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African National Congress

(South Afn'ca)

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THE ANC AND THE STRUGGLE OF OUR YOUTH

Dear Friends and Comrades,

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mathia-a few days eaiy at the beginning of this month three young men have died in the custody of the South African regime's policeznone of them had reached thirty years of age yet:

They were

- Mohammed-Allie Razak, a clerk of 28,
- Andries Raditsela, official of the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union, aged 29, and
- Sipho Mutsi, a leader of South Africa's student movement and its organisation Cosas, who was just 20 years old.

Tens of thousand turned up at their funerals, thus making it clear that they are regarded as victims of the Apartghid system as well as heroes of the resistance struggle against thisucrime against humanitye as the United Nations have brandished South Africa's policies.

Among the numerous crimes this regime has committed and continues tto commit against our people, some of its most heinous have been specifically against our youth and children:

On the shoulders of the apartheid regime rest such crimes as the scandalously high infant mortality rateamongst Black children;

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the stunting of their Growth through the use of child labour; the warping of their intellectual development through Bantu Education. Also, South Africa is littered with the graves of young patriots massacred by the apartheid regime in 1976 and in the subsequent years.

And this self-same regime has, with great impudence, decided to observe the International Year of the Youth, whose motto is: Participation, Development and Peace!

Thus, a special responsibility devolves on our youth during this year to take this year as their own and to use it as a means to advance our own perspectives of youth participation in society, in development and in the struggle for peace.

Already the youth of our country have won international recognition as dedicated and gallant fighters in the leading ranks of our revolutionary struggle. Their contribution is already manifest in the changed and changing fortunes of apartheid rule within South Africa. They are already playing their part in giving shape to the South Africa of the future.

The South Africa of today, as our National Executive Committee stated recently, is a country where events "are moving with astonishing speed"

"In our January 8th message we issued a call for the intensification of our liberation offensive on all fronts, the transformation of more and more localities into mass revolutionary bases, and the need to take further strides towards rendering the country ungovernable.

Only three months have passed since that call was made and already

the surge of people's resistance and active defiance have reached new heights. The face of our country is changing before our very eyes.

- In the black ghettos of the urban areas the legitimacy of authorities of all types is not just under attack, it has been largely destroyed. Most of those who served white rule in the so-called urban councils have suffered the wrath of the people. But many have respected the demands of the people by resigning.

- The tri-cameral parliament has exposed its complete impotence in the present crisis and continues to be shunned. The Bantustans are universally held in contempt.

- Well-organised stay-aways in localised areas have once again drawn attention to the potential of the organised workers to bring the ruling class to its knees.

- The people, by their actions, are teaching black police and soldiers that there is no place in our communities for those who wear the uniforms of apartheid and who carry out orders to kill, maim and torture their brothers and sisters.

- All attempts to tame our fighting students have failed and more and more schools and universities are becoming flashpoints for freedom.

- The continuing street confrontations with the enemy's armed forces show that our people, in massive numbers, not only want a new order in our country but are also prepared to sacrifice life, if need be, to bring it about.

- The people, undaunted by massive state repression, are openly demonstrating over and over again that the ANC is their legitimate and overall leader on the road to People's Power.

On the side of the people the conditions for a revolutionary leap forward are beginning to mature. On the side of the ruling class the economic and political crisis has reached new heights.

It is clear that the racists cannot continue to rule in the old way. The bankrupt and dying regime is being kept alive by those who carry arms in its defence. All attempts by it to find alternative solutions have landed on the rocks. All Botha's reforms, designed to defuse the developing revolutionary assault, trigger off even more vigorous mass opposition. ...

The historic conditions which are necessary to ensure the collapse of the apartheid system and the creation by the people of a new social order are beginning to take shape in greater measure than ever before in our history."

