

South African Communist Party 1976

### **The Enemy Hidden Under the Same Colour**

Source: statement by the Central Committee of the SACP on the activities of the 'Gang of 8', *The African Communist*, Second Quarter, 1976.

Transcribed: by [Dominic Tweedie](#).

'The other face is that of the indirect and secondary enemy, who presents himself under the cover of a nationalist and even as a revolutionary thus making it difficult to identify him... THE FIGHTER MUST DISTINGUISH FRIEND FROM FOE EVEN IF THE LATTER IS CONCEALED UNDER THE SAME COLOUR, LANGUAGE, FAMILY TIES OR TRIBAL MARKINGS AS THEIR OWN, EVEN IF HE RAISES HIS FLAG WITH US'.  
— President Samora Machel

South Africa's press has given a great deal of space to anti-Communist, anti-ANC and racist propaganda with which it has been fed by the group of eight who were recently expelled from the ANC for persistently betraying its political and organisational principles. For the enemy this group's campaign against the people's struggle could not have come at a better moment. It fits in very well with the Vorster government's desperate attempts to find black collaborators both inside and outside the country, in order to break up the unity of the liberation forces and to cover its criminal aggression against our brothers in Angola. Times are changing and our ruling class is being forced to find new ways to keep white power alive. Both inside and outside South Africa it desperately needs the Savimbis and the Holden Robertos, to divide the people under banners of so-called nationalism, anti-Communism and anti-Sovietism, and thus to prevent true liberation. Vorster and BOSS Chief van den Bergh must indeed be satisfied to see how well *their* cause is being served by this group of renegades from the ANC who are capturing so many headlines in the racist press.

The issues on which they have chosen to attack the liberation movement are as old as the struggle itself. The slander that the ANC is run by the Communist Party is not something new; it has always been spread by the racists and those who act as their agents. And it has always been designed to weaken the people's struggle. As early as the 1920s, liberals like Ballinger helped destroy the ICU by raising the banner of anti-Communism, and spreading scare stories about 'Communist take-overs'. In the late 50s, the break-away PAC group also used the white liberal parrot-cry that 'the Communists were running the ANC' in an attempt to destroy it.

The principled stand of the ANC against the so-called 'homelands' policy has been attacked by the Bantustan collaborators as 'Marxist-inspired' and the creation of Communists who 'dominate the ANC'. The latest tragic example of the way racists and reactionaries act together to exploit this kind of slander is in Angola. There, a few doomed black collaborators are again raising these cries together with Vorster and his Western imperialist allies, in a hopeless attempt to destroy Angola's newly-won independence, and to discredit its undoubted leaders-the MPLA.

### **GHETTO 'NATIONALISM'**

Erecting obstacles in the way of the unity of all revolutionaries has also always been the tactic of the South African white supremacists. It is for this reason that they devised a law (the Prohibition of Political Interference Act) to prevent Africans, Indians, Coloureds and whites from working together. Now the group of 8, like the PAC clique before them, are shouting 'poqo' (we alone) for the same reason. Under the guise of an admirable claim to be building unity of the African people, they spread racialism and a Savimbi kind of nationalism. They cover their real purpose by pretences about what they call 'a unity between equals'. We shall show later that in fact they dearly want to exclude even proven revolutionaries who are not African from any form of collective participation in the ANC's External Mission, on the grounds of race alone. Like Vorster, they believe that the place of a Coloured and Indian is to work only in his own ghetto amongst his own people. The race character of their so-called nationalism is revealed further in their statement that it is the duty of non-Africans in the struggle to 'humble themselves'. This is clearly the language of racism not of comradeship or revolutionary nationalism.

White supremacists have always shown their contempt for the African people in their insulting belief that Africans are inferior and will invariably play a secondary role if they work with Coloureds, Indians or whites. In exactly this spirit, this group of 8 scream 'manipulation' and 'domination' at the very thought that Coloured, Indian or white revolutionaries should work side by side with Africans. For example, the ANC's Revolutionary Council is overwhelmingly African in its composition including in its ranks only one Indian, one Coloured and one white, and with 100% African membership at its Headquarters. According to this group, this is enough to put the Revolutionary Council under the 'hegemony' of the 'clique of non-Africans'.

### **BIRDS OF A FEATHER**

Indeed, on this question of liberation unity, as in so many others, the group of 8 find themselves repeating (sometimes word for word) the mouthings of those whom they have themselves, until very recently, condemned as traitors to the cause of African liberation. Refer, for example; to the recent statement by the group of 8 read on their behalf by Tennyson Makiwane to an invited audience in London in December 1975, which not surprisingly included well-known PAC leaders. It is certainly no accident that there is such a striking similarity between the words used in that statement, and those used by Leballo in 1958 justifying the PAC break-away of that year.

**Leballo:** (all quotes from CONTACT, 1st November 1958) 'The leaders (of the ANC)... do not want to see the emergence of an African nationalism. Subscribing as they do to the myth that this is a class struggle, they see an obstacle in nationalism.'

**Group of 8:** The 'non-African clique' who have 'hijacked the ANC' have attempted 'to substitute a class approach for the national approach to our struggle.'

