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AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS OF SOUTH AFRICA

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POLITICAL PRISONERS BULLETIN

The last year has witnessed a high level of campaigning for the release of political prisoners both inside South Africa and internationally. At the same time the regime has continued to intensify its repression. At least 965 people were detained in 1980, 36 were sentenced to a total of 227 years imprisonment for offences under the Terrorism Act 14 were banned. Statistics reveal the broad sweep of people involved in all-round struggle against the regime: Of those in security police detention last year, 341 were school pupils, 117 college and university students; 32 lecturers, school principals and teachers; 67 political leaders; 39 community workers; 10 journalists and 21 trade unionists and workers.

SOLIDARITY WITH SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS!

The campaign for the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners has once again focussed attention on the barbaric policies of the Pretoria racists who keep more than 500 political prisoners incarcerated in Robben Island and other prisons. It has particularly emphasised the plight of the people's leaders, serving life sentences (and in South Africa with no remission for so-called "security prisoners", a life sentence means imprisonment until death) who have been in prison for up to 20 years.

Recent information indicates that the more than 15 women political prisoners have been moved to Pretoria central prison where they are being kept in almost complete isolation from the outside world. They have no access to newspapers, censored news broadcasts, recreational or sports facilities, and have been moved from various prisons without the knowledge of their families.

THE ANC CALLS ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO REDOUBLE ITS EFFORTS TO FIGHT FOR THE UNCONDITIONAL RELEASE OF ALL NAMIBIAN AND SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL PRISONERS.

SOLIDARITY WITH THE PRETORIA THREE THEY MUST NOT DIE

The passing of death sentences by the Pretoria Supreme Court on three ANC combatants last November, has evoked world-wide condemnation. On November 15, 1980, Ncimbithi Lubisi (28), Petrus Mashigo (20) and Naphthali Manana (28) were found guilty of "high treason" and sentenced to death by the apartheid court. Their six fellow combatants were sentenced to terms ranging from 10 to 15 years.

BACKGROUND TO TRIAL

This action by the racist regime came at the end of a year which had seen unparalleled resistance and struggle by the fighting people of South Africa. School boycotts, rent strikes, bus boycotts, nation-wide action by the black working class, campaigns for the release of political prisoners — all these factors compelled a desperate regime to attempt once again to cow our people. The brilliant attack by combatants of the people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, on the oil from coal plants at Sasolburg and Secunda in June, 1980, was yet another strong affirmation that power must inevitably pass into the hands of the people.

FEATURES OF APARTHEID 'JUSTICE'

The trial involving the Pretoria Three displayed all the characteristics of "legal" proceedings in Apartheid South Africa. Witnesses for the State gave their evidence in camera, while those on trial testified about the torture they had undergone at the hands of the notorious security police. Moses Molebatsi described how "a bag had been put over his head and he felt as if he was suffocating. He had been shocked by electrodes fixed to his head and handcuffed in a squatting position to a bar".

The Pretoria Three were found guilty of an attack on a police station in Soekmekaar (in the Lebowa bantustan) which took place in January of last year. Although nobody was killed during the armed propaganda action, the Judge found that the three had "intended" to harm the policeman inside the station. Giving evidence in court, Petrus Mashigo explained that their action had been in solidarity with the people of the area who had been involved in resisting brutal mass population removals by the racist regime.

SPIRIT OF RESISTANCE

Matched by the singing crowd of relatives and supporters, the Pretoria trialists displayed the spirit of resistance synonymous with their peoples struggle. The Pretoria Three were all products of the 1976 student uprisings: Lubisi explained that the sight of young children mowed down in the streets of Soweto had necessitated his return to South Africa "to fight for my rights".

After the death sentences were passed, hundreds of people surrounded the Pretoria Supreme Court singing freedom songs in solidarity with the trialists. Immediate reaction to the death sentences inside the country included a statement by the Womens Federation of South Africa in which they declared their intention to circulate a petition throughout the churches in South Africa in an effort to prevent judicial murder by the racist state.

INTERNATIONAL ACTION MUST BE INTENSIFIED

The response by the international solidarity movement to the call for an emergency campaign to save their lives was swift and effective. The level the campaign has reached is reflected by the fact that the security council of the United Nations met in special session to express its grave concern over the death sentences passed by the Apartheid regime. As a signatory to the Geneva conventions of 1949 and their Protocol 1 of 1977 on the humanitarian conduct of war, the African National Congress is calling on its supporters to increase the demand for prisoner of war status for captured freedom fighters.

As the Pretoria Three wait on the outcome of their appeal against the death sentences, a grave responsibility lies with the world's progressive and democratic forces to ensure that the apartheid regime is prevented from carrying out its criminal murder.

SUPPORT THE CAMPAIGN TO SAVE THE PRETORIA THREE!

URGE YOUR GOVERNMENT TO INTERVENE!

† Protest to P.W. Botha, Union Buildings, Pretoria, South Africa

† Send messages of solidarity to Manana, Mashigo and Lubisi, Pretoria Maximum Security Prison, Pretoria, South Africa

DEMAND PRISONER OF WAR STATUS FOR THE PRETORIA 3 AND ALL CAPTURED FREEDOM FIGHTERS

RACIST FORCES ABDUCT ANC MEMBERS FROM MOZAMBIQUE

On January 30, 1981, during the barbaric attack on ANC residences in Matola, Mozambique (in which 12 ANC members were killed), racist South African troops abducted three ANC members: Selby Mavuso (26), David Thobela (26) and Thibe Ntsekang (25). Reports in the South African press suggest that the regime is preparing to put them on trial in connection with the SASOLBURG attack of last June.

The African National Congress has appealed to the international community **TO TAKE URGENT ACTION TO SECURE THEIR RELEASE AND IMMEDIATE HANDOVER TO THE GOVERNMENT OF MOZAMBIQUE.**