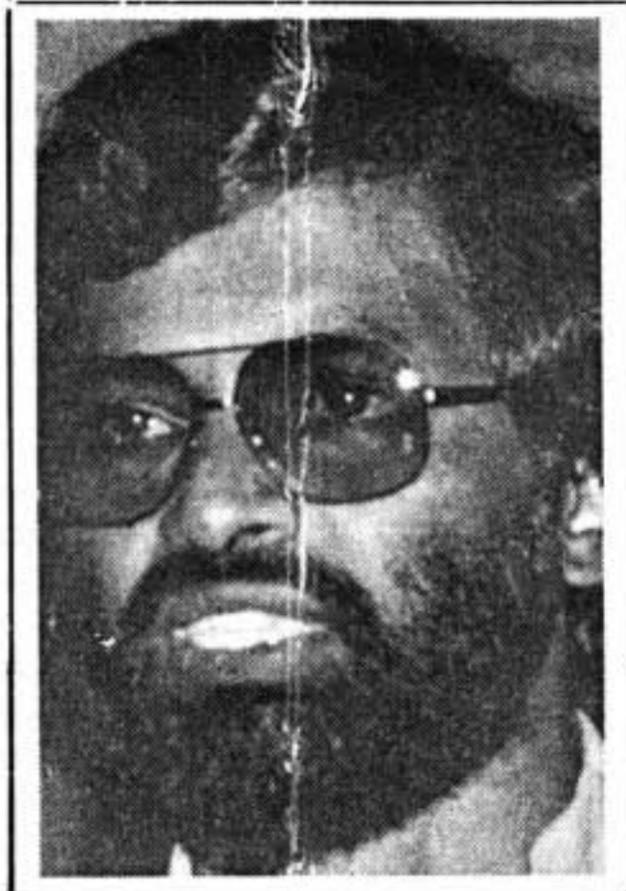


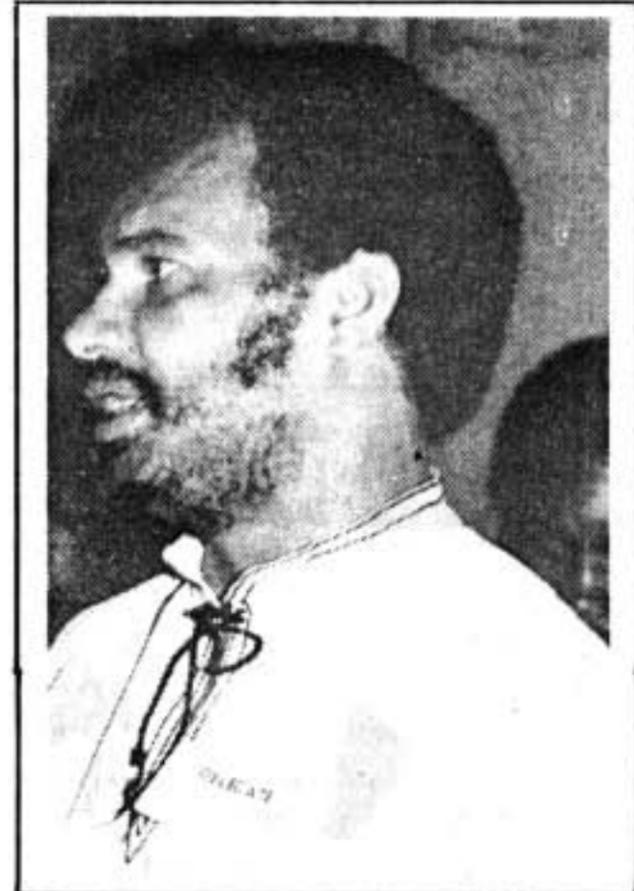
AZAPO's Fourth National Congress



HLAKU KENNETH RACHIDI
Transvaal Vice President



SATHS COOPER — Deputy President



PETER CYRIL JONES Cape Vice President

On being re-elected to the presidency of AZAPO, Lybon Tiyani Mabasa predicted that AZAPO was poised to make its mark in "Southern African history". The Fourth National Congress at the Patidar Hall in Lenasia was attended by over 1 600 observers and delegates on the 8th and the 9th January 1984. It was the largest congress in AZAPO's history and the first ever to be held in the Witwatersrand area.

