

Cam/054/0026/4

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICA

Toronto Unit

Minutes of Unit meeting 7 November 1990

Present: Zaheer B, Nomp, M Ayesha A, Baboo M, Fatime B, Michael R, Raymond L, Sam K, Ebrahim M, Bafo Nyanga, Ahmed M, Aleem J, Willinki M, Peter B.

Guests: Hilda and Rusty Bernstein, Kadar Asmal

Apologies: Mervyn L, Linzi M.

1. Delegate for National Consultative Conference in December in SA.

The RPC has decided that each Unit should submit the name of one representative who is able to go to SA to attend the Conference. The Units will then elect the two delegates from that list (one of which must be the Chief Representative).

There was much discussion about this procedure, which was an attempt to allow other Units more input into delegate selection. Some thought that the Toronto Unit should have more say, since it has so many members; others pointed out that members from other Units would not know members outside their own unit, and could therefore not vote in a meaningful way. Several suggested that Cmde Jabu should be the second delegate, since he spends so much time on ANC work. Cmde Nomp pointed out that women and youth should be given some consideration.

It was decided ultimately to adhere to the RPC decision, and nominations were taken. Nomp, Jabu and Aleem were nominated. Aleem could not stand because of school work. Members voted, and Cmde Jabu won the election.

2. Cmde Ahmed reported that Garnett Williams Hall (in Vaughan), where we had our last dance, has been booked for February 16. Tickets will be on sale soon. It was suggested that other SAN groups be informed so that they do not organize a conflicting dance (Nirvana, Forum Club, etc).

3. Cmde Ahmed announced the social gathering - pot luck dinner - to be held at Peter Bunting's house at about 8 pm on Saturday November 24. Comrades are asked to phone him with suggestions about what they might like to bring along.

4. Cmde Hilda Bernstein was invited to say a few words about her visit to Canada. She indicated that the time spent by South Africans in exile was a part of our history, and she was anxious to record that history. She had already done interviews in Africa and Europe, and was now in Canada. She encouraged us to participate in the process: even reluctant interviewees in the past had appreciated the opportunity to speak to her.

5. Kadar Asmal addressed our unit about his recent experiences in

South Africa. Some of the points made by him were:

- he found it exhilarating and rejuvenating to return to see the tremendous resilience of the people in the face of such hardship.
- yet he realised that apartheid has been horribly successful in its territorial partitioning of the country and of the people.
- it was clear to him that the ANC is the only non-racial, non-sexist organization in the country, and that the people need it.
- we will be locked in negotiations for some considerable time.
- the return of exiles and release of political prisoners are still not completely resolved: release of prisoners is essential before the Consultative Conference takes place.
- there is large-scale repression especially in the Eastern Cape, where meetings are illegal and are being broken up.
- much of the violence, especially in the East Rand, is the result of a "third force", which may involve internal security, informal groups, Inkatha, etc. Regime knows about it, but won't act.
- de Klerk's idea of power sharing includes a rotating prime minister, with all parties taking part in Government (a change from current practice in the white elections).
- the Constitution commission of the ANC has completed its first draft, which will be released as a discussion document soon: wants feedback from everyone.
- our task is to keep Canadians with the ANC, not only in a solidarity role as before, but actually fighting for us.

There followed a period of questions and answers.

On the question of problems for returning exiles: jobs and housing are scarce, as is training and employment. The task of organizing the ANC is extremely difficult, even though regional executives are in place: we need money, we have little access to the media, the government has the upper hand. Indeed, they are already fighting the next election. He encouraged all who can to return by ourselves (as he is doing), but to inform the movement that we were doing so. The movement's first priority has to be to return those in the camps; then those in other parts of Africa; and finally, those in first and second-world countries.

On the question of the negotiation process re: prisoners and exiles: there is a working group looking at armed struggle, another looking at the return of exiles, and a third at political prisoners. We are still learning how to negotiate - the government tends to take most of the initiatives. Even the matter of defining a political prisoner has been difficult. In Zimbabwe and Namibia, a third party was involved in making most of these decisions, which were usually favourable to the Patriotic Front and SWAPO. But here, the government tends to have more input than it should, and the process is slow and not always favourable. Some prisoners will be allowed a third of their sentence in remission plus one year, rather than be completely released. (This applies to anything that takes place after October 8). Indemnity forms are in place, and a copy has been left with the office. He agreed that it was unfortunate that we had to apply to an illegitimate government for indemnity and permission to return; but the reality is that de

Klerk has political power at present.

He mentioned that the Emergency in the cape covers huge areas - Wynberg, Rondebosch, Cape Flats, Gugulethu, Kayelitsa, etc.

On the question of privatization: COSATU and the ANC were quite clear on the future SA having a mixed economy; public utilities and major public social services would be nationalised (health, education, transport, etc). But the ANC does not have a huge amount of money to buy back all of the things it might like to. At present, the apparent "non-racialism" is, of course, a sham: whites can't integrate state schools without a ballot that includes a 90% response of voters, of whom 82% must agree with the change! Even then, the Minister is not bound by it!!

He pointed out that shares in SA are mostly owned by organizations (building societies etc), rather than individuals (as in Thatcher's Britain). So that the black population cannot easily gain ownership of businesses etc privately. When the land act is repealed next year, all that will happen is that the 13% set aside for blacks now, will be put up for sale - and will most likely be bought by whites! Racist apartheid is being converted to non-racist apartheid. Freedom of association means that any racial group can form a one-race association privately: there is no human rights commission proposed.

On the question of the negotiations deadlock:

Cmde Asmal pointed out that, even though our ultimate objectives were clear, in the heat of negotiations, we may have to accept many compromises which are less than ideal, as an interim objective. He pointed out that SWAPO won 57% of the popular vote, yet they have 3 Ministers from other political parties, to help with reconciliation. Even though comrades like Mac Maharaj have been detained for four months, and some have been tortured, we cannot completely abandon the negotiation process now. The people want peace, and even if we wanted to, we may not be able to start up armed struggle again. Mozambique, Angola and even Zambia have been battered to the ground as a result of their support for our struggle. Their economies and social infrastructure are in tatters. Even Eastern Europe will not support us as they did in the past. And at the UN we do not have the kind of clout that we used to.

On the question of sanctions: we must maintain the present sanctions at all costs - more for the psychological effect this has on the regime than on the real economic impact. It is the ANC who should decide when the process is irreversible.

On the question of violence; 70% of the police support the Conservative Party of Treurnicht. They act independently of the Government as part of the "third force". At the time of the "Total Onslaught" under Botha, it is probably that all kinds of plans to deal with our movement at this stage were devised and are being implemented. The media use all sorts of carefully chosen words to destabilise the situation and discredit our movement (such as anti-muslim riots, when a few muslims are hurt). The government knows

about Inkatha, but they serve their interests, so they are unwilling to act against them.

Cmde Chairman took pity on the three guests, who had all travelled recently and were suffering from jet lag, and terminated the meeting at this point.

NEXT UNIT MEETINGS:

THURSDAY	DECEMBER	6.
MONDAY	JANUARY	7.
TUESDAY	FEBRUARY	5
WEDNESDAY	MARCH	6