**Leballo:** 'The present ANC leadership both national and Transvaal, is dominated by... people of leftist inclination.'

**Group of 8:** 'The SACP relies entirely on using the ANC as its... front organisation.'

**Leballo:** 'If the Indians, for example, are also an oppressed group they should unite and fight as an Indian group.'

**Group of 8:** The 'clique of non-Africans, rather than spend time organising their own people, has sought to impose its hegemony...

**Leballo:** 'Since the advent of the present ANC leadership, a fetish has been made of loyalty to the leadership as such.'

**Group of 8:** 'Criticism of official ANC policy and practice has come to be regarded within the leadership circles as nothing less than treason.'

And so on and so forth.

It is not surprising that the group of 8 find themselves in that kind of company, echoing the ancient and discredited PAC politics.

Who are the leaders of this new group of splitters? Amongst them are some who not long ago were found guilty of organising factional groups in the ANC, and were removed from positions of responsibility in the organisation for that reason. Their persistent efforts to return to the positions in the leadership (at the same time refusing to accept the organisation's discipline) have been frustrated by the rank-and-file in the African National Congress which has nothing but contempt for their political and personal past. So now (with London as their base) they spread the malicious lie that their exclusion is all due to a conspiracy by the 'Communists' and a 'non-African clique'. They have spent some years gathering together a motley collection of dissidents whose history is only too well-known. Most of them have made many somersaults in their chequered political careers, always following what seemed to serve their ambitions at the given moment. Some of them have been Communists at some time and anti-Communists at others; some, racialists at times and multi-racialists at others; tribalists and African nationalists; strongly pro-Soviet and equally strongly anti-Soviet and pro-China. Some of the loudest so-called nationalists amongst them were activists of the white-led Liberal ARM when they were in South Africa; not of the ANC or its military wing Umkhonto. Some of them are not new to factional activities within the ANC, and have in their time attempted to use both Communist Party attitudes and anti-Communist Party attitudes to advance their personal careers. Included in this group of 8 are two gentlemen who in 1969 secured their own safety by giving evidence for the prosecution against Dorothy Nyembe and other comrades of the ANC in Pietermaritzburg, helping to send them to jail for decades.

The reason this group now attacks the ANC more openly than ever before is not because the ANC has changed since they were in the leadership but because they sense the prospect of new advances of the liberation struggle, new breakthroughs in the new favourable conditions created by the people's victories in the last year or two. And they want desperately to be at the top once again. They play on ignorance, and make their main appeal to prejudice and political backwardness. They distort the truth of the history of our movement, and exploit the problems which have faced it during the difficult period after 1963.

## **AGAINST REVOLUTIONARY NATIONALISM**

We will deal more specifically with some of their main distortions; but first it is important to emphasise that, like the PAC before them, this group is the expression of a political trend which seeks to dilute and eliminate the revolutionary content of South Africa's liberation struggle. Basically it wants the ANC to return to a type of nationalism which serves only a small elite and not the masses of the oppressed people. The social base for this tendency is to be found amongst those classes and groups within the oppressed who seek the kind of 'liberation' which will, at best, replace the white exploiter with a black exploiter. It is the unequivocal rejection of this type of 'nationalism' which gives a special revolutionary quality to such movements as FRELIMO and MPLA. The Simangos of Mozambique and the Savimbis of Angola also in their time paraded under slogans of 'true black nationalism', anti-Communism, anti-Sovietism, etc. They accused FRELIMO and MPLA of being dominated by Marxists, by minorities, and by persons of mixed blood. But in the course of the revolutionary struggle they soon showed their true colours by becoming open collaborators with the oppressor. Our Party is made the special target of this sort of attack precisely because it always exposes the kind of 'nationalism' which only fights the enemy in words, but helps it in action. It is an insidious 'nationalism' because it attempts to use the people's justified grievances and their hatred of the oppressor not against the enemy but against the people's interests, against comrades in the struggle, and against revolutionary unity.

The policy of our Party on the national question in South Africa is well known. Its essentials are contained in the Programme we adopted at an underground Party conference in Johannesburg in 1962. We pioneered the concept that the main content of the present phase of the South African revolution is the liberation of the African people. For this reason we have always recognised the leading role in the liberation front is played by the national organisation of the African majority, the ANC. But unlike the Liberals we understand that racism is not just a human failing; it has roots in the system of capitalism and in South Africa especially in the economic exploitation of the black working class. We believe too that the working class is, in the words of our Programme,

*'... the disciplined and advanced class which has no property stakes in present-day South Africa and has been the core and inspiration of other classes in every struggle of our time. The working class seeks a close alliance with the rural people; and with the urban middle classes and intellectuals in the national democratic revolution. Only under its leadership can the full aims of the revolution be achieved.'*

The emphasis on the dominant role of the working people in the struggle for national liberation is the main foundation of the ideology of revolutionary nationalism in the contemporary period. The African National Congress in its strategy and tactics (to which the group of 8 object) and movements such as FRELIMO, MPLA, PAIGC, the Congolese Party of Labour, also stress the fundamental role of the working people at all stages of the liberation struggle. For South Africa this approach involves a theory of revolution which takes into account both class and national factors. What then are the politics of the group of 8?

## **BACKWARD POLITICS BEHIND BACKWARD NATIONALISM**

The group of 8 complains that it is a Communist trick to dismiss those with whom they disagree as 'racist' and 'bourgeois nationalist'. Let us therefore briefly examine some aspects of the group's political standpoint as expounded in the Makiwane address.

