

**African National Congress Education in Exile in Tanzania,  
1978-1992:  
Dilemmas and Ambiguities**

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***Declaration***

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that the conclusions herein are my own.

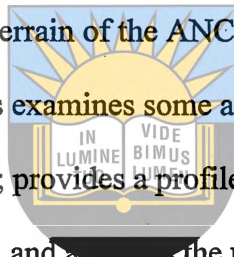
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## *Summary*

This thesis examines the activities of the African National Congress members who left South Africa in the aftermath of the 1976 uprisings. Specifically, it examines the activities of young people who, due to their youth, could not join the armed struggle, and were thus rerouted to a fledgling educational institution named the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College. This school, started in 1977, was purpose built near Morogoro, in Tanzania, to accommodate and nurture these youngsters, both in conventional educational matters, and as another terrain of the ANC's struggle to instill their brand of revolutionary instruction. The thesis examines some aspects of the school. Specifically, it examines the origins of the school; provides a profile of the people involved in the school; discusses the role of women, and analyses the underlying tensions and conflicts that resulted from concentrating people in an isolated environment. It concludes that SOMAFSCO was a place full of contradictions and dilemmas that resulted in many of its ideals remaining unfulfilled, but that it was also a place that produced many people who would enrich the South African public domain.



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The Govan Mbeki Research Resource Centre at the University of Fort Hare availed me of a junior research fellowship and resources, and provided me with an intellectual home where many of my ideas took shape.

Special thanks must also go to the Batlagae Trust and Mr. Mohamed Tikly for providing a grant that made this research a reality.

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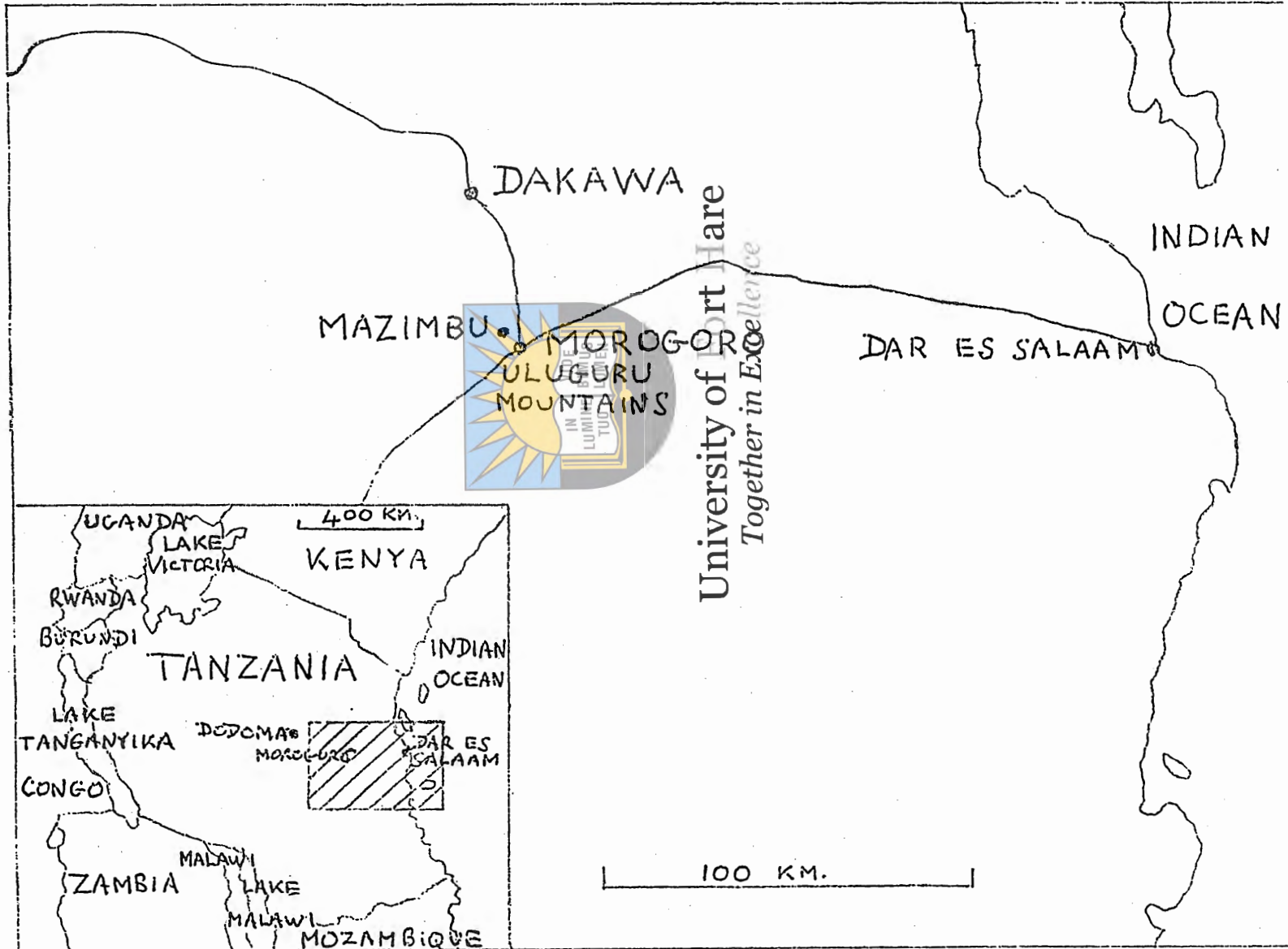
Finally, thanks to my parents and all my friends and colleagues who stood by me through thick and thin.



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# MAZIMBU: THE REGIONAL CONTEXT

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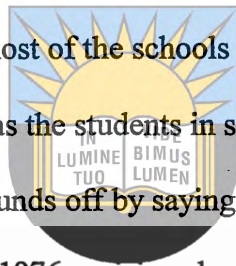
Map

## Introduction

The opening of an educational institution by the African National Congress (ANC) in 1978 was a crucial step in the history of the organisation. The very fact that a school is not at first sight an obviously 'political' entity implied that the ANC was bidding to lead and mould South African society in a comprehensive way, and signified that it was finally re-establishing itself as a major player in contemporary South African politics. The lull of the late sixties and early seventies had seen other organisations emerging to the fore in the ongoing political discourse. That the ANC had its headquarters and leaders outside the country made it seem far away in the eyes of ordinary people. The apartheid machinery had partially succeeded in isolating the ANC and castigating its members as terrorists who had no other means of driving white people into the sea. There was a constant portrayal of the organisation as being against progress, with its motive being only to destabilise the country, a move, it was claimed, that would see black people losing their jobs and the prosperity they were said to enjoy compared to their black brothers and sisters north of the Limpopo.

The successes of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) within the country in the 1970s had seemed to erode the support base of the ANC. But in reality the emergence of this movement, with its forerunner, the South African Student Organisation (SASO), can, with the benefit of hindsight, be said to have been a blessing in disguise for the ANC. There can be no doubt that these organisations were responsible for tapping some of the constituencies upon which the ANC had not previously focused, notably the

youth. It can be argued that what lay behind the struggles of 1976 and carried forward the momentum thereafter was that a core group of these students had been exposed to the highly charged rhetoric of the BCM. Of course there is an ongoing debate as to whether the 1976 uprising was influenced in any way by political groups or was a spontaneous reaction to the introduction of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction. Sifiso Ndlovu argues that neither of the two are a correct representation of what happened. He states that "liberation movements, and student organisations like SASO and SASM, played no significant role either in the day-to-day major debates in the classrooms or in planning the actual day of protest that involved most of the schools in Soweto". He further states that the uprisings were not spontaneous as the students in some schools had been on a go slow from as early as March 1976. He rounds off by saying that political movements have no right to claim to have organised the 1976 uprisings because the major issues at stake affected students in the classroom, not liberation or political movements like the then unbanned BCM.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand a variety of books written on the topic suggest that there was some influence of political organisations and that the discipline and precision with which these events took place supports this interpretation.<sup>2</sup>



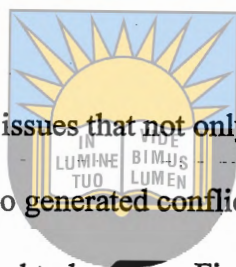
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It is no coincidence that Steve Biko's killing took place at this time, as the thinking might have been that getting rid of him would, maybe, destabilise the whole student movement. The bulk of the students who went into exile were from the BCM tradition. This does not necessarily suggest that the ANC had no influence in the unfolding of events in the country. But the extent to which they were caught unawares by

the deluge of students in the aftermath of June 1976 suggests that they were not exactly leading the unfolding proceedings inside the country.

These events resulted in the building of a school, the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFSCO). Initially, the school had been meant to cater for secondary school children only, but the pressures of an increased population resulted in the need for a comprehensive educational facility from nursery to adult education. This required broad planning which would take into account the various requirements of prospective students.



