

# ANC bogey image is false says group back from Lusaka

**P**ERHAPS the most significant outcome of the meeting between a cross-section of the Indian community in South Africa and members of the African National Congress in Lusaka was the "transformation of fairly apolitical Indians who gained first hand reassurance" of the fact that the banned organisation is not a radical organisation hell bent on taking power at any cost.

This was the assessment of Dr Jerry Coovadia, vice-president of the Natal Indian Congress who was among the group of 52 people from South Africa that met with the National Executive of the ANC in Lusaka over the weekend.

At a press conference held in Durban upon their return from Lusaka, members of the delegation spoke about the impact of their historic meeting with the organisation upon themselves as individuals, as well as members of the Indian community in South Africa.

**R**ev Clemens Lazarus, a Roman Catholic priest, said discussions with the "religious department" of the ANC revealed that although there were communists within the higher echelons of the organisations, its policy was one of religious freedom.

In fact, said Rev Lazarus, the ANC believes that religion has a vital role to play in the liberation of South Africa and that there

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was a need for religious leaders to make their congregations aware of the need for social change and justice in the country. The organisation also warned against divisive elements within religious groups.

He said all the religious representatives of the Hindu, Muslim and Christian faiths who attended the meeting expressed grave concern over the spiral of violence in South Africa and were reassured to learn that the ANC too is concerned about minimising violence.

"They assured us that the violence would stop once the South African state stops its structural violence and assured us of their commitment to non-violence," Rev Lazarus said.

Playwright Ronnie Govender said the ANC executive is understanding the needs of the various cultural groups in the country but was at the same time committed to the isolation of South Africa through the cultural and sport boycott.

Contrary to recent reports, there is to be no softening of the boycott campaign, but because the ANC realises the cultural needs of South Africa it felt that certain cultural exchanges could be sanctioned, provided they

have the blessing of the democratic movement within South Africa.

In this respect, Mr Govender recalled, that the High Commissioner Mr Sitnam Jit Singh, who facilitated the Lusaka tour, emphasised the necessity of continuing the cultural boycott.

"He in fact reminded Indian South Africans who have had to cut off cultural ties with India that this was a small price to pay in terms of the National Liberation Struggle in South Africa and urged them not to attempt to dilute this aspect of the struggle," Mr Govender said.

**T**eachers Association President, Mr Pat Samuels, said it was clear from the meeting that the ANC has a well-thought out plan for a future South Africa and he was told by the ANC leaders present at the meeting that they were able to strategise so well because as exiles they had enough time to develop their thinking.

"There is a great anguish in them to return to their motherland. They have so much to offer this country if they could only return," he said.

Mr Kanthylall Makan, a Pietermaritzburg businessman, said that as an apolitical businessman he had grave fears about mass nationalisation and the disruption of the free enterprise system under an ANC government, but was relieved to learn that the organisation does not foresee overnight transformation of the

South African economy, into a socialist economy.

Despite the influence of the communist elements within the ANC, he was surprised to learn that the organisation was pragmatic about the economy. It foresees a mixed economy with elements of free enterprise and socialism working side by side.

At the same time the organisation is mindful of the great imbalance in South African society at present, wherein 80% of the country's wealth is confined to 13% of the population and is determined to address this imbalance if it comes into power.

Greater attention would be paid to the plight of the poor and halting monopoly capitalism.

Mr Makan said he felt very reassured and was highly impressed by the ANC members who made him realise that rather than being the ogres they have been made out to be, they are sincere and dedicated people committed to fighting for a democratic South Africa.

He said he was also reassured by their commitment to the promotion of the culture of all the people of South Africa, although they made it clear that an ANC government would not break any form of racial practice whatsoever.

As far as the participation in the October elections and apartheid-created political institutions was concerned, the delegates to Lusaka learnt that there was no question of sanctioning

participation in either the municipal elections or any other state structure.

**A**lthough non-participation is not regarded as a principle stance," the ANC believes that this is not the right time to participate," Prof Coovadia said, adding that the ANC believes that a high poll in the October elections would cast a heavy shadow over democracy and help perpetuate the apartheid system.

"Asked what were the greatest fears expressed by the delegation to Lusaka, and whether there were any fears regarding black majority rule expressed by the more conservative elements of the South African delegation, Prof Coovadia said:

"Interestingly, most of the fears expressed surrounded the question of violence and religious freedom.

"Perhaps when the South Africans met the exco which consists of members of all race groups, all their fears about African domination evaporated because if the ANC could have such an integrated executive who so obviously saw each other as comrades and not people belonging to certain race groups, they realised that their fears were groundless."

As far as the fears about religious freedom were concerned, it was stated that "there are only two types of people one could rely on — the true communist and the true believer," he added.

## Victory is ours! October 26: No mandate!

Despite bannings, detentions, states of emergencies and harassment, our people have shown a massive rejection of the sham municipal elections.

Total votes cast in Indian areas in the Transvaal:

- Lenasia: 3381 (85% prior votes).
- Lenasia SE: 961 (80% prior votes).
- Total: 4 342 — a poll of 7% for Lenasia (4 342 out of 60 000).
- Laudium: 4 802
- Actonville: 3 782
- Azaadville: 900 (estimate)
- Springs: 1 100 (estimate)
- Palm Ridge: 900 (estimate)
- Eastern Transvaal: 3 000 (estimate)
- NW Tvl: 150 (estimate).

An estimated total number of votes cast in the Transvaal area is 18 974. The poll is 19%

(18974 out of 100 000 adult Indians in the Transvaal).

In addition, 13 000 people voted by prior votes. This means that only about 6 000 people (6%) voted on October 26.

Congress believes that many prior votes were coerced votes, and that no effective checks were allowed by the government to prevent the abuse of prior votes. In the past the TIC uncovered many abuses of the special votes system.

Furthermore, some people have up to three votes — this means that if 6 000 votes were cast, as few as 2 000 people could have voted.

The October elections were not free and fair. The government cannot claim any legitimacy from the results of this unjust and fraudulent election.

**IS FOR POVERTY**

**IS FOR APARTHEID**

Despite the state's repressive attempts to outlaw opposition to the election, organisations were still able to mobilise — and the result was a massive 'no' from people all over South Africa.