These developments are due to a large extent to the relentless struggle of our youth. They to whom we can proudly call our own have swollen the ranks of the mass movement by joining the struggle in

hundreds of thousands. Despite the campaign of murder and terror unleashed by the regime, they have stood firm in their demands. They have refused to break from the ranks of the struggling masses. And, fired by the heroic example of Umkhonto we Sizwe, our armed wing, more and more of them are searching for ways to organise themselves into effective combat units to defend the people, deal with the collaborators, and to hit directly at the enemy's armed personnel.

This is not a new characteristic in the history of our liberation struggle. The Youth have always played an important role in our people's fight against apartheid rule and for a non racial South Africa. To name only a few of these brave fighters:

- Johannes Nkosi, born in 1909, was already a seasoned veteran of the trade union movement and the workers' struggle when he was killed by the racist police on December 16th 1930. At the age of 19 he had taken part in the strike against the pass laws, led by the ANC. Coming from the countryside and working as a . ge/uha; \$1"me

domestic servant, he had joined the in 1926. In

a tribute to Johannes Nkosi, Albert Nzula wrote:

"A thousand Africans must take the place of Nkosi. Let his cowardly murderers know that the African Giant is awakening and nothing will stop his progress."

This call was heeded by many.

Among them was

-Ahmed Kathrada, who at the age of 34 in 1964 was sentenced to life imprisonment for his part in Umkhonto we Sizwe together with Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki and the others of the so called Rivonia trial who are still in prison. Born in 1929, i

he left school at 17 to work full-time in the office of the Transvaal Passive Resistance Council and was jailed for the first time that same year for civil disobedience.

- Dorothy Nyembe, who was released out of prison after 15 years for "harboring terrorists" for Umkhonto in 1968 last year 1'

to rejoin the ranks of the progressive movement again. She already)only

played a prominent part in organizing the 1955 demonstrations in Pretoria protesting the extension of passes to women.

One of the most important developments has been the foundation of the ANC's Youth League in 1943 in which Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo took part among others. The Youth League's Programme of Action was later adopted by the whole movement. Its significance is that it brought about a qualitative change in the political development and growth of our movement. The Youth

League played an important part in the transition to the militant nationalism which dominated the mass struggles of the ANC and its allies in the 1950s, which in turn laid the foundations for our underground struggle when this became inevitable after the banning of our movement in 1960. And again young men and women were in the front of the sharpening guerrilla warfare which was started in December 1961.

Umkhonto has produced an impressive galaxy of young heroes such as Basil February who fell valiantly in Zimbabwe in 1967; Solomon Mahlangu who was hanged in 1979, but whose name still strikes fear in the hearts of our enemies, and whose final words remain an inspiration to all: "My blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of freedom. Tell my people that I love them and that they must continue the struggle."; or Thandi Modise, a young Umkhontotgitant who at the age of 21 was convicted to eight years of imprisonment.

These examples are inspiring our struggle on all fronts.

One of these fronts is the fight against so-called Bantu Education.

When this was introduced the then Minister Verwoerd declared:

"When I have control of native education, I will reform it so that natives will be taught from childhood that equality with Europeans is not for them. ... There is no place for him (the African) in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour."

The stunning results of this inferior education, which is called "gutter" education by South Africa's Blacks illustrate what apartheid has in store for the children and youths of the country: A University of Cape Town study of adult illiteracy in South Africa has found that the number of illiterate people in the country could be as high as nine million.

- 33 % of Black people over the age of 15 can neither read nor write, while the figure for whites over the age of 15 was only 0.72 %.
- Among Coloured people, 15.5 % are illiterate, and the figure for Asians is 7.8 %.
- Admission of Black students at university is 2 % as compared to Whites (86.1 %).

Our movement and young Blacks have been opposing this education since its introduction in 1954.

In 1976 the introduction of the Afrikaans language of the ruling boers sparked off the Soweto uprising by thousands of Black students, in which more than 600 young demonstrators were killed by the police according to official figures. The Soweto uprising was largely spontaneous and unorganised - still, the spokesmen of the student councils expressed their respect for the jailed ANC leaders and themselves to continue the traditions of the ANC's struggle.