This study grapples with the issues that not only made the complex a hotbed of educational experimentation, but also generated conflicts and tensions as a result of diverse interpretations of what needed to be done. Firstly it will look at the origins of the school and the planning involved in bringing it to fruition. This involves the beginnings of the ANC Education Department, the formulation of the policy framework, the formation of education committees and the actual conception of the school. This will be followed by an examination of the varied people who came to SOMAFSCO, their backgrounds, and their motivation for coming. Other chapters will look at some of the structures that existed in the complex. Those to be examined will be the National Scholarship Committee and its role, and the Women's Section. Another chapter will examine the role of international donor agencies in the realisation of the school and the kinds of help they provided, and the mechanisms that were put in place to monitor the proper utilisation of help given and received. A further chapter will be a narrative detailing the role of the service sector in Mazimbu, including the farm, the furniture

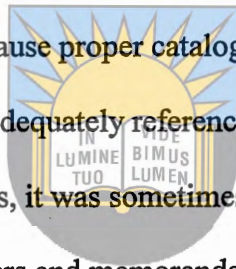
factory and the hospital. Finally the last chapter will examine the range of tensions and conflicts that permeated the complex and the reasons therefore.

Permeating the thesis will be the broad question of curriculum. This study has not devoted a specific chapter to the curriculum as this could imply that it was something separate from other endeavours at the schools. Also, R. Govender in his University of the Western Cape MA thesis has previously discussed aspects of SOMAFCO's curriculum, and Maaba, in his Fort Hare MA thesis, has to some extent looked at curriculum development at the school from the student perspective.<sup>3</sup>



This research was prompted by the arrival of the SOMAFCO archives, part of the archives of the ANC in exile, at the University of Fort Hare from the various countries and missions where this organisation had been allowed to operate. When they got to Fort Hare hardly any real sorting of these papers had been done, and it appeared that there would be little hindrance in allowing research to be undertaken on them. In fact, that they had been brought to an institution of higher learning was a challenge on its own to any would-be researcher. The Batlagae Trust provided a grant that enabled research on SOMAFCO using these archives. A preliminary survey of the documents revealed that, whilst there was enough material to do a worthwhile study, a better result could be anticipated if oral sources were incorporated in the project especially since many of those associated with the school were still alive and were back in South Africa. This was even more pertinent considering that very few secondary sources existed that had interrogated this subject. This led to a countrywide programme interviewing available people -

students, teachers, workers and administrators - who had been to Mazimbu or had had anything to do with the place. Further interviews were conducted in Tanzania. These included civil servants, diplomatic officials, and local people who had come into contact with South Africans during their exile years. This data has, to date, added new dimensions inaccessible from the archival record. Other ANC materials lodged at the Mayibuye Centre at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town was also examined. This combination of sources has resulted in more than this work as other individuals have also been part of the research team. The one drawback of using such newly available material is that because proper cataloguing and collation is still in progress, some documents are not adequately referenced. Also, with most of the documents still in their original files, it was sometimes difficult to ascertain the proper dates of the individual leaflets, letters and memoranda. In fact, some of these do not even have dates, which can be attributed to the clandestine nature of a revolutionary organisation. These minor issues do not retract anything from the exciting nature of these sources for academic work.



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### *Literature Review*

SOMAFCO as a research area is still relatively untouched and very little secondary material on the school exists. This leaves the researcher with the option of looking at related issues, such as the ANC's educational perspectives and any relationship

these might have to practical applications at SOMAFCO, and at similar revolutionary educational institutions elsewhere in Africa. A case in point is Zimbabwe's ZANU and ZAPU exiled schools dating from the era of revolution in that country. Furthermore there are occasional references in the literature to the educational experiences of South Africans in exile, be it in Africa, America or elsewhere. However, in general the literature referred to is essentially peripheral to the central concern of this study.

A relatively recent study of interest is Hilda Bernstein's *The Rift: The Exile Experience of South Africans*, which is made up of many verbatim transcripts of accounts about life in exile for a wide variety of South Africans.<sup>4</sup> She interjects here and there if only to sketch the background of her informants. The period covered is from the 1960s to the early 1990s. The book has a section on the development of SOMAFCO and the different components of the SOMAFCO community (builders, nurses, students, teachers, etc.).

*Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution, 1900-1992*, by A. and B. Isaacman is a book that examines different stages in the history of the conquest of Mozambique, later popular opposition, and the subsequent ejection of the Portuguese colonisers.<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this study, the most interesting section is that which deals with attempts by the revolutionary movement, Frelimo, to open schools in the liberated zones of Mozambique. This experience parallels SOMAFCO's own foundation problems. Those joining the schools were expected to help in the teaching of the lower classes: "Within the liberated zones those who could read or write, however minimally,

taught those who could not."<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, the book does not go very far in documenting educational matters as it only mentions the presence of these schools in a perfunctory manner. It fails to grapple with the real problems and achievements of the educational system of the revolutionary period. In that sense it does not really contribute to the broader assessment of bush-schools, and falls short of comprising a credible comparison with SOMAFCO.

A similar work is *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, Vol. 2, edited by N. Bhebe and T. Ranger. Chapter 5 of this book, 'Education and War', by P.M. Nare, examines the tentative steps by ZAPU, through a few of its members, to start a school in Zambia. An interesting aspect of this Zimbabwean experience was that the formation of this school was preceded by the wholesale escape to exile of an entire school, including teachers and students. The book then traces from the beginning the more crucial problems that the school faced, like the shortage of properly qualified teaching staff, the lack of proper materials and resources, the demand for a credible curriculum different from the old colonialist approach, the excessive number of would-be students with typical discipline problems; all this accompanied by the everyday struggle to survive against the elements and the environment, and against the marauding armies of Ian Smith's government.<sup>7</sup>

Another interesting document related to this field is the "Implementation Plan for Education and Training" produced by the Education Department of the African National Congress in May 1994, weeks after coming to power in South Africa.<sup>8</sup> In broad terms,

the document spells out the ANC's vision of educational restructuring for the post-apartheid era. An examination of this issue is important when viewed in parallel to SOMAFCO's educational experience in order to see if there are any similarities or glaring differences. Other than technical data relating to the necessity for the setting up of various committees and commissions to look into the problems caused by the inequalities of apartheid, little in the document is clear, save to re-echo the already obvious shortcomings. Certainly, two years after it had closed, SOMAFCO, the ANC's educational flagship moored in exile, did not even merit a mention.

Even earlier, in 1992, when it might be expected that SOMAFCO would have been fresh in the movement's collective memory, the same lack of reference to the SOMAFCO experience is evident in the ANC's "Policy Framework for Education and Training", which broadly charts general policy outlines for South African education.<sup>9</sup>

There is also Stephen Ellis and Tsepo Sechaba's *Comrades against Apartheid - The ANC & the South African Communist Party in Exile*, which makes a fleeting reference to SOMAFCO. Ellis and Sechaba portray SOMAFCO as more of an SACP vehicle to instil socialist ideals in the up and coming activists, than an ANC school in the full sense. They state that "the syllabus and teaching staff of the ANC's school, the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College, provided an example of the Party's concern to make the ANC membership in its own image".<sup>10</sup> Whilst the authors do not explore this very serious allegation, nevertheless they do open up another avenue of examination regarding SOMAFCO's conception and any ideological basis for its inception. The book,

though, does not amount to a real profile of the broader workings of the SOMAFCO project. In that sense it falls far short of being a helpful source on SOMAFCO, and, as will be seen, detailed examination of the school does not really support their allegation.

In relation to curriculum, Y. Nordkvelle's 'Teachers, culture, and politics: the struggle for a free Namibia. A case-study of the Namibia Secondary Technical School' looks at attempts to develop a curriculum for a SWAPO school in exile in the Peoples Republic of Congo. Mainly, it examines the influence of donor agencies and countries in the conception of a new curriculum, and whether their input taints the co-operative effort that is said to characterise the indigenous contribution and leaves the content more global than local.<sup>11</sup> This paper echoes arguments that took place at and about SOMAFCO, that is, to what extent was the ANC influenced by its donors in the drawing up not only of the curriculum, but also in the formulation of the whole policy framework, both for SOMAFCO, and for the Department of Education.

This literature, whilst not amounting to a comprehensive coverage of the topic, will help in framing some basic understanding of life in exile, and of the various inputs of donor agencies, and will imply questions about ANC education policy in the aftermath of SOMAFCO. The thesis will, certainly, fill gaps that exist in this area of study and create an original picture of education in exile.

The thesis will not be a narrative on all aspects of the whole complex. It will concentrate on specific themes that constitute areas of ambiguity and will thereby

illustrate some paradoxes that lie at the heart of ANC educational thinking. Its main thrust will be to grapple with the complexities of reconciling ANC educational discourse and the intractable problems associated with its implementation. In this fundamental sense, the dilemmas confronting SOMAFCO parallel those currently facing South African education.

