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)NS SEMINAR

ltonal Seminar, organised by the
mom Special 'Committee against
and the World Campaign against
rd Nuclear Collaboration with South
in London from 28th-30th May, and
clamtion which incorporated a series
sale to strengthen the arms embargo,
: its strict implementation. These
lations were forwarded to the world
0:: sanctions, with an appeal for their

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m: 150 participants at the seminar.
lernments were represented; national
movements, including ANC, SWAPO
2); and non-governmental organisa-
dexperts were invited to readpapers.
mar expressed its concern at "the
eat that the apartheid nuclear bomb
the peace of Africa and the world, "
accept that "in the case of .South
aningful distinction could be made
laboration for peaceful purposes and
clear weapons production. " The
. stressed the importance of the man-
embargo, which has created serious
r theSouth African military, depriv-
litll'mplies. It discussed the supp-
ms sent by the United States to
ciding that the supply of arms to
ummgateforeesamountedtoama-
cthearms embargo, and urging the
Joe Security Council to give im;
alien to the matter.
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In a message to the seminar, President Tam-
bo pointed out that the United Nations Security
Council arms embargo remained riddled with
loopholes, because the logical steps to strengthen
it had been resisted by certain member states.
Referring to the failure of the Security Council
to impose mandatory sanctions following
Pretoria's aggression against Botswana, Zambia
and Zimbabwe, President Tarnbo concluded:
"The latest abuse of the veto power by the
United States and United Kingdomare an act that
flies in the face of the world-wide condemnation
of Pretoria's attack on three Commonwealth
countries in order to torpedo the Commonwealth
peace initiative, and must be vigorously eon-
tiemned. It must be taken as a challenge by the
international community in general, and the
Commonwealth countries in particular, to
strengthen the arms embargo and to take effec-
tive measures, especially the imposition of com-
prehensive and mandatory sanctions against
racist South Africa. "

On 1 1th June, as part of the celebrations mark-
ing the 350th anniversary of its foundation, the
University of Utrecht in the Netherlands
presented an honorary doctorate in law to Win-
nie Mandela. As Winnie Mandela could not be
present, the award was received on her behalf '
by Comrade Rose Motsepe, of the ANC mission
in the Benelux countries.

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' By Wally Serote

This was an address given at the Second Con-

ference of African and Swedish Writers in Stockholm in April 1986.

The ANC, and as a result the people of South Africa, have a history of having had to sacrifice all basic human needs: family warmth and friendship, the right of living in ones country, demanding from each individual to make the demand from themselves of the highest form of discipline so that their actions define them as freedom fighters. And then, that each South African forges a lifestyle which equates freedom with life." That is one part of the story. The other is that the ANC, having demanded only the best of itself and of the people of South Africa, then forged alliances and friendship with governments, organisations and peoples whose purpose for living is to make the world a better place to live in. The people of South Africa have not only rejected apartheid, but have gone further, and created an alternative to it, the ANC. If we agree that culture is how people organise themselves to harness nature so as to better their lives, and also, that it is when they make rules for themselves so that they know how to relate to each other in the process of harnessing nature, ensuring that the rights of individuals, groups, and the nation are protected, in order that the national collective talent contributes to progress, joy and peace of the world in general, then simple logic would inform us that apartheid, whose basic principle is discrimination based on skin colour and super-exploitation of the majority by a minority which apartheid defines as 'the "master race" ', we then understand how apartheid itself is a violent cultural and political programme. In the South African context, a few get the best, the majority the worst.

Lessons of History

History has taught us that it is not in the nature of man to accept oppression and exploitation, and the people of South Africa are no exception to this rule. Therefore, a regime in power which formulates apartheid and implements it, will naturally be faced with rejection and hostility from its victims, and therefore will have to devise strong means of making its violent cultural and political programme acceptable.

The minority White regime in South Africa then, having devised apartheid and having created a strong security system to protect and implement it, has had also to seek allies and friends to make progress out of its backwardness and to share the loot. On the other hand, as I pointed out above, the ANC and the majority of the people of South Africa by saying, "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White. and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people," faced with the might of the "master race, " set new cultural reference for the people of South Africa and the world to relate to.

This is the story about two forces, one fighting for the oppression and exploitation of the majority, and the other fighting for the majority to become free, non-racial and democratic. It is a story of how a people can degenerate to the lowest form of human life. It is also a story about how a people can emerge in glory as they release their power for creativity to utilize the individual and collective talent and put these to the use of V all - to the glory of humanity!

Three hundred years of living under oppression and exploitation is a thorough process of generations upon generations being subjected to a systematic programme of dehumanisation; and seventy-four years of being an organised people struggling to become part of humanity is, on the other hand, a pointer to the size, depth and height of odds faced, and also to the vastness of the wealth of experience gained. This, in varying ability, has been the exploration of the cultural manifestations of South Africa.

It is against this background that South African cultural work and cultural workers must be judged.
(Continued on page 18)

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Whether we are looking at films, paintings, lithographs, theatre, dance, and/or music, all the time. Our guide is what role have these cultural manifestations played to record the story of the people of South Africa, to portray the state of this country, to contribute to the betterment of their lives, to inspire these same people to show their aspirations, and to give lasting and comforting hope, so that their lives are led forever optimistic.

It is not possible then, under these circumstances, to have cultural workers in South Africa who create art for its own sake, or cultural workers who have taken no side in this serious conflict. Nor is it possible to be alive and creating a world which is, on a daily basis, fighting for peace for all in it, while its other part creates tensions and prepares for the complete annihilation of humankind, and be neutral. We as cultural workers, like everybody else, must take positions on these matters.

