

SOLOMON MAHLANGU FREEDOM COLLEGE

REGION REPORT - ITALY

Our mission to Italy started in the late seventies. I am the third Chief Representative to be posted to this country. There are no members of our organisation that know of in this country, except for one student who studies about three hundred kilometres from Rome and someone called Govin Reddy who is a journalist.

Our organisation has no office of its own, we conduct our operations from a little corner inside the offices of a sympathetic non-governmental organisation called CIES. This NGO was responsible for the December 1985 visit to Italy of our SOMAFCO students. This mission is staffed solely by the Chief Representative.

1. In April 1985 I assumed duties. Comrade Thami Sindelo before his departure introduced me to the Communist Party of Italy, comrade Soncini of Reggio Emilia, to two trade unions CGIL and CISL respectively and to the NGO Molisv. These organisations give monthly contributions towards our rent and transport costs.
2. MOLISV has had a long relationship with us and has for several years been engaged in ANC projects. In Reggio Emilia, comrade Soncini through the National Committee has spear-headed support programmes. Prominent among these was the sending of two shiploads of solidarity goods to our comrades in the West and to East Africa. Mention is also made of support we once received from factory workers in Modena, who donated woodworking machinery for Star Furniture; I am following up this contact.



This mission has no records of past projects; whatever was done in the past was apparently handled directly between the particular donor and our National Treasury. However, we are presently in the process of reorganising ourselves. Thus far we have had three meetings at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation together with four NGOs who have expressed interest in understaking projects with the ANC.

#### FUND RAISING

Italy has a population of fiftysix million people and is a multi-party country. There are no records in this office of past fund raising activities that were taken here on our behalf. In this connection through the recently created National Coordinating Committee against Apartheid, we have embarked on a nation wide campaign. Our objective is to conscientise the local public into supporting our just struggle politically and materially.

Financial support in this country is very difficult to obtain. Business houses because of commercial links or other ties to South Africa are reluctant to support us.

CIES has currently launched a subscription campaign for SOMAFCO; prospects for its success are bright. In addition to appealing at rallies I have also been speaking to church groups and recently been given by a Protestant group a cheque for one million lire for our Womens' Section.

Public interest in the South African quuestion continues to grow here in Italy. Local trade unions, NGO's, Catholic and Protestant church organisation are willing to fund projects for us but are less enthusiastic when it comes to making cash contributions. Together with the friends I have just mentioned we are in the process of devising ways of fund raising apart from project undertakings. Needless to say, the Iltalian lire is not a strong currency, It is strictly controlled and is not negotiatable outside the



the E.E.C. countries.

In conclusion, our mission will at the forthcoming Fund Raising Workshop give a comprehensive report. In the meantime, we are seriously addressing ourselves to the President's call of January 8, and are conscious that for our struggle to move we need money. We are gearing ourselves to go out and find it or perish in the effort.