

SOWETAN, 30 JAN. 1984



Part of the crowd that applauded the call for liberation of the mind.

SOWETAN Domestics call for liberation

By SINNAH KUNENE

The domestic worker has to liberate her mind first if she hopes to be liberated from the oppressive conditions under which she is employed in this country.

This call was met with overwhelming applause by about 700 members of the South African Domestic Workers' Association (Sadwa) reportback meeting held at Immaculata Hall in Rosebank last Thursday.

Addressing the meeting, a Durban-based member, Mrs Mary Mkhwanazi, said the or-

ganisation had laid down rules and regulations which will help stop exploitation of domestic servants in "this non-recognised" industry.

Tabled at the back of the newly introduced membership cards, the rules include among other things, restrictions to all job vacancies which were previously occupied by fellow Sadwa members who were sacked following a dispute over wages.

The meeting strongly warned the members about such practices, as they felt some domestic

workers were collaborators in the continuous exploitation of the black workers.

Mrs Mkhwanazi urged for more membership of the organisation, which she believes should outnumber all other organisations' labour unions in the whole country.

She said in Durban alone, statistics for registered domestic workers (which could be more as there are many others who are not registered) released by the Port Natal Administration Board count 28 600 males and 53 960 fe-

males, and the Drakensberg Board has recorded 15 746 domestics from Pietermaritzburg.

"In the Transvaal we should be having more than 100 000 domestic workers, adding other branches throughout the country, we are definitely a strong force to be reckoned with," said Mrs Mkhwanazi, amid shouts of "Phambili Sadwa" (forward Sadwa).

Dwep (Domestic Workers' Employment Project), which aims at improving the working conditions of domestic workers, and spearheads the Sadwa, has

closed down due to lack of funds. But this did not dampen the spirits of the strong labour force, as already another union office has been established in Johannesburg.

The chairman of the local branch, Mrs Margaret Nhlapo, who recently lost her job as a result of Sadwa commitments, is the full-time adviser. The office is situated at Chester House, 132 Jeppe Street, Johannesburg. The telephone number is 838-6488. The office is open from Monday to Friday during office hours.

COMMENT

IT WAS termed a crucial meeting for the Media Workers' Association of South Africa. The meeting was specially called to discuss two vital issues — the admittance of whites in Mwasa and the affiliation of the organisation to the United Democratic Front.

We will not try to prejudice the intents of an organisation that has fought vehemently for the rights of black journalists. What we will try and ponder is their reconciliation with the dynamics of the emotional black politics. Mwasa was in an invidious position, like so many pragmatic organisations.

What they have obviously reconciled with is whether or not the course of black advancement can be helped by co-operation with whites. They have obviously pondered if the totality of advancement is divorced from the totality of prejudice. But they are also aware that the totality of prejudice somewhat militates against black advancement, especially in apartheid-ruled South Africa.

But like so many other black organisations, Mwasa has been driven to the limits of political pragmatism. Can an organisation really perceive itself of truly being progressive by shacking its black oriented stand? Can an organisation call itself progressive by being progressive enough to move from racial prejudice?

This is the dilemma of black political organisations. Even black trade unions. The line of demarcation between fighting for labour rights and black rights is so thin that both are indivisible from each other. But for a journalists' organisation to belong overtly to any political organisation would be a move to cede their right to objectivity — whatever their individual political affiliation.

It is not for this newspaper to decide what Mwasa should do, as they did over the weekend by splitting right down the middle, but to acknowledge that politics of liberation have been clouded by the dynamics of southern African politics.

So many groups purporting to be the sole custodians of the liberation struggle, have sprung up in the post ANC and PAC era. Because of the two bodies being banned, it has been difficult to openly declare an ANC or a PAC stand.

This is the dilemma of black politics as evidenced by the stand taken by the UDF as against the National Forum, the two most representative organisations.

Whatever we think of the black struggle we believe it is now crystal clear that a rethink into the strategy is imperative. Above all we think it is time all black organisations came together to work out a common basis if not a compromise. For all we know the UDF and the National Forum as organisations operating overtly in this country, have all the justification for sticking to their guns.

The meeting of Mwasa over the weekend has spelt it out. The question of multiracialism and black exclusivity is one for debate. What is clear to us is whether race has anything to do with advancing the liberatory struggle or not. Could we be wrong to surmise that the struggle can be advanced from economic, social and political grounds without being racist. This is the dilemma of the politicians. Something they can consider as food for thought.

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SOWETAN, Monday, January 30, 1984

Priest calls for Mandela's release

LONDON — The release of Nelson Mandela and other black leaders followed by negotiations on the future were the most dramatic actions the South African Government could take to prove to the front line states that it was moving in the right direction.

This point was made by Archbishop Trevor Huddleston in an interview following a three-week African tour that took him to Zambia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Tanzania as a guest of the respective governments.

Archbishop Huddleston made the trip as president of the Anti-apartheid Movement to determine whether the movement accurately reflected the viewline states. He was accompanied by Mr Abdul Minty, honorary secretary of the AAM.

In Zambia and Tanzania his hosts were presidents Kenneth Kaunda and Julius Nyerere respectively. In Zimbabwe he had discussions with President Canaan Bababa, prime minister Robert Mugabe and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In Botswana and Mozambique he spoke to a number of cabinet ministers.

In all the countries, he met prominent politicians, clerics and others.

