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# Hammer and sickle hopes revived

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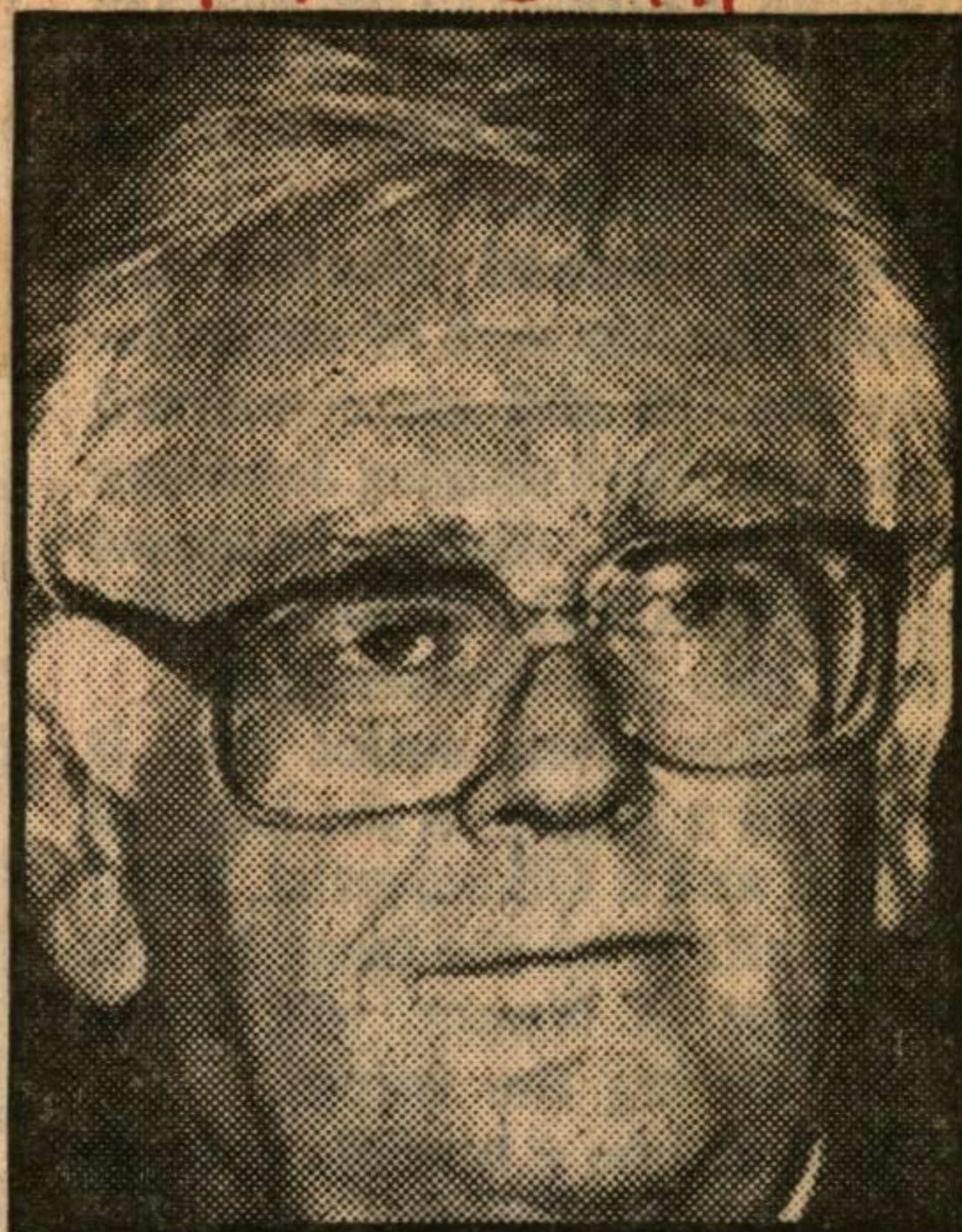
CAPE TOWN, Friday: As communism recedes in Eastern Europe, South African ideologues are preparing to re-hoist the hammer and sickle inside the apartheid State on Sunday.

The South African Communist Party (SACP) — traditionally an ideologically rigid Marxist-Leninist organisation — has hired an 80,000-seat Soweto soccer stadium for a mass rally aimed at ending four decades of underground activities.

However, plans for the launch ran into problems this week when police claimed SACP members were involved in a "conspiracy" to smuggle arms into the country.

More than 45 people, including a top communist official, Mr Sathyandranath "Mac" Maharaj, are being held under security legislation because police believe they are trying to sabotage peace talks between the Government and the SACP's long-standing ally, the African National Congress (ANC).