Soweto was the beginning of a new phase. "After June 16 1976, many said South Africa would never be the same again", Bishop Tutu recalled in 1981. "And a truer word was never spoken. Have you ever seen such determined young people, determined with a new determination that they and all of us, black and white, will be free? Have you seen ever anything what borders on recklessness in their confrontation with and lack of fear of the police - running the gauntlet of police dogs, tear gas, police bullets and prison as if these were just ordinary, just daily occurrences, as they display with increasing daring what everybody knows are

ANC insignia, ngsettes and flags; their leaders making fiery speeches and giving heroes' funerals to those whom the authorities call terrorists?"

Since 1976, in fact, there have been dramatic changes within the youth movement, changes which constitute a qualitative difference. They concern the social position of the youth in our society and the lessons to be drawn from this assessment.

First, it is important to note that the important role played by youth: at different stages of our struggle has led some people into misconceptions. It has led them to evolve false theories about the youth constituting the most revolutionary class which has to be the vanguard of the struggle. These dangerous and reactionary "theories" have been embraced by a tiny section of the South African youth. This has resulted in frantic efforts to detach the youth of our country from older generations of our fighting people with a view to weaken the revolutionary movement as a whole. Though these ploys have failed, it still becomes necessary to tackle this aspect.

The youth are not and should not be viewed as a class but as a social group (which is not homogenous) that corresponds fully to the social structure of a given society. In South Africa, the youth is born in a colonial society characterised by institutionalised racism, national exploitation and oppression of the majority of the people and their bitter life and death struggle against this. Thus the youth are born into and experience the same sufferings as the whole of the oppressed population. Thus, the struggle for youth rights, universal education, against unemployment etc. is not the mainstream of the

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national liberation struggle headed by the African National Congress and its ally I W

According to the growing political consciousness among these facts there has been since 1976 growing coordination of activities not only on the youth front but QED in the broad front for national liberation in line with the call of the people's movement for Greater and greater unity in action. On the youth front this co-ordination has been clearly demonstrated

in the wave of students' actions against "gutter" education. During the militant boycott actions since the beginning of the 80s, hundreds if not thousands of institutions - schools, teacher's training colleges and all the five Black universities were closed. Virtually the whole country is affected, including the Bantustans.

But the students linked their campaigns with the struggle of the community as a whole. One leaflet, "From the school? to the people" in 1981 already correctly stated: "The wider and deeper the present boycott action has developed, the more we have become aware of one of the main lessons of 1976. This lesson was simply that we should not allow any serious action by black students to become isolated in the schools! Every student action, to be successful, has to be linked up with the struggle of the rest of

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This has led to a combination of the schools with those in the communities against rents or bus fare! increases, to solidarity action with the workers' struggles and to combined action of students, teachers and parents.

Also of particular importance is the fact that our working youth are also now in the forefront of the struggle for a living wage,

better working conditions, trade union recognition and so on. There exists a direct link between Bantu education and the situation of the working class youth.

The system of Bantu education has a built-in mechanism for guaranteeing a high drop-out rate. The position of the past years has been aggravated by the unrests in black schools. The outcome is that the annual coverage of 270 000 new people here ' being thrown into the labour market; a market already now by over 5 million Africans unemployed, of whom the majority are youth. This fact has been demonstrated by a study in 1981 which showed that over 80 % of the unemployed Africans are below the age of 35.

Moreover, the stresses and frustrations produced by a combination of unemployment, the draconian influx controls, housing shortage, the daily terror of the police force, the cost the lives of over 360 people since last autumn - most of them youth in their teens and twenties - show themselves mainly in the youth. It is therefore no surprise that the youth is more responsive to oppression and exploitation. In this direction the figures of 1980 are very instructive. It has been shown that 75 % of those convicted under security laws were between 18 and 25 years old. Of course, oppression alone does not suffice to galvanise this energy generated by the youth and channel it into the mainstream of liberation. But in this respect also great progress has been made compared with the situation of 1976.