The group claim that the South African struggle is

'no different from the post-World War II, anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist struggles which have been waged and are being waged by our brothers on the African Continent as well as similar struggles in Asia and Latin America.'

It hardly needs theory to remind us that the fruits of victory in many of the struggles on our Continent (as well as in parts of Asia and Latin America) have not been gathered by the mass of the exploited people; they have been gathered by these small groups who stepped into the shoes of the colonial oppressors and exploiters. Where this has happened, it is precisely because the *dominant classes* in the national struggle were the self-seeking petit-bourgeoisie together with the emerging national bourgeoisie. The dominant ideology of such movements was therefore bourgeois-nationalist in character; in saying this reference is made not to the social background of the individual leaders, but to the class interests served by their policies.

In South Africa there is perhaps the oldest and most experienced black working class on the African Continent, with a growing trading and bureaucratic black petty bourgeoisie and, in the Bantustans, even the beginnings of a black commercial and industrial bourgeoisie. It is therefore particularly important for South Africans to distinguish between a nationalism designed to serve the interests of an elite or an aspirant bourgeoisie, and a nationalism which is revolutionary and designed to serve the interests of the mass of the oppressed people. In other words, it is not enough merely to speak of 'nationalism'. Nationalism, like all ideology, has a class content and it is necessary to say whether, in the long term, that nationalism is progressive or reactionary, bourgeois or revolutionary. In our view, therefore, it is impossible to separate nationalism from the class struggle; and the depth and closeness of this connection will have a vital bearing on the future of the South African revolution.

On the nature of our national struggle the ANC's Strategy and Tactics says;

'The national character of the struggle must therefore dominate our approach. But it is a national struggle which is taking place in a different era and in a different context from those which characterised the early struggles against colonialism. It is happening in a new kind of world — a world which is no longer monopolised by the imperialist world system; a world in which the existence of the powerful socialist system and a significant sector of newly liberated areas has altered the balance of forces; a world in which the horizons liberated from foreign oppression extend beyond mere formal political control and encompass the element which makes such control meaningful — economic emancipation. It is also happening in a new kind of South Africa, a South Africa in which there is a large and well-developed working class whose class consciousness and in which the independent expressions of the working people — their political organs and trade unions - are very much part of the liberation front. Thus, our nationalism must not be confused with chauvinism or narrow nationalism of a previous epoch. It must not be confused with the classical drive by an elitist group among the oppressed people to gain

ascendency so that they can replace the oppressor in the exploitation of the mass. But none of this detracts from the basically national context of our liberation drive. In the last resort it is only the success of the national democratic revolution which — by destroying the existing social and economic relationships — will bring with it a correction of the historical injustices perpetrated against the indigenous majority and thus lay the basis for a new — and deeper internationalist — approach. Until then, the national sense of grievance is the most potent revolutionary force which must be harnessed. To blunt it in the interests of abstract concepts of internationalism is, in the long run, doing neither a service to the revolution nor to internationalism.'

But the group of 8 see in this stress on the revolutionary role of the working class only a sinister Communist diversion to narrow the base of the national struggle. They echo the kind of attack which the most backward political forces in Africa have used under instigation from Western imperialism, to try to dragoon such movements as MPLA into some sort of acceptance of and accommodation to reactionary and counter-revolutionary nationalist forces in the spurious name of 'national unity'. The group of 8 complains that the SACP identifies

'two strands in this situation — a *so-called* bourgeois nationalism and a *so-called* revolutionary nationalism... Such dogmatic infusion of Marxist terminology into a situation with special characteristics of its own only serves the forces of confusion and division.'

Again they say that the SACP talk about 'progressives' on the one hand and 'reactionaries' on the other is in fact nothing more than a highly disguised sectarian attempt to substitute a class approach for the national approach to our struggle. Its most dangerous implication being to narrow down the broadly based African resistance and seeking to highlight only a workers' and peasants' conflict against capital. \*

(\* In fact the current fashion amongst ultra-left academic critics of our Party's policy is to accuse it of the very opposite: a failure to highlight the workers' and peasants' conflict against capital. But in their frenzied enthusiasm to attack the 'Communist-controlled' ANC and SACP from every possible angle, the group of 8 in fact contradict themselves earlier in the document when they say that a source of the organisational crisis in the ANC was a 'misguided and opportunistic definition of the nature and content of the SA freedom struggle *and projecting it as I fit were merely a struggle for the elimination of race discrimination.*')

An example of the type of nationalism which is not revolutionary but reactionary, and which objectively serves those who seek a neo-colonial type of 'liberation', is provided by the ideology of the group of 8. The group regards an emphasis on workers' and peasants' struggle against capital as an unpatriotic diversion. They believe that the concept of a bourgeois nationalism is a devilish invention of the Communists and that blackness alone is the test of the credentials of a South African nationalist. In effect they would like to see the ANC retreat into the past, and restrict its public policy to a vague, undifferentiated kind of patriotism which pretends to be classless, but which in practice serves the interests of the elite, the bureaucratic, the petty bourgeois minority.

They show the same spurious 'classless' formulation in their approach to the world struggle against imperialism, when they state that in international affairs they will work to change ANC attitudes by 'reinstatement of a foreign policy based on non-alignment.'