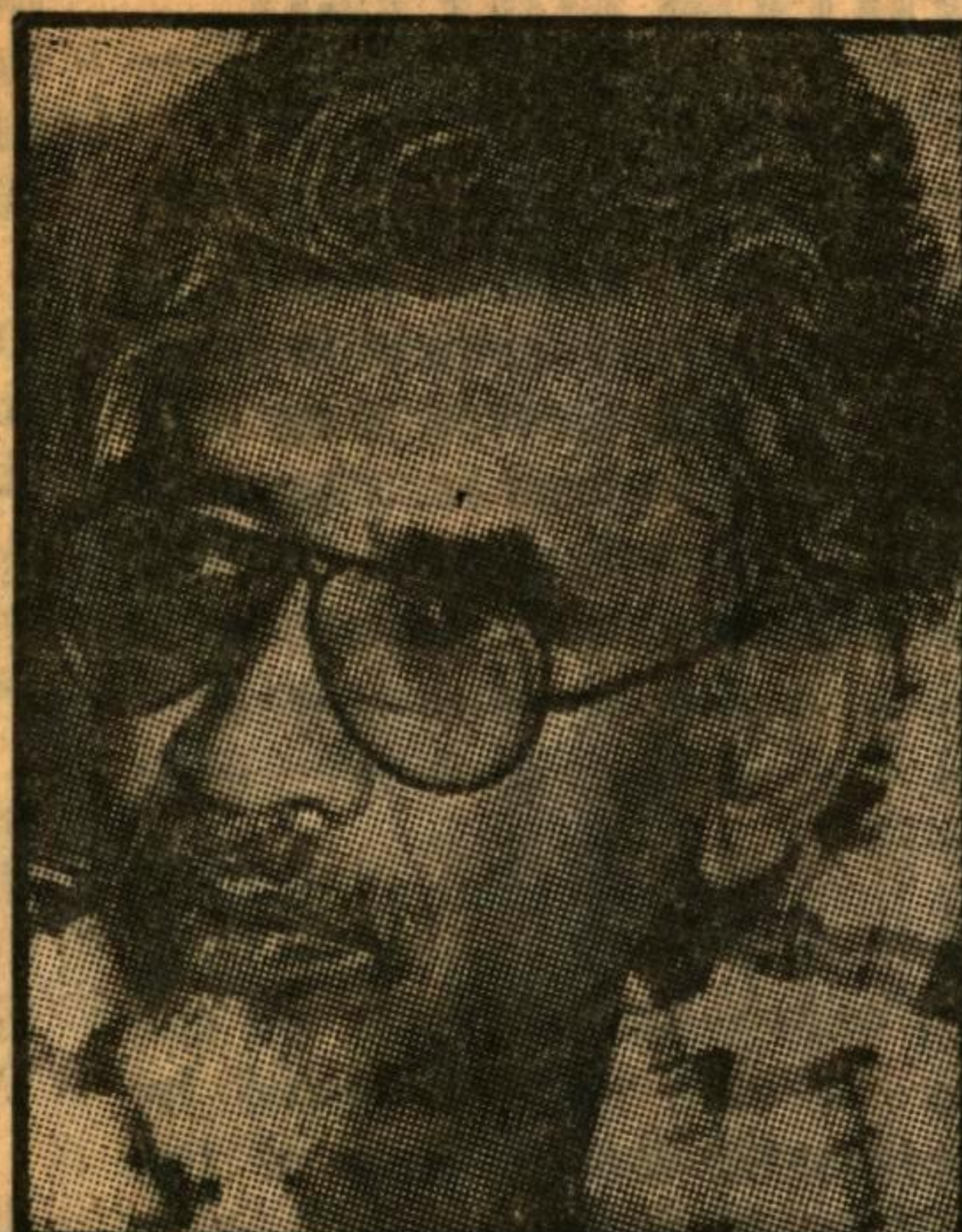
SACP spokesmen dismiss the arrests as a cynical attempt to undermine the party's launch, but the incident has again raised questions about the relationship



Mr Slovo ... dual member of the SACP and the ANC.

between the ANC and the SACP.

Ties between the two organisations — both made legal by President F. W. de Klerk in February — are so close that some political commentators describe the more popular ANC as just a horse for a communist rider. These analysts believe SACP officials such as Mr Joe Slovo have infiltrated the ANC executive committee in order to hijack the policies of the black nationalist movement.



Mr Maharaj ... being held under security legislation.

While Mr Slovo has promised to identify other high-ranking dual members on Sunday, he is unlikely to confirm a 1987 US Central Intelligence Agency report concluding that more than half the ANC's 35 executive members were also leading communists.

The nature of the ANC-SACP alliance will also be addressed by the ANC's deputy leader, Mr Nelson Mandela, a non-communist who refuses to cut ties with the

party because of its traditional support for the black cause.

Mr Mandela's speech is certain to prove a major drawcard, making attendance figures an unreliable method of assessing the extent of communist support.

In spite of the SACP claims that its cause is more popular among blacks than at any other time during its 69-year history, the party also cannot claim to be unaffected by the political transformation of Eastern Europe.

Practically, it has lost considerable financial and material support.

Ideologically, the SACP also has been forced to reconsider its role. The effects of perestroika forced Mr Slovo to soften some of his more hardline views earlier this year in a paper entitled *Has Socialism Failed?* In the document, the SACP official criticised a one-party system as "a shortcut to political tyranny" and committed his organisation to a multi-party democracy.

In addition, he appears to be questioning the necessity for a vanguard party characterised by a small, secret membership operating on quasi-military lines.

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