Whereas black working youth are filling the rank and file of the African trade union movement, their counterparts among the students have also taken onto a new path.

Black university students for instance, represented mostly by the Azanian Students' Organisation Azaso, have moved towards a position aligned to the Freedom Charter of 1955. They have joined their younger counterparts in the Congress of African Students (Cosas) who, since its inception a few years ago, have always upheld this position. Young blacks are now saying that the original principles of black consciousness and solidarity with progressive whites seeking national liberation are 39; contradictory. It has, in fact, become necessary for them to distance themselves from the simplistic interpretation of black consciousness espoused by some contemporary black consciousness leaders, representing small groups. And, Azaso as well as Cosas are member organisations of the large umbrella organisation

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UDF (United Democratic Front), in 1976 to fight the anti

so-called constitutional reforms - the tri-cameral parliament, which has almost 700 affiliated organisations today, representing

more than 2 million people.

Having become part of the main stream of the liberation struggle the organisations of the students today show great discipline in their actions and increased ideological capacities.

This is demonstrated, among other things, by their uncompromising attitude towards any manoeuvre in line with the Botha regime. It is

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not reforms any more, what they demand, not even very far

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future ones - it is the total abolition of apartheid as an exploitative system and its replacement by a new South Africa, the blueprint for which is the Freedom Charter.

Thus, hundreds of thousands of young volunteers have swelled

the ranks of our liberation army Umkhonto, and are continuing to do so. And these are the heroes of our people, as can be seen from the funerals of those fallen or killed by the regime as victims of the apartheid judicial system which denies our fighters the status of prisoners of war according to international demands. This new spirit of our youth is maybe best expressed by a chant! - a chant which was carried by a group of young blacks during the funeral of the victims of the Langa shootings of March 21, which read: "No to the SADF (South African Defence Forces)! Yes to Umkhonto, the people's army!"

In 1981 the Black Students Society, in their newspaper "Challenge" said: "Our message to our students, as well as students all over the country, is use the tools that you acquire from your university to further the struggle of our people. This means that as students we must identify ourselves with our community, with the people who have 'nothing to lose but their chains'. In doing so we must use the Freedom Charter as our guiding light and never rest until our legitimate demands have been met."

The Freedom Charter itself contains a chapter under the title "The doors of learning and culture shall be opened", which outlines the principles of education that are going to be to the benefit of all South Africans.

But this demands a fundamental change of South Africa's society. The liberation of the oppressed people of South Africa can only come about after the complete destruction of the apartheid system together with the capitalist relations existing within it. The Freedom Charter contains the fundamental principles of such a change. It thus contains the fundamental perspectives of the vast majority of the people of South Africa of the kind of liberation

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Regarding any solidarity the criteria are set by the struggling masses in South Africa; by their demands, by their uncompromising stance against any reshaping of apartheid instead of its total abolition. International support must serve the cause of the fighting people and the needs of its liberation struggle. In the light of this 'support means:

- action in order to force the respective parties and governments to implement international resolutions calling for mandatory sanctions against South Africa, which (have been supported in various resolutions by trade unions and socialist and social democratic parties;

- material support for the liberation movement in South Africa, the African National Congress;

- unconditional support for the main form of the liberation struggle in South Africa, the armed struggle waged by Umkhonto we Sizwe and seen by a growing number of black youths as the means to bring about liberation as soon as possible.

These are the tasks which are lying ahead of the solidarity movement.

For us, the ANC, the tasks are to extend the people's war to all corners of the land, to increase mass mobilisation all over our country to achieve the goal of people's power.

There is no going back!

Forward always is our battle cry.

The enemy cannot stop us.

Our future is in our hands.

Power to the people!