It is characteristic of the self-seekers amongst oppressed nations that they present their 'nationalist' ideology everywhere as if it were not ideology at all; the group of 8 follow that presentation. They claim that

'The ANC is not a political party committed to any political ideology.'(!!)

But, in fact, the history of its whole struggle has forced the ANC to reject this formlessness, just as it has for so many other revolutionary organisations. For such organisations as FRELIMO, MPLA and the PAIGC, it was the maturing of ideology, and steadfast safeguarding of their political line which enabled them to fight and defeat not only Portuguese fascism but also racist reaction and bourgeois nationalism in the ranks of their peoples. The importance of commitment to a revolutionary political ideology was stressed by the great Amilcar Cabral, speaking from the African experience:

'The ideological deficiency, not to say the total lack of ideology, within the national liberation movements — which is basically due to ignorance of the historical reality which these movements claimed to transform — constitutes one of the greatest weaknesses of our struggle against imperialism, if not the greatest weakness of all... Nobody has yet made a successful revolution without a revolutionary theory.' (*Revolution in Guinea — an African People's Struggle* p.75).

In Guinea the working class, in the sense in which Communists use the term, hardly existed; and yet Cabral goes on:

'We know that a struggle of the kind we hoped to lead — and win — had to be led by the working class; we looked for the working class in Guinea and did not find it... We realised that we need to have people with the mentality which could transcend the context of the national liberation struggle, and so we prepared a number of cadres from the 'small group of urban workers'... and even some peasants so that they could acquire what you might call a working class mentality... We are not a Communist Party or a Marxist-Leninist Party but the people now leading the peasants in the struggle in Guinea are mostly from the urban milieu and connected with the urban wage-earning group.'

Of tribalism in the Guinea-Bissau struggle, Cabral emphasised the way in which it is exploited mainly by 'detrified individuals or groups within the national liberation movement'. These groups corruptly play on tribal divisions to create a power-base for themselves in order to advance their careers. In the middle sixties, this is precisely what some of the leading members of the group of 8 were attempting to do within the ANC.

### **BEATING THE RACIST AND ANTI-COMMUNIST DRUM**

But now they are beating another drum, equally emotive and basically racist. In this respect too, they again follow the patterns set by the PAC in 1958. The group's statements and other pronouncements are filled with such phrases and expressions as 'non-African clique', 'the white-led CP', the 'failure of the non-Africans to humble

themselves' and 'submit themselves' and so on. 'The Morogoro Conference', they say, 'was a multi-racial affair'. This, they assume, damns it beyond redemption.

On the surface their main complaint is against the Morogoro decision to integrate non-African revolutionaries into the ANC's External Mission. Yet all those in the group of 8 who were present at the Conference neither voted nor spoke against the decision. We will return to the way in which this decision has been distorted. But for the moment we should ask what lies behind their policy of denying all non-African revolutionaries any place or any effective part to play in the work of the External Mission of the African National Congress. This policy means, in effect, that there is no place at all for a non-African revolutionary in exile, as they are well aware. For there is a long-standing decision adopted by the African National Congress leadership in the early sixties and endorsed by all the other partners in the Congress Alliance, that the whole South African liberation movement abroad would be represented to the outside world by the ANC only, acting for all and in the name of all.

Can it be that the group of 8 is saying that Indian and Coloured comrades on Robben Island and white comrades in Pretoria prison, some serving terms of life imprisonment for their part in both armed and unarmed struggle, should not have played a part, but should have restricted themselves to organising only among their own communities? Are they saying that non-African revolutionaries like Basil February, killed alongside Patrick Malaoa in Umkhonto's fighting ranks against racist troops, had no right to participate in the ANC's External Mission, or even to be a member of the ANC's Revolutionary Council? But, of course, they *are* saying all this. And, we suspect, more than this. Their prime purpose is to create a constituency for themselves and their reactionary ideology by appealing to racist emotionalism, prejudices and political backwardness.

Once again they ape the PAC who used precisely the same arguments when *they* were expelled from the ANC in the late fifties, long before the Morogoro decision was taken. It did not take long for the PAC to demonstrate what was really behind their attack on so-called non-African influence in the ANC. Shortly after their formation, they brought the white Liberal Patrick Duncan into their leadership and made him their official representative in Algeria; Gora Ebrahim became their chief ideologist and spokesman in Dar es Salaam; and others were brought into their top leadership. These acts fully exposed the hypocrisy and dishonesty of their criticism of the ANC. Clearly the truth is that white, Coloureds and Indians are acceptable as long as they are anti-Communist, anti-Soviet, and not left. The real attack on the ANC, then, was an attack on revolutionary nationalism, and the emotionally-charged approach of racism provided the smokescreen under which the attack was launched. Leballo in fact said as much when he let slip that

The African people in general... know them (the non-white partners in the Alliance), and when we want to fight for our rights, these people weaken us. This is so because they use campaigns for their own ends and also *because rile government will nor listen to our requests and demands because of their outlook.*' [our emphasis]

In the case of the expelled group of 8 it is equally clear why they are using the racist argument: firstly they hope that in the atmosphere of emotion that they build up by talk

of 'non-African cliques' and 'hijacking of the ANC', the real reason why they were excluded from the top leadership of the ANC will be forgotten. Secondly, whilst the racist bogey cannot be used against African Communists (who constitute the overwhelming majority of our Party's leadership and membership) it becomes a convenient weapon of attack against national leaders like Dadoo and other non-African Communists.

