Dear Friends,

As AFSC's Southern Africa International Affairs Representative, Edgar (Ted) Lockwood carries responsibility for writing reports, initiating conferences, seminars, and personal contacts that support the work of the member nations of the Southern Africa Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) in fostering greater regional development and economic cooperation. This Newsletter reviews a discussion with members of the African National Congress (ANC), the oldest multi-racial South African organization struggling against apartheid, and reports on the ANC in Swaziland and impressions of the Swaziland's political situation. To be included on the mailing list write to AFSC, Africa Program at the above address. Contributions to defray mailing and duplicating costs are welcome.

While in Lusaka, Zambia in August 1983, I met with Thabo Mbeki, head of Information Services, Kay Moomsamy and Ted Pekane of the national treasurer's office of the ANC. They began with an overall view of what AFSC, as an organization committed to the destruction of apartheid using nonviolent methods of struggle, could do. We also discussed the issue of violence in ANC's work. I was particularly interested in whether the Pretoria bombings, which took place in May 1983, represented a "new phase" in ANC thinking and modus operandi.

I was told that the ANC emphatically rejects "terrorism" such as that conducted in Northern Ireland, or by the Bader Meinhoff group and the Palestine Liberation Organization. ANC has to depend on the support of a large sector of South African society if it is to reach the goals of majority rule and racial justice for all. Thus it is and has been seeking political solutions to the problem, not military ones.

ANC defended its use of armed struggle by pointing out that South Africa is a violent state, one of the most violent in the world. Peaceful strikes and demonstrations have been crushed time after time by overwhelming force, including the indiscriminate use of firearms. Even the most legitimate forms of political activities are banned. The ANC tried Ghandian methods for fifty years and finally had to reluctantly give them up because they did not seem to have the effect in South Africa that they had in India. They also contend that if Americans understand their history, they should understand what the people of South Africa are struggling to achieve. The American Revolution was a violent revolution against colonialism and injustice. Another area of contention is the
investments made by multinational corporations which help to consolidate the South African regime. Here I emphasized that AFSC is involved in an active divestment campaign.

It was noted that AFSC can further its support for a just society in South Africa by supporting the United Democratic Front of South Africa (UDF). The UDF was called for by Dr. Allen Boesak, moderator of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. Its objective is to mobilize a broad spectrum of political and religious groups to demand a rejection of the new constitutional proposals, now laws, and to demand a democratic South Africa. The new constitution is seen as a move by Prime Minister Pieter Botha to consolidate his power base. He is losing support from the right, and therefore has to draw upon the Indian and Coloured populations, by offering them a certain "stake" or benefits in a revised apartheid. It is also a divide and rule strategy.

At the UDF convention held August 21, 1983, there were some 400 organizations present, including civic associations and church bodies. The South African media basically ignored the convention. Alex Boraine, Progressive Federal Party MP, raised the issue of unfairness in public coverage. In the end a small inconsequential report was aired.

Additional ways for AFSC, other peace groups and Americans in general to get involved emerged from our discussion. I have summarized them as follows:

- They could highlight the meaning of the referendums held in November 1983 and the fact that elections under the new constitution will elect only a tiny minority of the non-white majority. It is also important to follow the news through such media as community newspapers in South Africa, which give an alternative reportage. Grassroots is the best of these. They are run by collective organizations, trade unions, and churches, and appear irregularly.

- There should be an analysis of the role of the United States in undergirding South Africa's strategy, and the attempt to present the new constitution as "progress" rather than as an attempt to co-opt the more affluent elements of the non-white community by offering them meaningless "participation in the system". With the forthcoming presidential elections, now is an ideal time to interject this issue. The issue is probably best raised through churches, the Black Congressional Caucus, and other such vehicles.

A Change in Approach

The shift in ANC's policy came after South Africa made a major raid on Lesotho (December 1982), killing 42 people, including children, in retribution for ANC activities, ANC President Oliver Tambo made a major address in Lesotho. He asked rhetorically, "For how long is the ANC simply just going to attack empty buildings?", referring to earlier attacks primarily on structures that had been planned to carefully avoid injury to human life. It is to be expected that more military personnel will be involved in attacks; they are regarded now as a
legitimate target. The Pretoria raid, in which ANC claimed responsibility for bombing an office building in a military complex that killed 18 people and injured many more, signified a new phase.

Pretoria made a lot of noise about the civilians who had been killed. But it was interesting that the funerals were not played up by the media. Perhaps because it would have shown that most of the killed and wounded were military?

South Africa has been careful to downplay the effectiveness of the ANC against South African military targets. A rocket attack on the Voortrekkerhoogte near Pretoria was downplayed, "All they did was to manage to scratch a woman on the thigh,"—but no press were allowed in to see the lack of damage alleged.

