algiers

ANGOLA

PO Box 3523
Luanda

AUSTRALIA

Box 49 Trades Hall
4 Goulburn Street
Sydney NSW 2000

BELGIUM

PO Box 137
1040 Brussels

CANADA

PO Box 302
Adelaide Postal Station
Toronto
Ontario M5C-2J4

CUBA

Calle 21A
NR 20617
Esquina 214 Atabey
Havana

DENMARK

Landgreven 7/3 t.h.
1301 Kbh Copenhagen K

EGYPT

5 Ahmad Hismat Street
Zamalek
Cairo

ETHIOPIA

PO Box 7483
Addis Ababa

FINLAND

PO Box 336
00531 Helsinki

FEDERAL REPUBLIC

OF GERMANY

Postfach 190140
5300 Bonn 1

FRANCE

28 Rue des Petites Ecuries
75010 Paris

**GERMAN DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC**

Angerweg 2
Wilhelmsruh
Berlin 1106

INDIA

50KP Thacker Block
Asian Games Village
Siri Fort Road
Khel Gaon Marg
New Delhi-110049

ITALY

Via S. Prisca 15a
00153 Rome

JAPAN

Square-House Shin-Nakano
Room 105
4-38-16 Honcho Nakano-Ku
Tokyo

KENYA

PO Box 40432
Nairobi

MADAGASCAR

PO Box 80
Antananarivo

NETHERLANDS

PO Box 16657
1001 RD Amsterdam

NIGERIA

Federal Government
Special Guest House
Victoria Island
Lagos.

NORWAY

PO Box 6765
St Olavs Plass
N-0130 Oslo 1

SENEGAL

26 Avenue Albert Sarraut
PO Box 3420
Dakar

SWEDEN

Box 6183
S-102 33
Stockholm

TANZANIA

PO Box 2239
Dar es Salaam
PO Box 680
Morogoro

USSR

Konyushkovskaya Street 28
Moscow 123242

UNITED KINGDOM

PO Box 38
28 Penton Street
London N1 9PR

UNITED STATES

801 Second Avenue
Apt 405
New York NYC 10017

ZAMBIA

PO Box 31791
Lusaka