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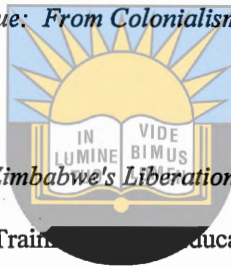


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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> S. M. Ndlovu, *The Soweto Uprisings: Counter-memories of June 1976* (Randburg, 1998), p.45.
- <sup>2</sup> See J. Brickhill and A. Brooks, *Whirlwind Before the Storm: The Origins and the Development of the Uprisings in Soweto and the Rest of South Africa from June to December 1976* (London, 1980); B. Hirson, *Year of Fire, Year of Ash - The Soweto Revolts: Roots of a Revolution?* (London, 1979); J. Kane-Berman, *Soweto - Black Revolt White Reaction* (Johannesburg, 1978); S. Johnson, *South Africa: No Turning Back* (London, 1988).
- <sup>3</sup> R. Govender, "The Rhetoric and the Reality of Curriculum Development at the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College", MA thesis, University of the Western Cape, 1997; B. Maaba, "The Students of Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College, 1978-1992", MA thesis, University of Fort Hare, 1999.
- <sup>4</sup> H. Bernstein, *The Rift: The Exile Experiences of South Africans*, (London, 1994).
- <sup>5</sup> A. Isaacman and B. Isaacman, *Mozambique: From Colonialism to Revolution, 1900-1992* (Boulder, 1983).
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p.93.
- <sup>7</sup> N. Bhebe and T. Ranger, eds., *Society in Zimbabwe's Liberation War*, vol. 1, (Harare, 1995), pp. 130-138.
- <sup>8</sup> "Implementation Plan for Education and Training", Education Department. 1994.
- <sup>9</sup> "Policy Framework for Education and Training", ANC Department of Education, 1992.
- <sup>10</sup> S. Ellis and T. Sechaba, *Comrades Against Apartheid: The ANC and the South African Communist Party in Exile*, (London, 1992), p.201.
- <sup>11</sup> Y. Nordkvelle, 'Teachers, culture, and politics: the struggle for a curriculum for the free Namibia. A case-study of the Namibia Secondary Technical School.' *Education Policy*, 10,4, 1995.



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## Chapter 1

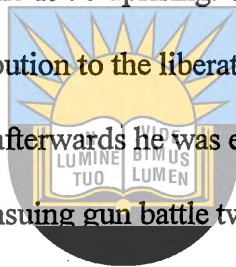
### Origins and early years of SOMAFCO



"My blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of freedom. Please tell my people that I love them."<sup>1</sup>

These were Solomon Mahlangu's last words to his mother on the 6th April 1979.

Mahlangu left South Africa with the flood of young men and women fleeing the wrath of the apartheid state in the aftermath of the June 1976 uprising. Having been trained by the ANC in fulfilment of his desire to make a contribution to the liberation of South Africa, he returned on a military mission early in 1977. Shortly afterwards he was engaged by the police in Goch Street, in Johannesburg, in June 1977. In the ensuing gun battle two whites were killed. He was tried and for his part in the episode found guilty, and sentenced to death on the 8th March 1978.<sup>2</sup>



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There were many appeals for a retrial to stop the execution. The United Nations called on all movements and public organisations to take urgent steps to save the life of Mahlangu, going to the extent of declaring the 7<sup>th</sup> February 1979 a Day of International Action for Solomon Mahlangu. Organisations world-wide were involved in protests to demonstrate their support and solidarity with his cause, and to call for a stop to the execution.<sup>3</sup> All was in vain because on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 1979 Solomon Mahlangu was executed. To show their dismay, the editorial comment of the June edition of *Sechaba*, headlined '*Hamba Kahle Solomon Mahlangu*', declared that "he went to the gallows courageously and confidently. He was aware that the black people of South Africa ... were behind him and indeed that the whole of progressive humanity supported him." This is why the ANC School near Morogoro in Tanzania was given

his name. It was another means of keeping alive the memory of a heroic young man in the minds of South African youth, to further the struggle of the South African people on the educational front and to prepare them to make a better contribution to the struggle. In other words, the complex came to symbolise more than its mere status as a school but it was further seen as a terrain where the educational aspirations of a free South Africa could be conceived, nurtured and realised.

Still, the immediate role of the 1976 revolts is not enough to fully explain the road to SOMAFCO. The complex sequence of South African realities that led to the disastrous educational outcome in South Africa needs also to be highlighted. A more nuanced view would start with the introduction of the Bantu Education Act in 1953 and the accompanying rhetoric of the governing regime at the time.



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When Bantu Education was first introduced, the ANC considered it the most dangerous of the oppressive laws, and Chief Albert Luthuli, the President of the ANC, at its annual conference in December 1954, called on African parents to withdraw their children from Bantu Education schools, not just temporarily but permanently.<sup>4</sup> Despite mass opposition and a protracted campaign led by the ANC, the Bantu Education Act remained law. Its object was to bring African people under direct governmental control and, secondly, to generate an adequate supply of African labour with sufficient education to qualify it to occupy the poorest paid, unskilled and semi-skilled jobs.<sup>5</sup>

Dr H.F. Verwoerd, then Minister of Native Affairs and the true 'Architect of Apartheid', made his intentions unambiguously clear about the future of black education:

When I have control of native education I will reform it so that natives will be taught from childhood to realise that equality with Europeans is not for them ... People who believe in equality are not desirable teachers for natives. ... The Bantu must be guided to serve his own community in all respects. There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour ... Until now he has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his own community and misled him by showing him the green pastures of European society in which he is not allowed to graze.<sup>6</sup>

Such utterances demonstrated clearly that the government intended fostering inferior education for the black people of South Africa. In essence, the state would, in applying its social engineering strategies, target education, the one area that arguably could free the mind. Unlike the other petty laws that sought to entrench segregation, the Bantu Education Act would have far reaching consequences for the black people, as its effects would take much longer to undo. In practice this resulted in the curtailment of technical facilities, further and higher education, and apprenticeship and training schemes for blacks. Consequently and logically most skilled and managerial positions became the preserve of whites only. This highly discriminatory educational policy was coupled with many other forms of degradation, such as bannings and banishments, detentions without trial, deaths in detention, and states of emergency, for any who dared to oppose apartheid.<sup>7</sup>

It is against this background of oppression that the Soweto uprising of 1976, which was to have such a strong influence on the establishment of SOMAFCO, took place. Black students and school children burst out in anger against apartheid, with the breaking point arriving when

Afrikaans was introduced as a medium of instruction into the already second rate education system.<sup>8</sup> To these youngsters Afrikaans represented not only the oppressor but also a final nail in the educational coffin, as they would now be forced to learn a new language accompanied by the necessary cultural reorientation. Much has been written about the 1976 experience, which has acquired almost legendary status.<sup>9</sup> Still, Lodge and Nasson aptly describe the experience when they state that:

The events of 1976-77 had turned children into leaders ... young black South Africans experienced an extraordinary political ascendancy, for it was their actions that broke the silence of the older generation. Reinforcing the courage, moral certainty, and crusading zeal of black youth was their lack of direct memories of the political defeats or the helplessness of black communities of an earlier era. ... Of all generations the "children of Soweto" were the least inclined to accept the limits and restrictions of the apartheid system.<sup>10</sup>

Though their acts were of heroic proportions, the state apparatus was equally determined to put them down by whatever means available. The resulting mayhem saw hundreds detained and many more tortured, sometimes to the point of death. This led to many opting to go into exile to join the liberation organisations rather than going to jail or even facing possible death in South Africa.

Suddenly the ANC found itself facing a mammoth task. Not only did they have to contend with a stream of youngsters, most of whom were too young to fight in the liberation struggle or in some cases were not keen on joining the movement's armed force, *uMkhonto weSizwe* (MK), they also had to accelerate the development of an education policy which would spell out the necessary fundamentals in counteracting the effects of Bantu Education. This

would, of necessity, have to be followed by the erection of an education facility that would serve two main objectives, that is, catering for the educational needs of exiled young people, and developing a blueprint for an education system aspired to in a free South Africa.<sup>11</sup> This school would have to act as an experimental terrain where various theories as to how a proactive, dynamic education system, accessible to everybody, could be put to the test. The school would also have to take its place as another avenue of struggle. Its curriculum, content and priorities would have to bear the distinct qualities of a revolutionary school, being an integral part of a liberation struggle.<sup>12</sup>



Furthermore, the Freedom Charter, the ANC blueprint for future government in South Africa, enshrined the ideal of an education aimed at creating people dedicated to serving the interests of the country above all else.<sup>13</sup> Amongst its objectives would be that "The doors of learning and culture shall be open to all. Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal".<sup>14</sup>

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#### *ANC Thinking and Debates Leading to SOMAFCO*

Henry Makgoti, then Secretary for Education in the ANC, aptly characterised the basis of SOMAFCO. In his report on the eve of the official opening of the school in 1985, he stated:

Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College is a cadre-training centre of the ANC. The problems posed by the freedom struggle in South Africa are extremely complex and the successful consolidation of that struggle demands cadres of a high quality. Here at SOMAFCO the ANC is making a modest effort to meet that challenge.<sup>15</sup>

This explanation outlined one of the core elements of the school, which, one could argue, was an idealistic anticipation of a liberated South Africa, which at the time seemed far from realisation. This may have lent itself to the purpose of keeping morale high within the ranks of the whole ANC movement. The leadership had the responsibility of churning out optimistic and confidence boosting statements to keep hope alive. This was even more necessary in the case of the young people that came after 1976. They had experienced extreme brutalisation and any wavering by the leadership would have led to severe setbacks in terms of organisational focus.