Archbishop Huddleston said his discussions centered on the South African Government's aggression against the front line states and its destabilisation campaign in Southern Africa.

"I found complete unanimity on these issues. The leaders I spoke to were all agreed that aggression and destabilisation formed the

basis of South African foreign policy in the area. They totally discounted the South African Foreign Ministers denials."

The leaders were also agreed that apartheid was the core of the problem and that there could be no peace in southern Africa, no stability on its borders, until apartheid was ended.

Nowhere was this sentiment more forcefully expressed to him than in Mozambique — on the same day that the South African delegation arrived in Maputo for talks.

Alex leaders granted bail

FOUR leaders of two Alexandra township organisations were last week each granted R500 bail by a Johannesburg Regional Magistrate after being held for more than two weeks in terms of security legislation.

Mr Paul Mashatile (22), president of the Alexandra Commuters' Committee (ACC) and his deputy, Mr Mack Lekota (55), appeared before Mr W Aucamp.

They were not asked to plead to charges under the Intimidation Act

and no evidence was led. The case was postponed until February 10.

The four men were detained by the Security Police about two weeks ago, while the Putco bus boycott in the township continued. Several other residents connected to the two organisations were also held in the pre-dawn raids.

Miss Naomi River, Mr Jacob Mtshali and Mr Obed Bapela, the Ayco executives, who

were detained at the same time with the four men, were early last week released by John Vorster Square police without being charged.

Meanwhile the Rev Abel Moleleki, of the Methodist Church in Alexandria and Mr Michael Vilakazi of Ayco, were detained and held in terms of Section 50 of the Criminal Procedures Act.

Mr Vilakazi was briefly held and released

by the police after questioning by police last week. Mr Moleleki, whose home was also searched last week, said then that a typewriter and a duplicating

machine were removed.

The ANC held meetings organised with Ayco at the Methodist Church, when the fare increases were introduced.

Nothing to offer

SIR — Please allow me to come out in support of Peter Fenyane of Saulsville (The SOWETAN, December 15, 1983).

Azapo and the UDF should leave our councillors alone. It is a fact that every child has to crawl before he or she can walk. Participating in Government-created institutions is only the beginning.

These two groups claim to have the support of the masses, yet only 1 000 people at-

tended the extensively published meeting at Regina Mundi on November 27. The UDF is clearly following the Committee of Ten into political bankruptcy.

The groups are too negative and unconstructive. They seek some sort of credibility by criticising those working within the system, yet they have nothing to offer. At their meeting one speaker after another — some with tears in their eyes — takes the platform

only to tell the audience that the true leaders of the people are either in prison or in exile.

Azapo has the habit of trying to impose its decisions on the community. Some time ago they tried to stop soccer fans from patronising Ellis Park and were promised a beating. More recently they tried to stop Inkatha members from attending a rally at Ngoye. In the ensuing clash many were killed and wounded.

These groups had a chance to prove that they have a high following by contesting the recent local elections.

If they had won the big majority they claim, they would have clearly proved a point which even the outside world would have taken note of. This having been done, they could have resigned en masse thus placing the Government — no friend of theirs — in the horns of a dilemma.

G H THWALA

Dube Village

Mwasa Congress 1984

THE Media Workers' Association of South Africa (Mwasa) split into two in East London at the weekend, when two of its five regions opted for a constitutional amendment allowing whites to be members.

At an emotionally charged congress which lasted for less than four hours, proceedings were brought to an abrupt end on Saturday when members of the Southern Transvaal, followed by those of Natal and the Northern Transvaal, staged a walk-out.

The dissident groups, Western Cape and Border regions, also opted for the organisation's affiliation to the United Democratic Front (UDF), a move that was fiercely opposed by the Transvaal Region, and one which has over the past few months fomented tension within the organisation.

The East London meeting was a special constitutional congress called to address itself mainly to the membership clause and that of affiliation to political organisations. The con-

Split over whites, UDF

stitution was also to be structured so as to give Mwasa a more pronounced trade union outlook.

The Southern Transvaal maintained from the very outset that Mwasa would remain an exclusively black organisation and that it would not affiliate to either the UDF or the National Forum.

The two clauses were non-negotiable cornerstones of the organisation, on which the Southern Transvaal had resolved during its regional congress held three weeks ago that it would not even discuss or vote on.

The Southern Transvaal and the Western Cape regions are Mwa-

sa's biggest and strongest regions with the Southern Transvaal having been the organisation's stronghold from where it has drawn its leadership since its formation.

In a joint statement released yesterday, Southern Transvaal, Natal and Northern Transvaal felt that they would continue operating as Mwasa and to maintain the organisation's standpoint on the two controversial clauses.

In a statement, Mwasa said affiliation to the UDF was viewed as "a betrayal of workers' interests."

"As a black trade union our responsibility is to the welfare and protection of our workers rather than coercing them to follow a particular party line.

"This does not in any way suggest that black workers are removed from politics, but we believe they are able to decide for themselves what political ideology to follow," the statement said.

On the question of opening Mwasa to whites the statement said Mwasa was made up of black workers who had common problems and a need to identify with each other.

"No whites are part of the working class in this country as they make the laws and are privileged. Whites are haves and blacks are have-nots."

Mwasa suggested the two "renegade regions". Join the Southern African Society of Journalists or the South African Typographical Union or form their own multi-racial organization.

The statement said the three regions would remain as Mwasa and continue to serve the interests of their members, "as this was more important than playing non-white politics."