The theme was, "AZAPO on the March — Facing the Challenges" and all the speakers emphasised that BC was a vibrant revolutionary ideology whose fundamental tenets were as relevant and as valid as ever.

Mabasa recalled that when AZAPO was formed in 1978, various "prophets of doom and destruction clamoured around singing dirges of (AZAPO's) demise." Many erstwhile "comrades", motivated by fear and opportunism, "joined the popular song" so that AZAPO has learnt not to consider affiliation to the pre-1977 BC Movement an "Open Sesame" to acceptance into AZAPO. There is no doubt that AZAPO has maintained its revolutionary consistency and is vigilant against "reactive, revisionist and opportunistic politics." Mabasa said the results of the referendum reaffirmed BC because they prove that white people connived at black oppression and exploitation. The white "radicals" were the main participants in the containment of the Azanian revolution.

Workers

Peter Cyril Jones, the Cape Vice-

President, contended that NUSAS provided a recruiting ground for white businessmen and politicians and a superb training-ground for security policemen. NUSAS's current flirtation with the United Democratic Front (UDF) was dubbed political "schizophrenia" because NUSAS faced "both ways at the same time."

Cyril Ramaphosa, the general secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), said that alignments of black and white organisations had nothing to do with "love and friendship".

AZAPO committed itself to the ushering in of a Worker Republic of Azania and it was emphasised that liberation depended on the consciousness of blacks. The Azanian Worker Republic would, in turn, establish a classless society.

It was repeatedly emphasized that in South Africa, racism was the soul-force of capitalism. Ramaphosa complained that there was "a regrettable habit on the part of some people to denounce and ignore the black labour movement as irrelevant, and to heap scorn on what they call the "bread and butter war." In fact, the "black union movement has educated and is educating black workers and is turning them into fighters, not only for their bread and butter issues, but for liberation from oppression as well."

Unions

Ramaphosa said the black union

movement was confused "without any plan — be it short-term or long-term for liberation." Nevertheless, he says: "The black worker has taken the first step by joining other workers in forming his union. He has taken the second step by becoming part of the labour movement. He is presently working on his third step by demanding that there should be one union, one industry, and he will succeed very soon on his fourth step by forming one consolidated union federation for Azania. His fifth and ultimate step is the unity of all oppressed people."

Students

Kabelo Lengane, the President of the Azanian Student Movement (AZASM), emphasised the close link between students and workers. He argued that the 1976 and 1980 uprisings demonstrated that isolated student activity tended to be moribund.

The crux of Lengane's paper was that while it might seem that the Government paid for education or that industry paid for education. "It is the black workers that pay for our education. Everybody lives on their sweat and blood, including us ... Simply because they do the paying, all lovers of humanity must find a way of ploughing back what they took from them."

Black students, in order to realize the solidarity between themselves and Black workers, need to "transcend their elitist nature, join and work alongside the working class."

Law

Nakedi Poswa said the ruling class made laws to its own advantage, and all South Africa's laws seethe "with the rotten aura of apartheid."

Poswa concluded that the painful reality was that "the laws made by our oppressors can never serve our struggle for liberation" but that these laws "serve to frustrate and avert our final and total victory".

Imrann Moosa, the Natal Vice-President, warned that while laws were designed to serve ruling class interests, ruling classes often created legal forms which may continuously impose a brake upon their own arbitrary actions and it behoves revolutionaries to take full advantage of this fact.

Economy

Congress acknowledged that political independence without economic independence was a sham and that black people needed to prepare themselves now to assume the reins of power.

Jones noted: "In learning to conduct their own struggles, the masses learn to run the state and economy of tomorrow. This places the emphasis of struggle on people inside the country. We are not spectators, cheering on the team.... We must not underestimate our people. No small group can bring about liberation on its own. Experiences must be shared and taken to the people."

The Cultural and Sporting Isolation campaign was re-affirmed by Congress. George Wauchope, the outgoing Secretary, said that these campaigns were part and parcel of the campaign to persuade foreign companies to disinvest in S.A.

Congress endorsed an earlier decision by Council that people may leave SA as long as their actions overseas do not militate against the struggle.