## **THE LIES AND DISTORTIONS**

The offensive which has been launched by the group of 8 against the ANC and the SACP is 'supported' by a stream of lies and distortions mostly about events which occurred some years ago. They hope that people who did not take part in these events will be misled into becoming hostile towards the leadership of the ANC and its allies in the liberation struggle. Let us examine just a few of the lies, distortions and half-truths which the group is attempting to spread.

## **WHY THE MOROGORO CONFERENCE WAS CALLED**

The group of 8 states that the 1969 Morogoro Conference was called under pressure from the SACP and minority groups.

### **THE FACTS**

The decision to call the Conference was taken unanimously by the NEC of the ANC which at that stage included four members of the group of 8 and the late Robert Resha whose name is being opportunistically exploited by the dissidents. Those who were present at the Conference could have had no doubt that it was convened because of the overwhelming feeling of the rank-and-file of the ANC and Umkhonto that a radical reappraisal was needed in a number of important areas. It was clearly felt necessary

(a) to create a more effective division between external and internal work by setting up special machinery under the NEC which would devote itself exclusively to problems of the internal struggle without being diverted by external solidarity work.

(b) to examine the composition of the National Executive Committee which had, by external co-option, grown to an unwieldy size. In addition, the personal misconduct of some of the Executive members had been severely criticised by the rank-and-file who were, as a result, beginning to lose confidence in the leadership.

(c) to find an effective place in the ANC's *External* apparatus for non-African revolutionaries who were expected (by a decision of the ANC at home) not to create their own separate external units.

The preparations for the Conference were perhaps the most remarkable that any exile movement has undertaken. A six-month period of intense, uninhibited and democratic discussion was encouraged. Literally scores of individual and collective written memoranda and other contributions had been submitted. In other words, it was perhaps the most representative and the most democratic ANC assembly since the days of legality. Just as the pressure for the Conference clearly came from the rank-and file

and the cadres in the camps, so it was the same groups who were the prime influence on the decisions which finally emerged.

## **THE COMPOSITION OF THE MOROGORO CONFERENCE**

The false version of the group of 8 is that the Morogoro Conference was unduly influenced and dominated by non-Africans. In the Makiwane memorandum it is described as 'a multi-racial affair which was attended by Africans, Coloureds, whites and Indians'. The innuendo is clear and is intended once again to invoke the ghost of 'racial parity'.

### **THE FACTS**

The non-Africans who attended were in fact appointed as delegates by the ANC's executive (which at that stage included men like Makiwane, Resha and Matlou) to ensure the presence of at least a few comrades who had connections with the ANC's allied organizations — the SACP, SAIC, CPC and SACTU.

In any case, non-Africans formed a minute proportion of those who attended. Out of approximately 70 to 80 delegates there were only three coloureds, five Indians and three whites. The proceedings themselves were overwhelmingly dominated, both in numbers and in contributions, by the rank-and-file delegates, particularly from Umkhonto.

## **THE CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP**

The change that took place in the composition of the National Executive Committee of the ANC has been described by the group of 8 as a sinister manoeuvre resulting from pressure by the Communists and the non-African groups who attended Morogoro.

### **THE FACTS**

Morogoro did not dismiss the NEC of the ANC. The NEC in fact came to Morogoro with the announcement that it had resigned en bloc and that it had mandated the Acting President General with full powers (assisted by the late J.B. Marks and Moses Mabhida) to reconstitute the Executive. The Acting President General announced that in carrying out his mandate he had been guided only by the *African delegates* at the Conference whose views he had canvassed. During the proceedings the delegates from the camps did not hide their outrage about the personal misconduct of some of the officials and members of the NEC. Most of those belonging to the dissident clique who were members of the NEC were also targets for such criticisms.

The non-African delegates to the Conference were neither singly nor collectively consulted on the composition of the new Executive. The Conference was informed that Executive members Temba Mqota (Alfred Kgokong) and Ambrose Makiwane had already been suspended from the Executive because of their pre-Morogoro attempts to organise an anti-leadership faction. When the names of the new Executive were announced all members of the previous Executive, such as Makiwane, Resha, Joe Matlou and others who were present at Morogoro, pledged their support to the new leadership

and offered their services in any capacity. It should also be recorded that some of those who were not reappointed to the new Executive were S.A. Communist Party members who had also forfeited their right to serve on the leadership because of personal misconduct.

## **NON-AFRICAN REVOLUTIONARIES**

The version spread by the group of 8 about the decision to integrate non-African revolutionaries into the ANC's External Mission is a deliberately misleading and grotesque distortion of the facts.

### **THE FACTS**

It is now conveniently 'forgotten' by those in the group of 8 who were present at Morogoro, that they did not speak or vote against the decision to integrate the non-African revolutionaries into the External Mission of the ANC. They in fact joined in the unanimous and tumultuous cheering which accompanied the adoption of this decision.

What in fact was actually decided? The decision was to integrate Coloured, Indian and white revolutionaries into the *External Mission* of the ANC. For this purpose branches were to be formed in those areas with a big concentration of South African exiled revolutionaries. The group of 8 has selected this decision (to which some of them were a party) as their main target for attack. It is in this area that their dishonesties, distortions and half-truths reach truly monumental proportions.