On another level, the opening of the school had other positive ramifications for the ANC. It strengthened the bond between the ANC 'old guard' composed of the exiles of the 1960s and earlier, and the 'young lions' of the 1970s. With the creation of an educational facility the ANC became the logical and natural home of the young exiles. It reinforced the ANC's claim to be the leading organisation in the struggle for freedom in South Africa.<sup>16</sup> The educational initiative also justified continued support for the ANC by donors, at a time when various political organisations from South Africa were fighting for recognition.

Specifically, the school was announced as opening for several reasons:

It was to be a school where academic studies and vocational training and labour would be equally respected - a counter to Bantu Education - where children would get the best possible tuition, be free to learn the culture of their own people and subsequently have the opportunity to take up scholarships in universities and colleges in different parts of the world. Finally, they would be practically and intellectually equipped to make their contribution in the present phase of the struggle in which they are eager to participate, and to take their rightful place as citizens in a free and democratic South Africa of the future.<sup>17</sup>

These rather dogmatically repeated aims did not even begin to describe the work that had to be done in organising the school, planning for it and actually getting it started. Still, to get the project under way the Tanzanian government offered the ANC 250 acres of land at Mazimbu near Morogoro, for the purpose of setting up a secondary school, an acreage that was soon to be greatly extended.<sup>18</sup> At the beginning of the project only a secondary boarding school was envisaged.<sup>19</sup> There remained the question of devising a viable organisational framework.

### *Organisational Framework*

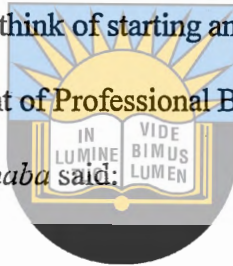


The foundation of the ANC school took place in a context where the movement as a whole was becoming more organisationally complex with departments and divisions mirroring the structures of governmental organisations. In setting out its initial strategy for the implementation of the school proposal, the ANC Education Department articulated three main aims, namely:

- to maximise use of the resources available to the ANC through the delegation of planning responsibilities, thus achieving the widest possible mobilisation of members and supporters;
- to co-ordinate and centralise this mobilisation to avoid unnecessary overlapping and repetition of tasks and waste of resources;
- to ensure that this effort remained within and determined by the agreed political nature and purpose of the school.<sup>20</sup>

These general aims were a result of broad consultation within the ANC. In the

immediate aftermath of the 1976 revolts, in early 1977, education committees were set up in various centres where the ANC had representation. These committees were initially meant to co-ordinate with international donor agencies, which wanted to give immediate help in the form of books, advice, supplies and finance. These committees were relatively informal and were usually comprised of any individuals who were willing to volunteer their time aside from their regular jobs. With the escalating number of exiles the ANC went further and developed committees in other centres where they had representation. With the need for more committees it became obvious that the ANC had to think of starting an Education Department, separate from the previously existing Department of Professional Bodies. In explaining the reasoning behind a fully-fledged department, *Sechaba* said:



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Reacting to the crisis which is taking place within the country, the ANC has decided to streamline its machinery, departments and sub-departments dealing with various aspects of our work. The creation of the Department of Education and Culture was one move. With South Africa embroiled in an educational crisis, it was created to meet the demands of our people. The formation of this Department is an attempt to meet this challenge and to create an alternative to Bantu Education. The decision of the NEC of the ANC to establish last year the Department of Education and Culture is symptomatic of the new revolutionary phase of the struggle against apartheid, heralded by the armed struggle and the adoption in 1969 [Morogoro Declaration] of 'The Strategy and Tactics of the South African Revolution'. Whereas previously educational work had mainly been concerned with scholarship, the new situation demanded a system of education which was an integral part of the Revolutionary Movement.<sup>21</sup>

The task of the committees was directly linked to the idea of opening the school and was geared to that purpose. Part of their brief was the difficult project of developing syllabi and teaching materials. These committees were located in London, New York, Dar es Salaam and Lusaka.<sup>22</sup>

The main centre was London where curriculum development, resourcing, policy discussion and

material dissemination took place.

In delegating the process, further committees were established. These were mainly geared to achieving the overall aims not only of the school but also of the ANC as a liberation movement. These committees were divided into Basic Planning, Co-ordination, Education, and Political Issues. The Basic Planning Committee was tasked with broad general issues in the project. These included basic education, extra mural activities, political education, catering, domestic work and social welfare. The Co-ordination Committee's main task was to co-ordinate the logistics of particular aspects covered by the Planning Committees. Further, they looked at construction and physical materials, staffing, curricula and teaching materials; and students. For the purpose of accessibility the committees were to be based in Dar es Salaam. The Education Committee, of necessity, had the overall supervision of the work of all the committees. It was responsible for bringing all the proposals into one coherent scheme. The Political Committee was responsible for the political direction of the school.<sup>23</sup> These were their functions on paper but, predictably, in a project of this complexity, the roles tended to mesh together in practice.

The actual process of starting up the school depended on two things, namely, the recruitment of workers (teachers and builders); and the number of students waiting in the wings to join the school.

## *Building SOMAFCO*

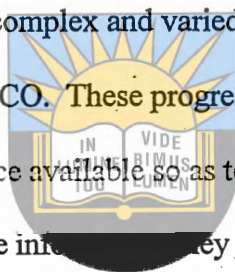
To get the project under way several people were coopted or recruited. The Planning Committee set out ground rules for the recruitment of workers and volunteers. For prospective teachers the ANC offered transportation to the school for the teacher and his or her family, accommodation, basic supplies, such as food, toiletry, cutlery, etc., a meagre monthly allowance, and an undertaking to provide for annual visits to relatives or to receive visits from them.<sup>24</sup>



For the critical purpose of overseeing the development of the initial infrastructure the ANC secured the services of Oswald, "Oswald" Dennis as project manager. Dennis had qualified as a civil engineer in the German Democratic Republic. Together with only six other workers they started working in Mazimbu in July 1977. There was an old sisal estate on the site donated by the Tanzanian government, and of that only two dilapidated structures were left. These had neither windows nor doors. There was also no running water, electricity nor ceilings in the houses.<sup>26</sup> From these apparently inauspicious beginnings SOMAFCO grew. There were, however, many problems that kept occurring, stemming mainly from the difficulty of keeping supplies flowing regularly.

Some Tanzanian firms contracted to provide materials took lengthy periods to deliver. There are many examples in the archives of letters from Dennis and his colleagues to the suppliers, drawing attention to such delays.<sup>27</sup> Dennis also had to consult widely with the

structures of the ANC on progress at the school and on his intermittent requirements for skilled manpower. In a typical letter to Rusty Bernstein in London, he reported on the magnitude of the work in Mazimbu, stating that he "estimate[s] the finished complex including vocational training, workshops, etc. will be in the region of 10 million dollars". He further stated that "apart from architectural and building work, we have over 200 students (1981) in great need of political education. There is also a great deal of artistic talent amongst the students, which needs to be developed."<sup>28</sup> One is immediately struck by the compacted nature of this letter, alluding within a few sentences to the complex and varied nature of the responsibilities placed on people leading the work in SOMAFCO. These progress reports had to contain as much information as possible in the little space available so as to sustain the interest of everybody, even those outside Mazimbu. The more information they contained and the more constituencies they appealed to the better their chances of raising the funds of the need for help.



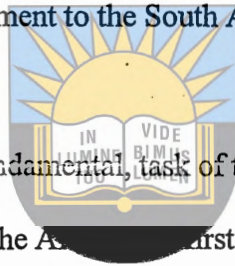
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The earliest students arrived in SOMAFCO in 1977, right at the inception of the project. These students were also instrumental in clearing the land upon which SOMAFCO was to be built. Amongst them was Titus, who arrived in East Africa in 1977;

I came straight to Mazimbu when I arrived in Tanzania. There was just bush everywhere. About fifty of us, all students, went to work clearing the bush and helping in the renovation ... We improvised a school. Those of us who had completed their matriculation levels at home assisted ...[in] teach[ing] the junior students.<sup>29</sup>

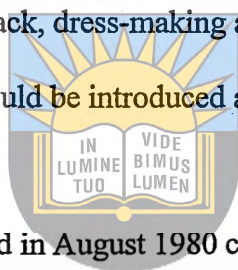
These were the humble beginnings of the secondary school. Proper building of the school complex started in 1979 and late in that year students and staff were able to move into the first completed dormitory block.<sup>30</sup> In these conditions some rooms were used as classrooms and

others served as accommodation for both staff and students. Still, there was a major problem with staffing. For the first four years of the school's existence from 1978 to mid-1982 the entire staff of SOMAFSCO was composed of South African exiles, members of the ANC. Very few were qualified teachers, many being graduates without teaching qualifications, and about half were post matriculation students awaiting scholarships in other countries. Eventually, some volunteer teachers were recruited from the Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK to teach the Natural Sciences, English and Geography. They were carefully selected on the basis both of their qualifications and of their commitment to the South African struggle.<sup>31</sup>



