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"TWINNING BEYOND TWINNING"

A Report from the Anti-Apartheid Movement's National Committee

The Anti-Apartheid Movement, at its 1990 AGM, responded to the unbanning of the African National Congress by agreeing to a new campaigning initiative based on the "twinning" of the 14 ANC Regions which had been established within South Africa, to the AAM's regions or equivalent structures.

This decision was based on an understanding that the struggle for freedom and democracy in South Africa had reached a new stage, and that if the goal of a united, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa was to be achieved, it was essential that the maximum possible support - both political and material - be rendered to the ANC so that it could advance the struggle in these new conditions. It was also recognised that the immediate objectives of the ANC were the establishment of an Interim Government and an elected Constituent Assembly to draw up a new constitution. It was crucial, therefore, to lay the basis for the maximum possible support for the ANC in the elections to such a Constituent Assembly in order to ensure a genuine end to apartheid and the adoption of a fully democratic constitution.

Despite certain organisational and logistical problems, the "twinning" approach has proved to be a most important initiative and is helping to achieve the objectives outlined above.

However, both the "twinning" initiative and other developments, have led to considerable debate and discussion over other forms of "twinning" beyond those directly between the ANC and AAM regions. Broadly speaking, such "twinning" beyond "twinning" is motivated by two related considerations:

- the importance of providing solidarity to non-racial formations within South Africa other than the ANC, eg COSATU and its affiliates, civics, women's organisations, student bodies, community groups, etc, in their efforts to secure a genuine end to apartheid and a non-racial democracy;
- the need to begin to relate to a new agenda - the overcoming of the legacies of apartheid - which involves "linking" with schools, health projects, literacy schemes, sporting bodies, etc, to provide support for them in beginning to build a new South Africa

Clearly, both of these motivations are ones which would enjoy the full support of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. However there are real questions which need to be considered before giving a blanket endorsement to all forms of "twinning". This is especially the case since at this stage of the struggle within South Africa the Movement faces two apparently contradictory tasks.

On the one hand the AAM has to overcome the perception which is widely held, although wrongly so, that the structures of apartheid have largely been dismantled and therefore that the goal for which the AAM was founded has been achieved.

Yet the AAM also has to prepare public opinion so that it can be mobilised to address the legacies of apartheid. However, by even raising this issue, the AAM can, unless it is most careful, reinforce

the view that the apartheid system has been, or is about to be eliminated.

The most important questions, therefore, which need consideration are:

- i) the nature of the signals which the AAM should be sending to its supporters, as to its assessment of the stage of the struggle which has been reached;
- ii) the need to identify priorities given limited resources;
- iii) the need, if any, for consultation over "twinning" projects to ensure that they are consistent with the AAM's objectives.

In order to provide answers to these questions, the National Committee suggested at its meeting in February 1992, when it considered the resolutions adopted at its 1991 AGM, that appropriate consultations should take place with the ANC Chief Representative and the newly established section of the ANC Projects Department in London. As a result this report has been prepared which it is hoped will assist in providing guidelines for local anti-apartheid groups, AAM affiliates and other organisations associated with the Movement, as to how to approach "twinning" beyond "twinning".

Firstly, the main priority for the Anti-Apartheid Movement in this area, at least up to the holding of the first democratic elections, must be the "twinning" between AAM and ANC regions. This is first and foremost because the best, indeed the only, guarantee that a genuinely democratic constitution will be adopted by an elected Constituent Assembly (CA), will be if the CA contains a substantial majority who are in support of South Africa's democratic forces - of which the ANC is the most significant component.

An additional advantage of presenting "twinning" with the ANC as the main priority, is that it provides us with an excellent opportunity to present the case for continued support for the country's democratic forces in order to ensure a genuine end to apartheid - a stage which will only be reached when a new democratic constitution is in place.

Secondly, the AAM has always recognised that the process of democratic change within South Africa requires the strengthening of all non-racial democratic formations. This has been recognised especially by the trade union and student movements, but during the period of the Mass Democratic Movement, it found expression in support for civics, SAYCO, National Sports Congress, and a host of other community based initiatives. Clearly this support needs to be sustained during this period.

The AAM should therefore be promoting and encouraging such support, especially by the trade union movement in support of COSATU and its affiliates, by the NUS and student unions in support of the South African Students Congress (SASCO), and by local authorities for the civic structures brought together in the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO).

The AAM/ANC "twinning" could also be strengthened by encouraging women's organisations in Britain to work with the ANC Women's League and other appropriate non-racial women's organisations working to empower women in South Africa.

It may be appropriate, provided that it does not conflict with existing arrangements, for such support to be organised within a similar framework to that of the AAM/ANC "twinning" ie using similar regional structures. Thus a student union in Scotland could establish a "twinning" relationship with an equivalent student body in the Transkei.

It is important, however, that such support should be seen as complementing and reinforcing solidarity with the ANC rather than an alternative.

Thirdly, there is a real potential to build on "twinning" with the ANC and support for the wider non-racial democratic movement by developing programmes of "people to people" solidarity involving projects designed to tackle the legacies of apartheid. Whilst the priority for the Anti-Apartheid Movement must be the AAM/ANC "twinning", it could play a key role in encouraging groups and institutions to initiate such projects. Examples could vary from major projects such as "twinning" between a British and South African university to simpler ideas such as school to school "twinning". Again, it may well make sense to encourage such links on a regional pattern similar to the AAM/ANC "twinning".

However, to have the AAM's approval, any such project must have as its objective, support for the democratic transformation of South Africa. Links should not be being established with existing apartheid institutions which includes local government structures and much of the educational system. Thus before establishing any such links, it is important that those involved understand fully the nature of the body with which they wish to establish relations and be confident that the project will assist the democratic transformation of South Africa. The Anti-Apartheid Movement, nationally, regionally and locally, can play a role in ensuring that this is the case by facilitating appropriate consultation with the ANC Chief Representative. The ANC has its own Projects Department with a newly established section based in London which can identify appropriate projects which will be consistent with these objectives.

CONCLUSION

This report has been prepared on the basis of discussions with the ANC including the Chief Representative and representatives of the ANC Projects Department in London. It was originally presented to the Seminar on 'Twinning' organised by the AAM in May 1992. Regional structures involved in "twinning" were asked to comment, and in the light of comments received and further consultation with the ANC, this report was presented to the National Committee in October and finally approved.