In every one of their pronouncements, including the above-quoted Makiwane statement, they baldly state that 'ANC membership has been opened to whites, Indians and Coloureds' but they dishonestly omit to mention that the decision explicitly referred **ONLY TO THE EXTERNAL MISSION OF THE ANC**. They also conveniently omit to mention that the decision **EXPLICITLY EXCLUDED NON-AFRICANS FROM SERVING ON THE NEC OF THE ANC**.

What then was behind the decision to allow non-Africans to participate at **CERTAIN LEVELS** of the External Mission? A brief look at some relevant post-1960 developments will throw light on this question.

We have already referred to the decision which was taken by the internal leadership of the ANC that, externally, its representatives should be the sole spokesmen on behalf of the liberation alliance and that the SAIC, CPC and COD should not establish separate external missions. This decision was taken after the break-up of the United Front which had operated outside for a short while and had included the PAC. It was endorsed by the leadership of the SACP and the other Congresses inside the country. Thereafter, as a result of the post-Rivonia terror, most internal organised levels of the liberation front (including the ANC) were, for a time, completely destroyed or incapacitated. It became necessary for the external forces to assume greater responsibility in many areas including the most important area of internal reconstruction.

Hence, inside the country the Congress Alliance in the form that it was moulded in the 50s, ceased to exist. And outside the country non-African revolutionaries loyal to the

original decision about the ANC's external mission could neither create their separate communal organs nor participate as members of those ANC organs also mandated to speak on their behalf. In addition there was widespread recognition that with the disappearance of the Congress Alliance there was no longer any *public* expression (either inside or outside the country) of the true character of the revolutionary front in South Africa and, in particular, of the nonracial content of our struggle. Indeed, reports indicated that the sudden disappearance at all public levels of the liberation front of leaders like Dadoo (whom the South African masses had always regarded as more than merely communal leaders) was being interpreted by many as reflecting a new policy of African exclusiveness.

It was partly in order to deal with these important problems that in the mid-sixties the NEC created a new apparatus in London under the late Robert Resha. In terms of his mandate Resha created an *ANC collective* which included non-Africans. At about the same time, leaders like Dadoo and September were being appointed to represent the African National Congress at international conferences as part of its own delegation and not as representatives of the CPC or SAIC. The practice also began of inviting leading personnel like Dadoo, September and Slovo to some of the extended meetings of the NEC. Executive members like Resha, Matlou and Makiwane welcomed this procedure and indeed were partly responsible for establishing it in the late 60s. They were also part of the collective which ensured that the Morogoro Conference was what they now disparagingly call a 'multi-racial affair'. What was different about Morogoro was not the fact that it had the usual sprinkling of leading non-African revolutionaries, but that it decided to find a place within the ANC External Mission (at levels below the top leadership) for non-African and rank-and-filers who had proved themselves in the struggle.

The Strategy and Tactics document adopted by the Morogoro Conference showed no ambiguity on the ANC's approach to collaboration with other revolutionary groups. Now, six years after the event, the group also, *for the first time*, dissociate themselves from the ANC Strategy and Tactics Document which they say 'was never discussed in the Conference'. Yet at the Conference itself they voted in favour of the document which like all others had been circulated for discussion long before the actual Conference took place. It stated:

'Whatever instruments are created to give expression to the unity of the liberation drive, they must accommodate two fundamental propositions: firstly they must not be ambiguous on the primary role of the most oppressed African mass and, secondly, those belonging to the other oppressed groups and those few white revolutionaries who show themselves ready to make common cause with out aspirations, must be fully integrated on the basis of individual equality. Approached in the right spirit these two propositions do not stand in conflict but reinforce one another. Equality of participation in our national front does not mean a mechanical parity between the various national groups. Not only would this in practice amount to inequality (again at the expense of the majority), it would lend flavour to the slander which our enemies are ever ready to spread of a multi-racial alliance dominated by minority groups. This has never been so and will never be so.

'Therefore, not only the substance but the form of our structural creations must, in a way which the people can see, give expression to the main emphasis of the present stage of our struggle. This approach is not a pandering to chauvinism, to racialism or to other such backward attitudes. We are revolutionaries, not narrow nationalists. Committed revolutionaries are our brothers, to whatever group they belong. There can be no second-class participation in our movement. It is for the enemy we reserve our assertiveness and our justified sense of grievance.'

And indeed the apparatus created after Morogoro in no way departed from this approach. The Executive retained its 100% African character. The Revolutionary Council (which includes one white, one Indian and one Coloured) is overwhelmingly African in both numbers and executive function. Every external mission is (with the exception of New Delhi and London) headed by an African. It therefore seems clear beyond any doubt that the continuous attack on the London office of the ANC because it is represented by a national leader like Reg September (who happens to be Coloured) is either crude Vorster-type racism or is cynically used as a cover for advancing corrupt political ambitions.

### **THE CONGRESS ALLIANCE**

On this question, as on so many others, the group of 8 invents 'facts' which it then supports with racist slander. Their document states that the Congress Alliance was dissolved in 1960 for 'two important reasons': one, the ANC and the COD were outlawed and the COD disbanded itself; two, the ANC decided to embark on armed struggle, 'but some of the constituents of the Alliance, the South African Indian Congress and the Coloured People's Congress, the South African Congress of Trade Unions, did not adopt the policy of armed struggle.' The group alleges that the non-African section outside wanted to revive this Alliance in its original form but 'the main basis of the ANC's rejection (of this attempt) was on the ground that the non-African contingent and their organisations had to consider the repercussions for all involved in a situation wherein some organisations had adopted a policy of armed struggle whilst others had not'.