Another important, probably fundamental, task of the committees was to come up with a curriculum to match the aspirations of the ANC. At the first meeting of the Joint Committees, in October 1978, named the National Education Council (NEC) in 1981, was geared mainly at drafting the conceptual framework of the Education Department. From that would emanate a draft ANC policy on education. The process of developing a curriculum more compatible with the precepts of the policy framework would be the next logical step. At the end of this first Council meeting, each regional education committee was allocated syllabi to prepare over a specific timeframe.<sup>32</sup> These were to be presented at the next meeting, which took place in April 1979. The drafts were given to the members to study and they quickly produced a description of priority areas so far mapped out. The curriculum would encompass ten priority subjects. These would be Mathematics, General Science, Biology, Physical Geography, Agricultural Science, History, History of the Liberation Struggle, Literature, Development of the South African Liberation Struggle (later termed the Development of Societies) and English.<sup>33</sup> On the

subject of South African indigenous languages, it was felt that these should be "taught mainly to acquaint the students with the similarities of the various languages. By this, it is hoped, the divisive attitudes that have been inculcated in the minds of our people will be greatly reduced." Other subjects mentioned were the Performing Arts, Arts and Crafts, and foreign languages like French and Portuguese. The ANC Health Department came forward with a draft syllabus on personal hygiene and public health, food and nutrition, and first aid. There was also a draft syllabus on journalism from the London Committee. It was hoped that, later on, when some of the people undergoing training came back, dress-making and design, carpentry, plumbing, building and building maintenance, would be introduced as subjects at the School.<sup>34</sup>



The third NEDUC meeting held in August 1980 came with more organised statistics on progress in curriculum development. The NEDUC meeting also noted that the entry of students for Tanzanian examinations planned for 1980 should be abandoned and candidates withdrawn. Instead form V would be entered for University of London G.C.E. 'O' level examinations from June 1981 onwards. Specifically, they would be examined in English Language, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Geography. The ANC would conduct its own examinations for History, Development of Societies and Literature.<sup>35</sup> The main reason for abandoning the Tanzanian examinations was the problem of language. In Tanzania Ki-Swahili is an official language which is also compulsory for promotion from one level to the next. Also, much teaching in Tanzania is done in ki-Swahili, and as a result there is an inevitable bias in favour of Swahili speakers.<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, the result of this decision was to link SOMAFCO with a British style of examination as, for instance, are many of the

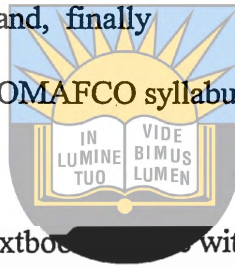
international schools to be found in African capitals, catering largely for the children of expatriates.

Emanating from one recommendation of the third NEDUC meeting, a Curriculum Development and Planning Unit (CDP) was set up. In justifying its existence, its aim was stated to be to develop "a genuine curriculum programme for liberation so that the present demands our people are able to confront the enemy with, must be in line with the thinking of our organisation and the experiences it is gaining at SOMAFSCO."<sup>37</sup> It was also stated that advances already achieved by ZAPU and SWAPO in the primary school syllabus, should be used as the core from which ANC education for liberation must emanate. These concepts would be filtered back into South Africa to contribute to the development of curriculum redevelopment amongst relevant structures. The CDP saw itself working mainly as a co-ordinating agency in the actual drawing up and development of curricular material. The teacher, it was argued, would always be central in the process. Following panels and seminars on these issues conducted with teachers and other stakeholders, CDP would compile the outcome. Thus there would always be ongoing innovation at SOMAFSCO "or any of our future schools which we hope will come into existence in future."<sup>38</sup>

The work on curriculum development came to a standstill when the ANC Education Policy document was questioned in the 1982 Curriculum Development Workshop held at SOMAFSCO. This controversy over policy was resolved at the August 1983 National Education Council meeting.<sup>39</sup> The CDP work from this stage onwards was clearly tabulated. It consisted

of:

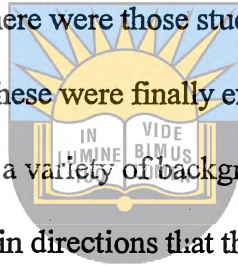
- recruiting more members into the curriculum committees,
- constituting curriculum consultancy work groups of specialists in various fields of curriculum development,
- recruiting and recommending for training personnel who would specialise in particular areas of curriculum development,
- planning for comprehensive research on SOMAFCO problems and evaluating the school's achievements in its first five years, and, finally
- producing a second edition of the SOMAFCO syllabus handbook.<sup>40</sup>



Another problem was lack of textbooks with ANC education policy. The department was tasked with having these specially written, particularly in History. In the meantime teachers improvised, and sometimes used local Tanzanian materials. It was easier with the sciences as donor agencies from Britain and the Scandinavian countries kept a regular supply flowing.<sup>41</sup>

When the ANC was originally planning the education facility, only a secondary school was envisaged. The primary school was an incidental creation, because after the secondary school got under way "the population became aware of the fact that there were some 20 young children who should be at school. A 'teacher' took them in hand early in 1980 and a school began to take shape."<sup>42</sup> It was almost a natural progression that a nursery school and a day care centre should follow in 1981.<sup>43</sup>

From here on SOMAFCO began to take even bigger strides in its development. With generous contributions from international agencies like UNDP, SIDA, UNCHS, ARDHI, CUSO, OXFAM, DUIA, DUF, and many others, the work took on a life of its own. Several important ANC activities began to be held in SOMAFCO with regular visits from its leaders. A scholarship programme was also set up for those students who wanted to pursue tertiary studies overseas.<sup>44</sup> Most of those who took up this opportunity would later come back to make their contribution to the school. Of course there were those students who could not take the disciplined lifestyle of the school and these were finally expelled.<sup>45</sup> This could be expected in any society involving individuals from a variety of backgrounds. For others, SOMAFCO proved an opportunity which led them in directions that they could not possibly have envisaged in the South African contexts from which they had come.



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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> ANC/SOM/7/Progress report at official opening by Henry Makgoti, Secretary for Education, 21-23 August 1985.

<sup>2</sup> *Sechaba*, January, 1979, p.29.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, April, 1979, p.10. It should be noted that the first council meeting of the Education Department held from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1978 had recommended to the National Executive Committee of the ANC that the name of the school be The Albert Luthuli Institute. Even the second meeting held from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> April 1979 inaugurated the school as the ANC Freedom School. The school was not officially opened, and the new name formally bestowed, until 1985.

<sup>4</sup> T.B. Fulani, "People's Education for People's Power," *The African Communist*, 112, (1988).

<sup>5</sup> Eric Stilton, "The Function of Education in the Struggle for Liberation", *The African Communist*, 105, (1983).

<sup>6</sup> ANC/SOM/41/Cutting from unnamed British journal, "Education Today and Tomorrow", Middlesex, Winter, 1980/81, p.14.

<sup>7</sup> ANC/SOM/7/SOMAFCO Student Journal, September 1985.

<sup>8</sup> ANC/SOM/17/Internal Memo on issues to be mentioned when addressing visitors to SOMAFCO, N.D.

<sup>9</sup> See for instance J. Kane-Berman, *South Africa, - the Method in the Madness* (London, 1978); A. Brooks, J. Brickhill, *Whirlwind Before the Storm* (London, 1980); J. Fredericks, *South Africa - A Different Kind of War. From Soweto to Pretoria* (London, 1986); P. Colligan, *Soweto Remembered: Conversation with freedom fighters* (Atlanta, 1981).

<sup>10</sup> T. Lodge, B. Nasson, *All, Here, And Now: Black Politics in South Africa in the 1980s* (Cape Town, 1991) p. 38. See also B. Hirson, *Year of Fire, Year of Ash: The Roots of Revolution?* (London, 1979.)

<sup>11</sup> ANC/SOM/7/Progress Report at official opening, Foreword by Alfred Nzo, Secretary General, 1985.

<sup>12</sup> ANC/SOM/44/Workshop on Curriculum Development, 31 January 1982.

<sup>13</sup> ANC/SOM/UFH Archive Shelves, Freedom Charter, Reproduced by ANC Department of Religious Affairs, Tanzania, 1971.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> ANC/SOM/7/Official Opening, 21-23 August 1985.

<sup>16</sup> ANC/SOM/18/Correspondence, 1978-1981.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> ANC/SOM/14/"Education for Liberation: Overcoming Apartheid at Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College", *Student Journal*, 1983. P.1.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p.1.

<sup>20</sup> ANC/SOM/15/"Strategy for the implementation of the proposals of the ANC (SA) school", 23.12.77.

<sup>21</sup> *Sechaba*, August 1979, 'New ANC School', p.23.

<sup>22</sup> ANC/SOM/15/"Strategy", 23.12.77.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> ANC/SOM/234/Correspondence, 1978-1980.

<sup>25</sup> ANC/SOM/160/Progress Report, School Building Project. May 1981.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> ANC/SOM/18/Supplies, August 1981. An example is given of a Tanzanian firm, BHESCO, which inordinately delayed the supply of armoured cables and two other construction orders.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 18, Supplies.

<sup>29</sup> ANC/SOM/7/Progress Report, 1983.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> ANC/SOM/3/Progress Report, 1982.



<sup>32</sup> *Sechaba*, August 1979, p.26. **University of Fort Hare**

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<sup>33</sup> ANC/SOM/5/The Second Council Meeting, ANC Education and Culture Department, Mazimbu, 14<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> April 1979.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> Interview Loyiso Pulumani (henceforth LP)/ Mr. R. Mwinuka, Dar es Salaam, 10 May 1997.