New Deal

Deputy President Saths Cooper effectively put paid to all suggestions that AZAPO needed to review BC because of the "New Deal" (an argument which emerged from the liberal media) by saying that when Matanzima opted for independence, Xhosa-speaking people were not excluded from the BC Movement, neither were so-called Vendas and Tswanas excluded. Mabasa elaborated: "AZAPO can never review its stand and commitment to BC because of yet another predictable direction chosen by dummy puppet bodies such as the Labour Party and its ilk. We stand on solid ground and committed to our policies to the letter."

Black Solidarity once again emerged as AZAPO's watchword, the definition of Black automatically excluding all elements whom the system has co-opted i.e. sections of the middle class and the collaborators. Mobilization of the oppressed on ethnic lines was viewed as poisonous to the liberation effort. The argument that ethnic divisions are a "South African reality that cannot be wished away" was answered by Nkosi Molala: "Of course it is. But then is not discrimination against us a South African reality that cannot be wished away? Is not our exploitation a reality that cannot be wished away? If we can fight racism and exploitation why cannot we fight these divisions?" Tribal chiefs and kapteins are not to be ignored "for they still continue to dupe a large body of the oppressed that must be won onto the side of the revolution."

Congress saw the "new deal" as one of many oppressive measures which does not warrant being singled out, although Congress emphasised the need for AZAPO to guide the Black people on the issue of conscription into the SADF.

The National Forum Committee (NFC) was seen as a positive move by Congress as it seeks to unite the black people irrespective of their political persuasions. The NFC has not constituted itself into an organisation, but rather provides for unity in action.

The UDF has constituted itself into an organisation "with symbolic leadership" and had "coerced support from across the political spectrum." The UDF is an ad-hoc organisation responding to a crisis and like all ad-hoc organisations, it will face "the problem of leaders without followership". Muntu Myeza AZAPO's Publicity Secretary, called the UDF an "unprincipled amorphous pot-pourri of organisations with conflicting interests." He described the attacks on AZAPO by certain UDF members as "fulminations... of opportunistic, intellectually-abbreviated individuals some of whom harbour grandiose nepotistic notions."

Jones said the NFC-UDF choice was a choice between a united front and a popular front. The united front rejected any alliances between the liberal bourgeoisie and the workers movement and thus sharpened the conflict between workers and the bourgeoisie. On the other hand, the popular front brought together the workers and the bourgeoisie in an amorphous grouping which subordinated the worker's interests to those of the bourgeoisie.

Structure

Four provincial Vice Presidents and the introduction of a Projects Co-Ordinator were the only changes in the structure of the National Executive, now re-named the "Central Committee". The new structure was found to be necessary because of AZAPO's phenomenal growth.

AZAPO's ten-person Central Committee comprises mostly "prison graduates". The Committee is: President — Lybon Tiyani Mabasa; Deputy-President — Sathasivan 'Saths' Cooper; Transvaal Vice-President — Hlaku Kenneth Rachidi; Cape Vice-President — Peter Cyril Jones; Free State Vice-President — Fikile Qithi; Natal Vice-President — Imrann Moosa; Secretary-General — Sefako Nyaka; Publicity Secretary — Muntu ka Myeza; National

er — Thabo Ndabeni; Pro-
Co-Ordinator — Zithulele Cindi
he Constitution was amended to
vide for Regional Executive Com-
ees and the Branch Executive
nmittees will all have to include a
ects Director in future.

he National Congress is the
me and highest governing and
-making body of the organisa-
efore, delegates must leave
s with a sense of mission, a
work and a clear set of direc-
s for the year. Congress must
vide cadreship with definite pro-
mmes of action: revolutionary
ggle is based on linking theory
practice.

Congress 1984 can be described
an unqualified success **only** from
ublic relations point of view.

The same can hardly be said about
sense of purpose and hard-
ided evaluation of AZAPO's

policies and progress these features
were sadly lacking.

The long speeches, nine on the
first day alone, acted as a soporific
and prevented maximum response.
Commissions were often searching
for terms of reference — surely the
reams of rhetoric in the papers
should provide the requisite
guidelines.

AZAPO should seriously consider
the following suggestions for all
future congresses:

1. The number of papers should be
at a **necessary minimum**.
2. Two points of view should be
presented on contentious issues,
e.g. Speaker A can justify
AZAPO's stand on Cultural Isola-
tion while Speaker B can attack
it.
3. All formations of the Organisation
should be given advance notice
of the topics to be discussed at

Congress.