### **THE FACTS**

In the first place it is not true that the Congress Alliance was dissolved in 1960 or at any stage in the sense described by the group of 8. After the outlawing of the ANC, the Alliance continued to operate in clandestine conditions. Leaders of the Congress Alliance met regularly and there is public evidence of raids by the Security Police on some of these meetings under the chairmanship of the late Chief Albert Lutuli. This arrangement continued until the Rivonia setback which, as we have seen, for a time destroyed most internal levels of organisation of the whole liberation front. In this sense it could be said that it was enemy action which effectively destroyed the Congress Alliance inside the country.

The policy of armed struggle was initiated in 1961 (and not 1960) by the ANC *and the* SACP (a fact which is deliberately omitted by the group of 8). For tactical reasons both organisations decided that the armed wing of the liberation movement — Umkhonto — should operate as an 'independent' body. It was some time after the commencement of

the sabotage campaign in December 1961 that MK's connection with the liberation movement was divulged externally by Robert Resha.

For the same tactical reasons (which seem very obvious) *it was decided that the SAIC, CPG and SACTU should not do anything to jeopardise their legality by an open commitment to armed struggle.*

But right from its inception Umkhonto (by decision of its founders — the ANC and SACP) incorporated militant revolutionaries from every section of the Congress Alliance. Robben Island and Pretoria are still filled with 'a fair share' of Indian, Coloured and white revolutionaries who 'waged war'. And the group of 8 have the temerity to say 'how very immoral indeed are some people to speak of a Council of War before they have even taken a decision to wage war'. How very immoral indeed are some people, like Makiwane and Mqota, who have never lifted a finger to engage in war whilst in South Africa, to talk this racist reaction about the Kathradas, the Naidoos, the Februarys, the Aprils, the Goldbergs and the Fischers!!

But in any case it is completely untrue to suggest that there was an attempt outside by any group to revive the defunct Congress Alliance in exile in the form in which it had been historically formed in the 50s. Certainly as far as our Party is concerned the position we consistently adopted is contained in the 1970 report to a Plenary Session of our Central Committee which says:

'Our movement has moved away from the concept that the Alliance necessarily implies a single formal defined structure. We see it operating at a number of levels and simultaneously in a number of different ways. We must discover and integrate individual revolutionaries. We must achieve a broad collaboration between the ANC and the other community bodies. We must cement a formal working relationship between the Parry and the ANC and so on. As our work inside the country develops, consideration will have to be given to the need for collaboration between our revolutionary movement and other bodies such as student, trade union, peasant movements etc. This will not necessarily imply the incorporation of these bodies into a formal front with a defined structure. It is clear that in this sphere there can be no rigidity. The different structures which are created from time to time must serve the political needs and the political realities. The primary problem at each stage is the mobilisation of the maximum number of forces for revolutionary aims. The precise manner of achieving this is complex and many-sided and must not necessarily be sought for in a single formula and a single structure.'

## **THE PARTY**

It is for our Party that the group of 8 reserves its most poisonous distortions. In their hymn of hate against us, they falsify our history and deliberately distort the composition of the Parry and the true nature of its relationship with the liberation movement. We say 'deliberately' because in the case of at least two of the clique (Kgokong and Makiwane) they were both members of the SACP during the 50s. Both were subsequently expelled when, outside the country, they attempted to use the Party as a base for their tribalist and factionalist activity against the ANC.

Examining only the opening paragraph of the section in the Makiwane document headed 'The South African Communist Party', we find that every single line bristles with deliberate distortions and lies. The paragraph reads:

'The SACP was formed in 1921 as a white organisation. It remained as such for a full decade and when, during the thirties, it decided to recruit Africans into its ranks, it was to pursue a consistently incorrect policy on the national question. For instance it resisted the slogan of the Communist International calling for the setting up of a Black Republic in South Africa, and it opposed all moves aimed at consolidating African trade unionism, insisting on a multi-racial set-up despite the fact that the white working class had shown its determination to carve for itself a position of privilege and was to support Industrial Colour Bar and Job Reservation.'

It is a fact of history that the SACP emerged largely from the organised white labour movement at a time when the black proletariat was still in its infancy and the white working class as a whole had not yet been fully co-opted politically into the ruling class. Nevertheless, right from its inception its constitution was non-racial and its membership included blacks. It is untrue that the Party was a white organisation for a decade and that it only began recruiting Africans into the Party in the thirties. Already by 1928, of the 1,750 Party members, 1,600 were Africans. It was also during the middle and late twenties that names famous in South Africa's working class and national movements, like J.B. Marks, Moses Kotane, Albert Nzula, Gana Makabeni, E.T. Mofutsanyana, Johannes Nkosi, Josie Mpama, were already leaders and activists of the Party. By 1929 Albert Nzula was the Assistant General Secretary of the Party and was acting as Editor of its official organ, *The SA. Worker*. Gumede, the President-General of the ANC, told the February 1927 Congress of the League Against Imperialism in Brussels:

'I am happy to say that there are Communists in South Africa. I myself am not one, but it is my experience that the Communist Party is the only party that stands behind us and from which we can expect something.'