<sup>37</sup> ANC/SOM/11/NEDUC 4, Mazimbu, 18<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> August 1981.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> ANC/SOM/6A/Curriculum Development Report, August 1983.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> ANC/SOM/3/Progress Reports, 1983.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.* See also B. Maaba's *The Students of Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College: 1978-1992*, M.A. University of Fort Hare, 1999.

<sup>44</sup> ANC/SOM/207/National Scholarship Committee, Scholarship Policy.

<sup>45</sup> For example, ANC/SOM/13/Report on the case of rape, 02.01.83. The background and the final CDC decisions on the case of misconduct - 18.03.85.



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## Chapter 2

### The Background of the SOMAFCO Community, in Particular the Early Teaching Recruits.

The SOMAFCO project was an ambitious undertaking. This meant that after planning, the next step, a demanding one, would be to examine the proper mechanisms for populating the place. In this regard several aspects had to be kept in mind: amongst them, that there was, as yet, no permanent source of funding, which required that those co-opted or persuaded to work there should have a level of purpose and commitment to the ideals of the ANC that would enable them to remain committed even given this level of uncertainty. This commitment would have to extend to the realisation that conditions would be very difficult and that the terrain of the project, consistent with tropical conditions, would be tough and unforgiving. People who went to work there at the early stages emphasise this necessity to consider such conditions seriously in deciding to go to Mazimbu.<sup>2</sup> Most note the initial hardships they experienced, but their resilience and the capacity to face up to the challenges set them apart from those who crumbled and gave up. In response to the question of how she or others felt about coming to SOMAFCO, a teacher said that she:

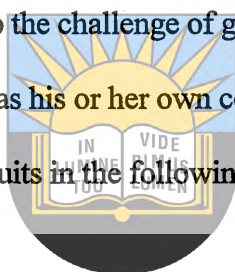
quite liked the challenge that we were faced with, ... the demands make them grow, even when they are not aware that they are growing. Their experiences are unique in one way. ... They are asked to be creative, to have an initiative to do things ... that they have never done before.<sup>3</sup>

In recruiting teachers, the ANC sent out communiqués to all its missions around the world, encouraging people to come and be part of the project.<sup>4</sup> Initially, those targeted were people of

South African origin, to such an extent that some of the invitations were sent to internal underground structures in South Africa.<sup>5</sup> Following the resolutions of the third National Education Council (NEDUC) meeting held from 14-18 August 1980, the guiding principle was that

all recruits to the SOMAFCO project fully understand and are committed to the role of the ANC as a liberation movement whose only resources derive from the sacrifices and selfless devotion of the oppressed South African masses themselves. Services to SOMAFCO therefore must be seen not as favour to the ANC but as a modest contribution and privilege to serve oneself and ones own people.<sup>6</sup>

This simply meant that any one taking up the challenge of going to Mazimbu should not expect any material rewards, but should rather do it as his or her own contribution to the struggle. The same policy resolution listed categories of recruits in the following order of priority:



1. Professionally qualified ANC members
2. South African supporters of the ANC
3. Non-South African allies and supporters of the ANC with proper professional qualifications.<sup>7</sup>

These categories were developed to impose some system on recruitment criteria. The first set out the ideal candidates for the job. The second acknowledged that whilst the ANC had a vast pool of educated supporters, they were not all be trained teachers: hence the omission of 'professional' in this instance. Also, this category implicitly acknowledged that by 1980, the date on which the document was written, there was a substantial number of matriculated students at SOMAFCO who, whilst awaiting scholarships to study abroad, and in view of the dire shortage of teachers, could help with the teaching of some of the classes. The third criterion set out to tap the

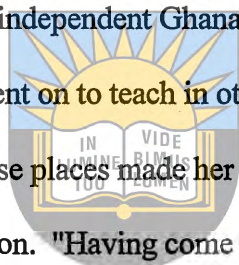
ANC's very wide support base amongst solidarity groups all over the world. If the ANC was to satisfy its intention of promoting the teaching and learning of the 'hard' sciences, which the apartheid government had discouraged and in which there were very few South African teachers from backgrounds likely to be favourable to the liberation struggle, it stood to reason that the most likely individuals for this task would probably be drawn from those foreign supporters with a solidarity background. Overall, teachers and their work were recognised as "the very pillar upon which the realisation" of the aim of the project lay.<sup>8</sup> The success or otherwise of the school was seen to depend on getting the best possible people who would be able to transcend the decades of inferior instruction, and who would be able to instil new virtues and goals whilst simultaneously building the confidence of the students.



Using the benefit of hindsight, an examination of the profiles of prospective teachers will help to create an image of their motivation, the build up to their tenure there, the various reasons for being in exile, and the bureaucratic processes involved in enrolling as volunteers. The emphasis will be on the earliest members, who had to play the difficult yet exciting pioneering role, requiring great patience and the resolve to overcome whatever obstacles came their way.

The most striking aspect of the first batch of teachers was their peculiar sense of adventure.<sup>9</sup> They all realised that conditions in Tanzania would be hard, but the thought of assisting the fight against apartheid through teaching was attractive even to those who might have regarded themselves as pacifists or as not having the stomach or will to engage in military resistance. Others had long ago taken their stand against apartheid education. Mrs Njobe was amongst these. She and

her husband left South Africa in the late fifties, a few years after Bantu Education had been promulgated. As a trained teacher with university education she had watched as the apartheid machinery set about efficiently and uncompromisingly breaking down the structures of black education, putting in its place crude scraps bandied about as the appropriate lot for second class citizens. Finding it hard to endure this onslaught, and with her husband increasingly on the opposite side of the law, they realised that they had to look elsewhere if they wanted to continue plying their trade. At about this time Dr. Kwame Nkrumah was seeking qualified African teachers to assist in the rebuilding of the recently independent Ghana. They took up that challenge and moved to Ghana. Over the years they went on to teach in other African countries like Nigeria and Zambia. Mrs. Njobe's experience in these places made her yearn to be part of the SOMAFSCO experiment when she heard of its inception. "Having come across children who had grown up having never experienced racial oppression and encouraged to exercise their faculties to the fullest" made her think of these displaced South African children in SOMAFSCO. She thus took up a place in the school as a biology teacher in September 1979, a few months after tuition started.<sup>10</sup>



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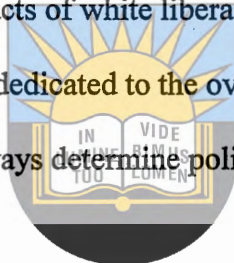
André Proctor's route to SOMAFSCO was somewhat different. His time as a student at the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand had exposed him to the various layers of struggle, and in the process he realised that he could not accept the *status quo*. The deciding factor was the arrival of his draft papers ordering him to report for his military service in the South African Defence Force. In response to this he and his wife crossed to Botswana, where he thus became probably the first draft dodger to escape from South Africa. Here he became part of

the small South African exile community, and he also formally joined the ANC. He spent a few years here until he also heard of the opening of the school in Tanzania. He heeded that call and arrived in SOMAFCO at the beginning of 1980.<sup>11</sup>

The army also called up John Pampallis. Having been through basic training and having been part of a few manoeuvres he could not shake off the feeling of the gross misdeeds of apartheid.<sup>12</sup> Thinking that the army had finished with him, he was in fact again called up, as a sergeant. This prompted him to leave South Africa and take to the road in Europe and the Americas, and then to seek more permanent refuge elsewhere. This was not done clandestinely, but through his fiancée, who was a Canadian citizen. He moved to Canada, and after a few years, and having gained citizenship, he again felt the pull of the African continent. About this time he also heard, through the ANC presence in Canada, of the opening of SOMAFCO and the call for teachers. He moved there with his wife in early 1980. Like Mrs. Njobe, Proctor and Pampallis were highly qualified individuals (both with honours and masters degrees), who could have easily lived comfortably anywhere in the world, but they chose the uncertainty of SOMAFCO. Their overriding wish was to contribute however they could to the struggle against apartheid. Others of course were, at the wish of the ANC, redeployed to SOMAFCO from other sectors of the movement.

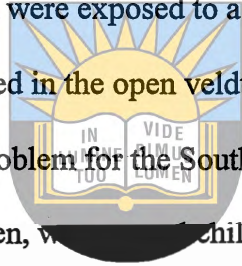
Another interesting dynamic about these teachers is their relatively comfortable background. As one recruit puts it, for him "it came down to a very simple choice about South Africa, and that was either live and not partake any more of this, among other things, unwanted

privilege, rather go and be poor somewhere else, or do something about it, and then I was offered this opportunity or asked or recruited or caught in the web ... and it came together at that moment of those kinds of thoughts."<sup>14</sup> Clearly the motivation of this teacher, Richard Jurgens, was that of conscientious objection to the excesses of apartheid privilege, which others were taking for granted. This also raises the important role of the underground structures of the ANC in universities where the left tendencies of some students were exploited to convince them to assist the mass-democratic movement, and to combat the machinery of government propaganda. There is a certain irony in the privileged products of white liberal universities, mostly from well to do families, turning towards an institution dedicated to the overthrow of the educational *status quo*. Social privilege, it is clear, does not always determine political action.