4. Speakers should refrain from
repeatedly "justifying" BC —
AZAPO must move beyond
fighting rear-guard battles.
5. Commissions should be assigned
topics directly related to the
papers presented.
6. Symposia must be arranged at all
levels of the Organisation, par-
ticularly on the following topics:
(A) The Nature of the Soviet
Union,
(B) The National Question in
Azania and the Role of the
Peasantry,
(C) Scientific Socialism,
(D) The Isolation Campaign,
(E) Economic Self-Sufficiency,
(F) Black Theology,
(G) The Trade Union Movement
in South Africa, and
(H) The Specific and Multiple
Oppression of Black Women.

AZAPO ON THE MARCH

A terrified ruling class dropped the
netlet on Black Consciousness
(BC) organizations on 19 October
1977. The aim of the bannings was
re-create the post-Sharpeville era
when blacks stood in awesome fear
of their white "masters"; in a word,
the aim was to destroy the ideology
of Black Consciousness.

What the ruling class reckoned
it had lost was the vitality of BC and
that it had grown from the daily ex-
periences of the oppressed people.
It cannot be killed for it
characterizes the resistance of the
oppressed, the plundered, the
disadvantaged and the colonized
against an arrogant white world, one
in which the white man has tried to
impose his value systems.

As an ideology BC was first ar-
ticulated by a group of students
confronting problems that affected
them as students. Steve Biko,
Mpetla Mohapi, Onkgopotse Tiro
and their counterparts in the South
African Students Organization
(ASO) did not proceed from any
preconceived theoretical frame. In-
stead, the most remarkable fact about
it is that it is a developing world
view: as Amilcar Cabral says- "I can-
not ... pretend to organize a Party, or
struggle on the basis of my own
ideas. I have to do this starting from
the reality of the country." BC does
not seek to construct conceptions of
man and his relation to the world
step-by-logical-step but rather seeks
to embody the fears, the frustrations,
loves and hates, the needs,

desires and the aspirations of the op-
pressed and the exploited in a
coherent and a revolutionary
ideology.

When the BC Movement first
emerged, the very mention of the
word "politics" was enough to kill a
conversation: black people were in
the grip of a paralysis and they readi-
ly allowed white liberals to misrep-
resent the cause of the oppressed, a
cause liberals can never properly ap-
preciate because they do not feel and
suffer as the oppressed.

BC protagonists in the 70's pro-
ceeded from the reality of the coun-
try and proclaimed that the first re-
quirement was for black people to
shed the psychological shackles of
slavery, to reject the dwarfing of their
consciousness and to stand up and
define themselves as people who
have every right to live, work and
love in the land of their birth.

The early protagonists also suc-
ceeded where every other liberation
movement had failed — they
brought **all** black people into single
organisations.

The lethargy that had gripped the
60's was shaken off, resulting in
renewed black trade union activity in
December 1973, in recurrent student
action at high schools and univer-
sities which climaxed in the Soweto
uprising of June 1976 and in a
plethora of BC organisations such as
the South African Students' Move-
ment (SASM), the National Youth
Organisation (NAYO), the Union of
Black Journalists (UBJ).

As a result of the 1977 bannings,
there arose a vacuum in political ac-
tivity. But the spirit of pride and de-
fiance was carefully nurtured and this
prevented the paralysis of the move-
ment.

The BC groups which survived the
bannings such as the Black Priests
Solidarity Group and the Teachers
Action Committee formed the
Soweto Action Committee, chaired
by Ishmael Mkhabela. A sub-
committee of the Action Committee
convened by Lybon Mabasa was to
investigate "national possibilities".
This sub-committee called a conven-
tion at St. Ansgar's near Welgespruit
in Roodepoort on 28 — 31 April
1978: Lybon Mabasa delivered the
theme paper "Blackman, Whither
Goest Thou?". Father Buti Tlhagale
gave a hint of the new thrust of the
BC Movement in his paper "A Fur-
ther Determination of Black Con-
sciousness". Mabasa's voice rings
with the proud BC spirit:

*"Our peacefulness does not
presuppose timidity. No timid
people can become a nation. To
augment our peacefulness we also
need a militant spirit, a strong will
and a desire to survive in a violent
and carnivorous world."*

and Tlhagale hammers home the
point that the Black worker is the
most oppressed and exploited seg-
ment of South African society and
must become the vanguard of the
liberation movement.