Having said that, I want then to confront a very difficult and very serious reality which confronts everyone on a daily basis, for, without doing this, it becomes irrelevant. Also, since I am dealing with South Africa, it is best to focus at the real reality in that country. The ANC made a call to our people to make apartheid structures untenable and the country ungovernable. The apartheid regime has directed all those who support it, especially its supposedly invincible security system to, by all means, defend apartheid, this crime against humanity. What do these positions mean for the people of South Africa on a daily basis?

Writer Must Face Reality

I am not here to use literature, since that is what brought us here together, to look at the issues of this country. The pictures of today's reality are grim, and can be blood-curdling. Let us take one incident, which is grim. Which most of the people in the world are aware of because it was carried from bloody streets of South Africa into the homes of people inside the country and into all parts of the world. A young woman who was still a student was hurled into living rooms and streets. She had just been bound, made to wear the necklace, and we watched as she wriggled underneath the raging flames which were consuming her clothes, her leg and, eventually, her life. Those who did it said that she was working for the police. They were doing this as they were burying seven young men of their age who had been killed by grenades. The people of the township where this was happening said the grenades were a booby-trap set by the police, and that this young woman who died such a grim death was responsible for, and had directly participated in, planning this grim incident of killing the seven youngsters. A funeral procession which was held together by revolutionary songs and had been brought together by the deaths of the seven young fighters, whose bodies were in the coffins which the procession suspended into the air as it marched, watched as the young woman was caught, bound and burnt. What is all this?

Well, the death of this girl, more than anything else, must make us sober. It must demand of us to find out why it is possible for a little girl, for

that matter, for anyone, to die such a ghastly death.

Suppose it is true what the people are saying about this little girl, what does this say to a writer, and what can a writer do with such grim information? Suppose it is not true what the people were saying, the question remains, what does this say to a writer and what can a writer do with such information? What are the tools and skills which a writer must have to handle such matters? And, why must a writer deal with such matters, or does a writer have a choice: is it a matter of take it or leave it?

That is one incident. The other is that the world has been witness, as daily for the past twenty or so months, the South African regime, with frightening coldness, sends its soldiers and police into the streets of townships all over South Africa to kill hundreds of young girls and boys in defence of White domination. We also heard what the reasons are for all this. What does a writer say to the many, many other fighting young girls and boys who have decided that no one will stop them from facing the soldiers. for as long as the white minority regime remains in power. We also know what the regime says about all this, and daily we witness what it does about those who say it through flowing blood, their own blood, that South Africa must change, will change. We have also heard the ANC call to the people of South Africa to render South Africa ' ungovernable algae that they must form organs of popular power. Each side is going to use all its resources to achieve its objectives. Whose resources are South African cultural workers? Apartheid Does Not Respect Ute

We must answer this question, for then the answer to it enables us to answer once and for all the issues raised by the death of the girl and the death of the seven young tighters. We may not know the details of these terrible incidents but we know one thing: the minority regime has no respect for international law, for the sovereignty and independence of other countries, as the people of Southern Africa have come to know. It has no respect for life, will stop at nothing to maintain white domination. To them, we can say, it must be very clear that we do not want our children to be used for, or killed to save, apartheid which is a crime against humanity. Then we must, as writers, arm the minds and hearts of our children with knowledge, with hope, with optimism, with courage, that not one of them must be used to save apartheid.

South African literature which does not address itself to these issues is irrelevant. Writers who are not part of this unfolding process cannot write about the lives of these people. Why? That is so because we can only know how green the grass is and how many brown patches of earth hide themselves by reducing the distance between us and the grass we are looking at.

A bloody conflict is ensuing in South Africa. The people are saying that they have created street committees. These committees are taking control of the hearts and minds (to use words that have been made bloody) of the oppressed. 'These committees are receptacles of new ideas which must challenge and do away with old ones. What literature must these people read, or what can the world read and learn from the literature of these

embattled people? That to me is the issue which South African writers must answer through what they know best, and it is the only tale they can tell well to their people and to the world. The courage, the hope, the optimism of these people, young and old, including children, who are part of the street committees, hold and hang on every second, every minute and hour which passes every day as blood flows, as gunshots crack, and gun-smoke smells.

Oh comrade

We would love less

You and I

If we loved nothedom more

says Lindiwe Mabuza in her poem, To a Comrade.

ANC Leads the Struggle

There is one truth that a South African writer knows: the world hears a lot about young men and women, the under thirties, who, through their lives, articulate the day-to-day struggle of the people - that the world knows; whereas writers also know that the day-in-day struggle of the people is a manifestation of the presence of the African National Congress which is leading and guiding the process of struggle. This struggle is for the people to seize political power so that they can use the creative ability of everyone to build a new South Africa. What contribution can the South African literature make to this process? It is my view that one reason for our being in this conference is about that question; that the presence of writers from other countries enables us to learn from them and their people, and that they can learn from us and our people, and since South Africa is part of the world and as a result of this conference, it is our task as writers to support firmly this noble objective of the people of South Africa, also, to learn from them for our creativity.

Lerato Khumalo, a South African poet, in her poem Childhood in Soweto, in which she so ably portrays the life of a child who has to grow up in this township, where "There are no playgrounds" and "There are no stars/ to twinkle twinkle little eyes," concludes:

But I have seen new plays

in one act

announcing the birth

of childhood

grenades clearing the night

of blinders of smoke

and hurdles

passing the child

into star-grappling teens

adulthood without passes

in Soweto

in towns and cities

north and east

growing jiam

Soweto.

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