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that we, all of us, are fighting for. Hence it is not only the
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the Freedom CHarter of the ANC and its allies.5#& fuuyJ, .
Rather it is the charter of the people of South Africa for
liberation. It was drawn up on the basis of the demands of the
vast masses of our country and adopted at an elected Congress of
the People in 1955. Because it came from the people, it remains
still a People's Charter, the one basic _ political
stathent of our goals II... to which all genuinely democratic
and patriotic forces of South Africa adhere.

This is realized by a growing number of young whites in South
Africa, too. They are pledging their support tor the demands
of the Freedom Charter; theyA??24ZEESEil53yzgngEE Bantu
education. 4::;ih225nsas; they resist service in the SADF for
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variuos reasons, and ehoy are supporting the underground struggle
on the ANC. The regimbe has clamped down on them, too. They
have been sentenced to long years of imprisonment for furthering #
the aims of the ANC and for supporting MK; and they even have
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been murdered like Jeanette Schoon, a young white woman -
who was killed last year.

We are confident that our youth will accomplish the tasks we
have assigned them .

As we are paying tribute to the mi-llions of people involved
in the ever-expandina work within the worldwide anti-apartheia
movement , it is also our hope that the international democratic
youth and student movement will also use the occasion of the
current development in South Africa to strencthen its links of
comradeship and solidarity with the embattled youth and students
of our country, and take new initiatives to intensify the campaign
for the total isolation of the apartheid renime.

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Dear friends,

the demonstrations, the vigils, the activities of organisations and individuals has rightly made the struggle of the South African people an international issue. This is because our struggle is a struggle against racism - it is a struggle against Apartheid - a system declared heresy and a Crime against Humanity.-It is a system described by our churches and our leaders as the nearest thing to Facism. South Africa possesses nuclear weapons and is therefore a threat to world peace. Our struggle is therefore ene closely associated with the forces of this world fighting for peace.

We are sure that most of you have through the press and especially through TV-pictures witnessed a part of the reality of the system under which our people live. The brutality of the army and the police against our people is an everyday reality. Nearly a thousand human beings, including babies and children have been murdered, thousands arrested ant it is common knowledge that these human beings are brutally tortured by the authorities.

Today nobodx can sax "we did not know". We do not have the concen-
tration camps but it is known that in the bantustans we have one
of the highest infant mortality rates in the world. Apartheid kills

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whether through inhuman conditions for our mineworkers or through the payment of starvation wages or through diseases bagpd on malnutrition - Apartheid kills. Nobody can claim today that he did not know.

For the white minority regime to rule it can only do so by force and murder. We are told that Botha is a reformist. His friends and those that make super profits through the brutal exploitation of our people are helping to proPagate this myth. Suddenly they are all in love with the black people of South Africa. They are all there in our country solely for the good of our people. Friends - this is a lie.

80 8 of our people have called for total sanctions. The frontline-states have called for total sanctions, the non-aligned states have called for total sanctions. Apartheid cannot be reformed or changed by a few cosmetic sanctions - Apartheid must be destroyed! Our struggle started and was based on passive resistance in this period. that lasted nearly So years. The changes made in the system increased oppression and suppression. Today by the mass actions of our people at home and through horrendous sacrifices we are not only making 'South Africa ungovernable but we are instituting sanctions ourselves.

When the big banks of this world, when the monopolies of this world think twice and even refuse to support one of "their best customers" then we are on the right lines. Our promise to you is as Winnie Mandela put it, we will fight "to the last drop of our blood". We will escalate not only mass-actions but above all - we will escalate our armed struggle.

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We believe that with your support we will achieve our goal in destroying Apartheid. A democratic South Africa - a South Africa where our Freedom charter, which opens with the lines "South Africa shall belong to all who live in it, Black and White, will become a reality.

- Condemn ALL cooperation with the racist regime
- E9 military cooperation
- Call for TOTAL sanctions
- Condemn South Africa's destabilisation policies with the frontline states
- Demand the withdrawel of the racist troops from Angola and Namibia
- Demand the release of Nelson Mandela and all the political prisoners.