Most of these individuals brought their spouses who also played an important part in the project. Mrs. Njobe's husband was the first principal of the school. John Pampallis's wife, Karin, whilst a Canadian national, did not hold back and dirtied her hands as well. Initially she became secretary of the Scholarship Committee. Here she helped the Principal in liaising with the Dar es Salaam Education Secretariat in the Office of the Chief Representative, in the difficult task of apportioning scholarships to those students who had graduated from secondary school. Later she joined the construction office as secretary to the project manager, Oswald Dennis. In this capacity she practically ran his office, taking care of orders, correspondence, filing and all general office work. So meaningful was her contribution that her portfolio was later upgraded to that of full assistant to Dennis.<sup>15</sup>

Proctor's wife, due to recurrent ill health, could not be employed at SOMAFCO.<sup>16</sup> In this respect she was not alone. Many of SOMAFCO's recruits had to battle bouts of debilitating illness, more often than not malaria. The clinic was one attempt to combat the constant health problems. This of course did not stop the prevalence of sickness, and in these earliest stages a number of people were forced to leave as a result of ill health. Two teachers, for instance, were forced to leave because of the continuous illness of their spouses.<sup>17</sup> Recruits were also shaken by the continuous ill health of their children.<sup>18</sup> This applied particularly to those living in difficult conditions in Morogoro, where children were exposed to a very unhealthy environment.<sup>19</sup> Also, at these earliest stages, food was prepared in the open veldt, under trees, in essentially unhygienic conditions. However, a fundamental problem for the South Africans was that they did not have resistance to tropical health hazards. Men, women and children, born and bred outside the tropics, were prone to recurrent bouts of illness.<sup>20</sup>

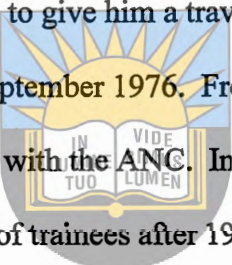


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There were those teachers who came to SOMAFCO from different areas within the ANC network. Amongst these was Douglas Ramaphosa. He had been immersed in the 1976 wave of resistance to apartheid and, like thousands of others, found himself in detention in a South African prison, spending time in the cells of the dreaded police station at John Vorster Square.<sup>21</sup> The time he spent there raised his political awareness as brutalisation at the hands of the police brought detainees closer together and made them resilient and even more committed to the idea of a free South Africa. Though after detention he was able to resume his life and find a well paying job, his contacts with people from the ANC underground encouraged him to abandon his cover and flee the country. Even though he was not a qualified teacher, he had heard of the

pressing need for staff, and therefore decided to go to SOMAFCO as a teacher.<sup>22</sup>

Patrick Mtshawulana had graduated from Fort Hare and was supporting his family by working as a prosecutor in Bizana, Transkei. After the events of June 1976 he decided to give up his job. For him "it was clear that the time had come for young people of my age to join the struggle, to join the ANC which was leading the struggle, to avert and avoid that people should spontaneously rise up as they were doing in Soweto, without leadership, which cost so many lives."<sup>23</sup> Having convinced a magistrate to give him a travel document to go to Swaziland to visit relatives, he left South Africa in September 1976. From Swaziland he went to Mozambique where Frelimo brought him into contact with the ANC. In the ANC he joined MK as part of the June 16 detachment, the first big group of trainees after 1976. Due to his educational background he later became a political instructor for new recruits. In 1980 he was recruited to come to SOMAFCO, to teach History of the Struggle.



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Phetu Serote's route from South Africa took her to Botswana where she stayed for five years working as a teacher. She had obtained her teaching qualification in South Africa under very difficult conditions. Then, through the involvement of her husband in politics, she left the country to join him in Botswana. She arrived in SOMAFCO in 1983 to work as a teacher in the secondary school.<sup>25</sup>

For Thami Mali the route to exile came about when he found himself facing trial in two different cases. In the first one, together with Albertina Sisulu, he was charged with

contravening section 6 of the Terrorism Act, by furthering the aims of a banned organisation, the African National Congress. He was found guilty and sentenced to five years imprisonment. Whilst still appealing against this sentence he was arrested on another unrelated issue. On being released on bail he decided to leave the country as prospects of facing a long jail term loomed large. This was in 1980, and outside the country he made his way to Lusaka, where after his debriefing he joined a military training camp in Angola, at Mpamgo. Later, in 1987, he came back to Lusaka to work in regional military logistics. A year later he was asked to leave the army and join SOMAFCO, as in his previous life in South Africa he had been a teacher. Reluctant though he was to leave the army, he agreed, and in February 1988 he arrived in SOMAFCO to take the post of a teacher in History and English. He was also appointed as the Political Commissar of the primary division. This decision probably reached as a result of his military background. As a Commissar's role was to instil and maintain political commitment and morale, the feeling must have been that he would bring to bear the motivation and discipline that was part and parcel of army life. Also, 1988 was a time in SOMAFCO's history when there were many upheavals. The bulk of students who arrived after the 1985 wave of unrest in the country brought with them certain elements of divisiveness. At this stage when some students started forming themselves into cliques, and students born in exile began to get labels that set them apart from the rest of the student population. Thus, Mali's appointment as a Commissar, it was hoped, would inculcate deeper political discourse and dispel petty rivalries emanating from South Africa.<sup>26</sup>

These teacher profiles show that the people who went to teach at SOMAFCO were not

necessarily heroes, but ordinary people who wanted to play a meaningful role in the struggle for a new vision of education. These are the people who fulfilled the basic tenets for viable recruits as set out in the resolution of the second NEDUC meeting held in April 1979.<sup>27</sup>

Of course, for teachers' skills to be put to real use there had to be a well structured teaching programme. This was elaborated by the committees set up to examine areas like curriculum development and syllabi. From the earliest Education Council meeting held in Mazimbu in October 1978, these aspects came up for discussion. The issues that received particular attention were how to deal adequately with "revolution within education". NEDUC recorded that under social sciences, it was strongly felt that there should be a separate subject dealing with the development of the South African liberation struggle. It was to be one of the compulsory subjects to be taught to students attending the ANC School so that they became aware of the history and development of the struggle including its tactics.<sup>28</sup> This subject was History of the Struggle, which in the main dealt with the history of the ANC, the histories of other political parties and movements, and the role of formations like the Afrikaner Broederbond. It also examined the relationship between the political and armed struggles and the role of the students at SOMAFCO in the whole situation. The course was based on the idea that the armed struggle is central to the revolution, and at the same time that it could never advance without the political struggle.<sup>29</sup>

At first glance it is easy to see the motivation behind these requirements. As a school operating in the abnormal conditions of armed struggle, the morale and direction of the students

had to be honed to adhere to revolutionary necessities. Also, because in South Africa access to knowledge about the deeds of African martyrs in struggle against oppression was prohibited or presented in a skewed manner it was required that the ANC take bold steps to remedy this through education. However the question is to what extent was this kind of endeavour different to its predecessor in trying to mould a stereotypical student, through what could be construed as propagandist education? Was this education simply a reverse-image of what students were experiencing in South Africa? It can be argued that, ideally, students' best chance of developing enquiring and critical minds would be to offer all sides of a debate and then allow them to decide on issues for themselves.



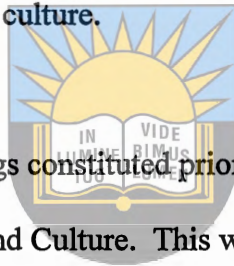
This argument is put into perspective if one listens to the accounts of past students of SOMAFCO. Generally, students felt that the education they gained on SOMAFCO allowed them to develop a very strong sense of their individuality and their place in the world. Through vigorous student participation in class discussion they were able to develop confidence and were made aware of developments in the world and how these affected them.<sup>30</sup> They also felt the SOMAFCO atmosphere made them grow up quickly and not be preoccupied with the usual teenage angst and pursuits.<sup>31</sup> The merits and demerits of this are debatable, but what cannot be ignored is that these students were markedly better off than their counterparts in South Africa. The ANC was involved in a life-and-death struggle, and it would be unrealistic to expect that its school would completely adhere to the liberal educational ideas of more settled and peaceful communities. Bearing the context in mind, the accounts of students and teachers indicate that the educational experience at SOMAFCO demonstrated a remarkable level of intellectual openness

and tolerance.

Another educational area deemed crucial was literature. The feeling of the school authorities was that what was available needed broadening. It was felt that all 'acceptable' books, be they Russian, French, German or whatever could be used so long as they were available in English translation.<sup>32</sup> This outlook was later further developed. From form I to form V central themes were developed which overtly served a political agenda. These, in the words of the NEDUC document, were "disintegration of traditional society, the emergence of political sufferings, from defensive to offensive - **challenging** - appeals to demands, and finally confrontation".<sup>33</sup> Specific books were used with each of these themes highlighting the message to be imparted. One distinct aspect of the books used was that the majority were by African writers and a few were revolutionary writers from other parts of the world like Chile, Cuba, Palestine and the USSR. The usual classical writers in the English language like Shakespeare, Lawrence, Joyce, and Hardy were never used. Again, the merits and demerits of this are highly debatable. When one considers that these great writers dealt with just about every theme, from pacifism to war, puritanism to eroticism, oppression to revolution, it seems that the approach was, to a certain extent, blinkered and geared particularly for a narrowly interpreted socialist agenda.<sup>34</sup> However, the context within which the school operated to some extent explains this narrowness of approach. Until late in its history, the main supporters of the school and those who offered scholarships came from the Eastern Bloc and the Scandinavian countries. The West, with the exception of the Scandanavians whose largely social - democratic governments sometimes flirted mildly with the Marxist left, not only ignored the school and offered no

scholarships; they still supported apartheid South Africa and branded the ANC a terrorist organisation.<sup>35</sup> It is thus not surprising that the school's approach tended to lean towards a Marxist oriented outlook.

