

# State in a bid to link Alex 5 with 'total onslaught'

THE Alexandra Five, who include general secretary of National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), Moses Mayekiso, have been in jail for almost two years.

Initially, they were detained under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act.

For some months they were held in solitary confinement before being charged.

And now Mayekiso and his other comrades from Alexandra, Paul Tshabalala, Richard Mdakane, Obed Bapela and Mzwanele Mayekiso (Moses's brother), face charges of treason, sedition and subversion.

The state has been trying to link the activities of the Alexandra Action Committee (AAC) to the "total onslaught" on the South African government.

Over 60 state witnesses, who include town council officials, Alexandra residents, members of the Security Branch, and members of the South African Defence Force (SADF) have testified against the Alexandra Five.

But there has been little oral evidence directly implicating Comrade Mayekiso or the other accused.

In accusing Comrade Mayekiso, the state has alleged that he promoted the view that the working class, also referred to as (the proletariat) as the vanguard for liberation, should be in the centre of and in control of the struggle.

It further alleges that he expressed the view that the working class, including the unemployed, youth and other members of the community should be mobilised, organised and united against the capitalist system and the state.

Mayekiso is also said to have expressed the view that "the working class or its unions and progressive organisations should seize control of the means of production and of residential areas".

The state further alleges that Mayekiso held the view that "the capitalists must be forced into a situation where they are unable to exercise control" and also that "South Africa was ripe for social, economic and political revolution".

Comrade Mayekiso, according to the state, expressed the view that the existing constitutional, political, social and economic



system of the state should be replaced with a socialist political order.

Liaison and co-ordination with other organisations such as the ANC should take place in order to achieve these goals, Mayekiso is alleged to have advocated.

He is also alleged to have argued that people should refuse to pay rent as a short-term solution to their problems.

## MEETING

The state also alleges that the accused, through the activities of the People's Court, discouraged Alexandra residents from reporting offences to the SAP and from assisting the SAP and encouraged people instead to maintain law and order through the People's Courts.

The state also claims that during a meeting, which was held in Alexandra stadium on February 21 1986, Alexandra residents were ordered not lay charges with the SAP.

It is also alleged that the accused formed a group known as the Marshalls. The marshalls assumed the role of policing the township, it is alleged.

It is also alleged that the marshalls investigated residents' misbehaviour; discussed disciplinary measures and further liaised with the block and street committees on punishment.

Further allegations are that the marshalls acted as a "people's army". Another allegation is that the accused launched a campaign against the SAP, the South African Defence Force (SADF) and the local town council.

The state alleges that the accused operated the People's Courts in the name of the Alexandra Action Committee (AAC) of which the Alexandra Five are said to have been leading members.

## CHARGES

According to the state, the Alexandra Youth Congress also took part in the activities of the People's Courts, which dealt with various charges ranging from criminal and civil matters to domestic quarrels.

Mayekiso and his comrades are also accused of launching rent, consumer and business boycotts. They are accused of having changed the names of streets in Alexandra to MK, Steve Biko, Soviet, Mandela,

ANC, Lusaka, Katrida (Kathrada), Mabhida, Slovo, Mbeki, Vincent, Sobukwe, Bazooka, Oliver and Dos Santos streets.

During the trial, the state's expert witness, Brigadier Stadler, gave evidence against the accused. He handed in a bundle of documents containing extracts from Sechaba and other ANC and South African Communist Party (SACP) publications.

Brig Stadler, a senior policeman in the Security Branch, has testified in numerous trials involving the ANC.

He read extracts from the publications in an attempt to establish what calls the ANC had been making during the 1980s concerning aspects such as people's power, ungovernability etc.

Brig Stadler, in his evi-

dence, described community organisations as ANC followers because of their behaviour.

Certain witnesses gave evidence to suggest a linkage between the Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU) and a People's Court in Alexandra.

One of these witnesses told the court that Obed Bapela has been involved in a number of cases.

However, the witness, under cross examination, denied that Obed Bapela had been involved in any acts of violence against any person who attended the court.

His function had been solely to resolve disputes in a few cases, the witness told the court.

The administrator of Alexandra, Mr Steve Burger, who was appointed administrator of Alexandra after the collapse of the Alexandra Town Council on April 23 1986, gave evidence about the meeting he had with the Alexandra Action Committee and other civic representatives including Moses Mayekiso. He described the meeting as cordial.

Moses Mayekiso's involvement with trade unions dates back to 1976.

Like most leaders, he started as a shop steward and after nine years of hard work and dedication, he was elected general secretary of MAWU.

## CONFIDENCE

And in 1987, when MAWU merged with NAAWU and MICWU to become NUMSA, Mayekiso was elected general secretary. This was seen as a sign of confidence in the leadership of Comrade Mayekiso.

The case has attracted the attention of overseas communities, which have already launched campaigns to have him and other comrades released.

In terms of the new legislation, COSATU is prevented from taking part in campaigns for the release of Mayekiso and his comrades. But NUMSA is not restricted, and the union has already launched a massive campaign both locally and abroad to secure Mayekiso's release.

Last year, NUMSA had a programme of regular protest stoppages in factories throughout the country.

To further intensify the campaign, the union distributed about 80 000 pamphlets to all its members — calling on them to discuss various proposals for the continuation of the campaign this year.

Comrade Mayekiso and the other accused have been given support by a wide range of organisations such as the International Metalworkers Federation (IMF), United Automobile Workers Union in the United States of America and also Friends of Moses Mayekiso (FMM) in Britain.

The outcome of the case will have an important bearing on other trials involving trade unionists and other community activists, according to a NUMSA spokesman.