And at the ANC's annual conference in June 1927, in his Presidential Report President Gumede said:

'Of all political parties, the Communist Party is the only one that honestly and sincerely fights for the oppressed people.'

It is also a fact of history that the call for a Black Republic was adopted at the Party's 7th Congress in 1929. True enough (and understandably) a spirited debate within the Party preceded the adoption of this history-making policy. But our Party has the distinction of being the first organisation in the history of our Continent to call unambiguously for black majority rule on the basis of universal suffrage. This was at a time when even the ANC stopped short of this demand. Why then do the authors of the Makiwane document falsify so blatantly when they say that the Party 'resisted the slogan'?

It is also a fact of history that from the twenties onwards Communists were right in the forefront of attempts to build and consolidate African trade unions. By 1926 Black Communists were active enough in the ICU to provide Kadalie and his liberal advisers

with the excuse to push through a resolution excluding Communist Party members from holding office in the ICU. This move was, like all such moves, designed to steer the ICU towards a more 'moderate' and 'sensible' policy. Already at its 3rd Congress in 1924 the Party decided that failure by the existing trade unions to admit African workers required the Party to go all out to organise separate African unions. It was the Communist Party and its activists which both inspired and helped to build the Federation of Non-European Trade Unions in the twenties and thirties and the Transvaal Council of Non-European Trade Unions in the forties. It was our Central Committee who went on trial for the Party's role in helping to build the African Mineworkers' Union and supporting the historic African mineworkers' strike of 1946. Communists were again in the forefront of those who, in the fifties, helped found and organise the South African Congress of Trade Unions, the membership of which was overwhelmingly black. And against all this incontrovertible evidence, we are now told by this middle-class clique that the SACP 'opposed all measures aimed at consolidating African trade unions'.

We have dealt with the opening paragraph of the group's diatribe against our Party as an example of their reckless and deliberate disregard for truth. The balance of their document is equally studded with petty lies. They know (certainly those of them who were members of the Party during the fifties) that in the stirring campaigns of the fifties our illegal Party played a most important role. Yet they say that after dissolving in 1950 the Party 'remained dormant for a whole decade'. Some of them know too that the overwhelming majority of the membership and the leadership of the Party is black, yet they nevertheless spread the smear that it is 'white-led'. They are aware that by the fifties the Party's illegal network had spread to every major South African centre, and that by 1960 five underground national conferences had already taken place. And yet they resort to another childish invention that the Party had to 'rely on a number of members of the ANC to help out' with the first illegal leaflet distribution. On this question, too, the jails of South Africa have the answer: Robben Island and South Africa's other jails hold many of the Party's leaders and activists;

It is clear from the few distortions we have dealt with that there is no limit to the depths to which this group is prepared to sink in its unprincipled assault against our Party and all sections of the liberation movement.

Above all the group has attempted to distort the true character of the collaboration between our Party and the national movement.

Our movement has never hidden the fact that there is a relationship between the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party on those questions of policy which both organisations share in common. In particular both organisations believe that in the present stage of the revolutionary process in South Africa, the primary aim is the national liberation of the most exploited and most oppressed section of the South African people — the Africans. It is well known that throughout the forties, fifties, and sixties, the two organisations collaborated on many issues. Dr A.B. Xuma was meeting with representatives of the Communist Party. Chief Lutuli had the closest working relationship with Comrade Moses Kotane who was both General Secretary of the S.A. Communist Party and also a member of the NEC of the African National Congress.

'This collaboration', says the Central Committee report to the 1970 Plenary Session, 'is not, as our enemies always allege, a ploy to create front organisations or to 'capture' fraternal organisations and transform them into wings of the Party. Indeed, where objective circumstances require it, the true independence and political expression of other social forces (whether economic or national) must be safeguarded both in the letter and in the spirit. A Party exercises its vanguard role in relation to trade unions not by capturing them or transforming them into wings of the Party, but by giving correct guidance in the best interests of their members; and by individual Communists proving that they are the most loyal, the most devoted and the most ideologically clear members. The same principle applies when we examine a situation such as ours in which the main content of the immediate struggle in our country is the liberation of the African people whose national movement is devoted to this end.'

In the middle sixties, the late Robert Resha was the first to announce externally at a meeting in London (when questioned about the need for liberation unity) that there was in fact liberation unity in South Africa and that it correctly expressed itself in an alliance between the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party and the other Congresses. In deeds, as well as in words the basis of collaboration between the two organisations has always been founded on a respect for the absolute organisational integrity and independence of each.

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In his closing address to the Morogoro Conference, Oliver Tambo received a prolonged standing ovation when he exhorted the delegates present to:

'wage a relentless war against disrupters and defend the ANC against provocateurs and enemy agents. Defend the revolution against enemy propaganda, whatever form it takes. Be vigilant, comrades. The enemy is vigilant. Beware of the wedge-driver, the man who creeps from ear to ear, carrying a bag full of wedges, driving them in between you and the next man, between a group and another, a man who goes round creating splits and divisions. Beware of the wedge driver, comrades. Watch his poisonous tongue.'

And now the wedge-drivers who had been working behind closed doors against the whole liberation movement and its policies have come out into the open. They are part of the impure load which every revolution carries and when that load is thrown aside the journey to victory is always a swifter one.

<http://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/sections/sacp/1976/hidden-enemy.htm>