As a result of ANC's actions Botha is intensifying efforts to secure the allegiance of the white population, emphasizing that whites must stick together in this crisis. The ANC message is that they do not want a campaign of terror, but a show of support from whites for what they describe as "the democratic forces." It is questionable as to how many white would heed this call, but the ANC wants to encourage that kind of response. Indiscriminate bombings, they realize, especially those involving civilians, will not encourage support.

National Service

I asked about ANC's position on white resistance to conscription. Was it true that ANC preferred for people to serve in the army and perhaps resist from within?

Although the general ANC position goes against service in the South African army, there are no absolute rules. The consciousness of the individual is the deciding factor. Some can be useful in the army, while others will just avoid the draft and get out for personal reasons. Others may gravitate toward active service with the ANC.

Conscientious objection is allowed in South Africa, but under very tight definitions that exclude all but the absolute pacifist. The choice to be a conscientious objector has been made much more difficult because the law on conscientious objection has been stiffened, providing for eight years mandatory sentence for those who resist going in the army at 18.

The ANC sees its mission in this area as one of consciousness-raising among whites, rather than prescribing a set formula for them to carry out resistance.

Ted Lockwood had an opportunity to visit Swaziland briefly in October, following his talks with ANC officials in Zambia. Excerpts of his report are included here to give a fuller picture of the ANC presence in the region, and of the peculiar context which Swaziland, a country land-locked by South Africa, represents.

The ANC in Swaziland

The situation of ANC refugees in Swaziland is very tenuous. They are under continuous surveillance by the Swazi security authorities. Since the death of King Sobhuza over a year ago, who was himself an ANC member in his youth, the ruling council, the Liqoqo has drawn much closer to South Africa. The ANC leadership was rounded up and put in a Swazi prison "for protection" following the Maseru, Lesotho raid. The ANC refugees felt they had in effect become
"sitting ducks". When they were freed from the prison many left, especially those that played a leadership role. There are now no more than 30 or so registered refugees who are ANC, although there are probably more who have gone underground.

It seems that in addition to constant surveillance, the Swazi authorities haul people in who are suspected of being clandestine ANC and they are subjected to prolonged grilling. The Swazi police are in very close liaison with the South African security branch.

Last year the deputy representative of the ANC and his wife were killed by a car bomb explosion. A woman I talked to has had to keep changing the place where she sleeps every night.

In Tanzania, a country known for its support of the liberation movements and for political and economic justice, the ANC position is quite different. There the ANC has two projects, one in Morogoro and Dakawa.

In Zambia the ANC has a 3,000 acre farm, located approximately 10 km. from Lusaka. The farm is essentially to be a training center in agricultural skills for young South Africans. The farm also provides food directly to refugees, as well as generate income.

Other countries are helping such as the Norwegian Government which has agreed to assist in developing a water system and sewage control on the farm.

General Impressions of Swaziland's Political Situation

I met Father James Sommers, head of CARITAS in Manzini, and Sister Judith Ellen, an Anglican nun at St. Michael's Anglican School. Both are active in trying to create a vocational school in Manzini for dropouts from school. I saw a small knitting factory for unmarried mothers, who would otherwise be forced into prostitution. (There are almost 300 prostitutes in Manzini, Father Sommers told me, and Manzini is not a large town.) In terms of development work generally, the churches are involved in a small way.

The Swazis, who have a reputation for being docile, are feeling anti-government, but there is no organized opposition to speak of.

The ruling clique in the country, 16 men, some princes of the royal family and some not, have recently arrested four women who work in the Central Bank for distributing "seditious" pamphlets—i.e., they were critical of the government and the ousting of the Queen Mother Dzweliwe, the senior wife of King Sobhuza. There is very great fear of being overheard, and so one talks in autos or on walks, but not openly in public places.

No one seems to be sure whether the Liqoqo, the ruling council of 16, was named by Sobhuza to rule until the young prince, now 16-years-old, is of age. The Minister of Justice claims so, but no one else heard the king name them. The Liqoqo has several factions, but all are reputed to be part of a spoils system oriented toward fast money, political deals. Swaziland is not a democracy; the Parliament, which is indirectly elected, has no real legislative authority and is
pretty toothless. Now the prime minister is lining up the 200 or so chiefs who are the local authorities in the so-called Swazi Nation land (the 55% of the country where the peasantry lives) and demanding that they be loyal and trusting, in the Swazi tradition, which says that the monarch knows best (the ruling council, in this case).

Of course, Swaziland is economically part of South Africa. The rand is used as currency along with local currency. The capital that is invested largely comes from South Africa, although the government para-statal holding company, Tibiyo Taka Ngwane, holds various percentages in banks, factories, merchandising, etc. The government gets a good part of its revenue through membership in the South African Customs Union. All petrol and a lot of food comes from South Africa, as in Botswana and Lesotho. But where Botswana has a small opposition party and Lesotho has the Basotholand Congress Party, which is carrying on guerilla warfare, Swaziland has no organized opposition at all.