



POLITICAL TERRORISM IN LESOTHO

*Statement by the
Central Committee,
South African Communist
Party*

WHO IS BEHIND the series of attempted political assassinations in Basutoland?

Recently there have been a number of murderous assaults on well-known Basotho Communists.

John Motloheola, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Lesotho, was shot in the back and dangerously wounded. Simon Makheta, a member of the secretariat was attacked in his house by an unknown assailant. Another well-known Party member, Nako Mefane, was stabbed at night by a would-be assassin, who escaped. All these events took place within a few weeks of one another, in June 1964.

These acts of political thuggery cannot be dissociated from the speeches and writings of certain Basotho political and religious personalities who have joined forces recently in an unrestrained anti-Communist witch-hunt. While themselves maintaining an outward appearance of respectability, they incite their followers to violence against Communists and other patriots and progressives in Lesotho.

These events are particularly ominous coming immediately after the constitutional reforms, and on the eve of a general election, which will advance Lesotho a stage further on the road to political independence.

The Communist Party of Lesotho is a patriotic Basotho party, in the vanguard of the struggle for a national united front for independence—independence both from British imperialism and from the economic domination and sinister designs of Verwoerd's apartheid Republic.

Poverty and unemployment—the fruits of colonialism—national liberation and independence—the threat of direct and indirect aggression by South African imperialism—these are the very real and pressing problems and dangers facing the people of Lesotho today.

Anyone who diverts the attention of the people from these pressing problems and dangers to the imaginary ‘danger of Communism’ is playing the game of British and South African imperialism. He is dividing the nation at the time of its most serious crisis.

Those who shout loudest about the ‘Communist danger’ are the same men who, when in London for the constitutional talks, wrote to the *Times* newspaper to oppose international sanctions against South Africa. This was a stab in the back for the oppressed African people in the Republic who have called for such sanctions. It was also a betrayal of the Basotho people, for we all know full well that Lesotho can never be safe or independent until white minority domination is replaced by democracy in the Republic, with one vote for every man and woman.

COWARD’S WEAPONS

If some politicians in Lesotho do not agree with the ideas of Marxism, let them discuss their views in open debate. The gunman’s bullet and the assassin’s knife are cowards’ weapons, of the man who cannot answer the arguments of his opponent and lurks in the bushes to kill him. Such methods are alien to the Basotho tradition of freedom, to the tradition of King Moshoeshoe. They are the methods of Verwoerd and Vorster, who are unable to meet the arguments of the Communists and African patriots and therefore pass laws like the Suppression of Communism Act and ban, jail and murder thousands of supporters of freedom, Communist and non-Communist alike.

Sharp criticism must also be made of the conduct of the British colonialist authorities, the self-appointed guardians of ‘law and order’ in Lesotho. Instead of strong action against those who are inciting assassinations they conducted a raid of the premises of the Young Communist League in Maseru. No official statement of any kind has been made condemning political terrorism. Nor have such statements been made by the leaders of the various Basotho political parties and religious movements. This is not a question of the rights and wrongs of Communist theory and policy; fundamentally it is a question whether political matters in Lesotho are to be settled by traditional Basotho methods of reasoned discussion among the people, or by Texas methods of gangsterism in politics. The people of Lesotho have every right and reason to demand that all political and religious leaders in the country should speak out unequivocally now, whatever differences

they may have, to repudiate political terrorism and to show their sympathy with its victims.

An immediate and thorough investigation is required into these foul acts, and also to the links between those who planned and carried them out and the fascist elements in the Republic of South Africa which surrounds Lesotho. The men who kidnapped Ganyile and his companions would not shrink from plotting and organizing terrorism in Lesotho itself.

We South African Communists express our warm brotherly solidarity with comrade John Motloheoa and all other fighters for Basotho freedom, Communists and non-Communists alike. We are convinced that our brave comrades in Lesotho will carry on with their struggle, whatever the dangers and hardships. We assure the Basotho people that their truest and best allies are and always will be the oppressed people of South Africa, their liberation movements and their Communist Party.

Long live Basotho freedom, independence and unity!

Long live the Communist Party of Lesotho!

July 7, 1964.