African languages were taught at the elementary level, mainly to enable students to follow and understand conversation.<sup>36</sup> This lack of emphasis on indigenous languages highlights the continuing attempt by the ANC to stifle any 'tribalistic' or ethnic tendencies within its ranks in pursuance of its avowedly non-racial culture.



Three basic curriculum groupings constituted priority areas, namely, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and Communication and Culture. This was in line with attempts to create complete beings who would regard the sciences as crucial as against attempts to do the opposite in contemporary South Africa. Indeed, it would seem that many students did grow to love the sciences and not to regard them as beyond the African intellect.<sup>37</sup> Briefly, the Natural Sciences consisted of Mathematics, General Sciences, Biology and Agriculture; Social Sciences were made up of History and Development of Societies; and Communication and Culture comprised English, Literature and South African languages. Under Communication and Culture were also grouped the performing arts and arts and crafts, and foreign languages.<sup>38</sup> The other para-educational areas identified were health and physical development, integrated environmental study, administrative and practical skills and other vocational training programmes.<sup>39</sup>

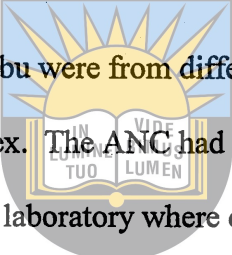
It seems that the planners were quite forward looking in these earliest proposals for the

overall Mazimbu Complex, when it is considered that this was 1978 and the overriding requirement of the ANC at the time was, simply, to build a secondary school to absorb the influx of youngsters from South Africa. At this stage other areas like the nursery, kindergarten, primary school and the maternity section were not even considered. They came into existence later when numbers swelled and SOMAFSCO became the central educational institution of the ANC. Suddenly the ANC found itself with a facility around which all their children could be gathered and looked after in an environment whose political orientation it controlled. Also, they could exploit the growing guilt of the world recently dismayed by media images of South African state brutality, and shocked by the obvious state slaying of Black Consciousness leader, Steve Biko. This was the time to show the world that the ANC was not merely a warlike structure fighting the apartheid regime, but was a 'broader' institution which also had a civilian training centre in the form of a school. With this softer image in place, they could proceed to garner more support, even from those who had previously felt uncomfortable supporting a liberation organisation involved in a military struggle.<sup>40</sup> Thus the curriculum was based on a recognition that the ANC had multiple tasks at hand that needed to be reflected in the school project.

These tasks also involved finding gainful employment through vocational training for ex-MK combatants, popularly known as *Mgwenyas*, who were located in Kongwe, Tanzania, with no particular prospects for the future. Most of them had been in Nelson Mandela's Luthuli Detachment of 1962 which formed the core of MK.<sup>41</sup> Also, vocational training would assist younger MK veterans who had sustained either physical or psychological scars and were not fit to return to the army. Additionally, and rather conveniently, the camp-like structure of the

complex would be the ideal place to keep social misfits and people who had somehow come into disfavour with the organisation, thus keeping them away from the central corridors of power.<sup>42</sup>

The contents envisaged for the Vocational Training Programme were quite ambitious, in that they were to be linked to an Adult Education structure which would offer lifelong skills that could be taken to a free South Africa.<sup>43</sup> These skills included agriculture, sewing and tailoring, woodworking and carpentry, metal work, building, electrical repairs, printing, motor mechanics, and catering.<sup>44</sup>



The people who came to Mazimbu were from different and diverse backgrounds and this made the melting pot even more complex. The ANC had the opportunity not only to start a school, but also to have a kind of social laboratory where different views could be given a hearing. The ANC was able to attempt to put into practice its various policies, from non-racialism to gender equity. All these aspects had to be played out against the background of a functioning school. The teachers introduced the students to aspects of education they were not used to, like the arts and vocational studies. For the students, the cosmopolitan composition of their teachers exposed them to a variety of lifestyles and cultures. With many variations on the political left, the level of discussion must have been very vigorous and the differences of opinion gathered from interviewees during this research attests to this. These differences in background and ideas should be acknowledged to have played a fundamental part in contributing to whether the complex was finally able to live up to the expectations of the original pioneers who started the Education Department in 1977.

## ***Endnotes***

<sup>1</sup> ANC/SOM/5/ Central Administration/ Correspondence - "Beginning of the Project", 1978.

<sup>2</sup> This is borne out in their testaments to this researcher and others who have investigated the past of the school.

<sup>3</sup> Hilda Bernstein Collection, Mayibuye Centre, UWC, Cape Town (hereafter Bernstein papers), Interview with Pearl Serote, ND.

<sup>4</sup> ANC/SOM/8/ Secretary for education - correspondence, 1979-1982.

<sup>5</sup> Interview, Sean Morrow (henceforth SM), LP with Mr. Sindiso Mfenyana, Cape Town, 10.06.97; Interview SM, LP & Brown Maaba (BM) with Mr. Richard Jurgens, Johannesburg, 01.09.97.

<sup>6</sup> ANC/SOM/5/ Central Administration, NEDUC III Minutes, p.10, 1980.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> Interviews conducted by researchers on the SOMAFCO Project conveyed that the schools' recruits from South Africa were mostly young people of all races seeking an exploration of sorts. This is also borne out by the Bernstein interviews.

<sup>10</sup> Int. SM, LP/ Mrs. Njobe, Cape Town, 10.06.97.

<sup>11</sup> Int. SM, LP / Andre Proctor, Cape Town, 09.06.97.

<sup>12</sup> Int. SM, LP, BM / John Pampallis, Johannesburg, 29.09.97. Also interview in the Bernstein papers.

<sup>13</sup> Int. SM, LP, BM / Karin Pampallis, Johannesburg, 29.09.97.

<sup>14</sup> Int. SM, LP, BM / R. Jurgens.

<sup>15</sup> Int. SM, LP, BM / K. Pampallis.

<sup>16</sup> Int. SM, LP / A. Proctor.

<sup>17</sup> Ints. SM, LP / Proctor; SM, LP, BM / R. Jurgens.

<sup>18</sup> Interview, LP, BM / Diana Cumbalege, Johannesburg, 30.08.1997.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Int. LP, BM / Dr S. Sokupha, East London, 02.06.1997; ANC/SOM/199, Regional Department of Health, 1979-89

<sup>21</sup> Bernstein papers, Mayibuye Centre, Int. Douglas Ramaphosa, Mazimbu, ND.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*



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<sup>23</sup> Int. BM / Mr. Patrick Mtshawulana, Johannesburg, 09.04.1998.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> Bernstein papers, Mayibuye Centre, Int. Pearl Serote, Dakawa, N.D.

<sup>26</sup> Int. BM/ Mr. Thami Mali, Johannesburg, 04.02.1998. For comments on the nature of the students who arrived at SOMAFCO after the 1985 wave of unrest see Int. LP/ Palmiro Coedie, Cape Town, 10.06.1997.

<sup>27</sup> ANC/SOM/8/Central Administration, NEDUC 2, Minutes, 14 - 18 April 1979.

<sup>28</sup> ANC/SOM/1/ Central Administration, NEDUC 1, Minutes, 1 - 3 October 1978. p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> Int. BM/ Mtshawulana.

<sup>30</sup> Int. LP / Steven Senzeni Nhlebenya, Cape Town, 07.06.1997. Other than this student, most ex-SOMAFCO students lodged at the Peninsula Technikon in Cape Town at the time of the researchers' interviews shared the same view as Nhlebenya, that their experience in SOMAFCO provided them with an advantage over their peers, inside and outside school.

<sup>31</sup> Int. LP / Oscar Majola, Cape Town, 06.06.1997.

<sup>32</sup> ANC/SOM/ Central Administration, NEDUC 3, Minutes, 14 - 18 August 1980, pp. 14-15.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> This might probably be one of the reasons for the argument in publications like Ellis and Sechaba's *Comrades against Apartheid* that SOMAFCO was a vehicle for the promulgation of the South African Communist Party agenda.

<sup>35</sup> Int. SM, LP / Mr Sindiso Mfenyana, Cape Town, 10.06.1997. Ronald Reagan's policy of constructive engagement enforced by Assistant Secretary of State, Chester Crocker, can be interpreted as nothing more than a veiled ploy to continue trading with apartheid South Africa. So was the stance of the British administration under Margaret Thatcher, which resulted in the protection of South Africa at the United Nations. Margaret Thatcher is on record several times as branding the ANC a terrorist organisation.

<sup>36</sup> ANC/SOM/1/Central Administration, NEDUC 1, Minutes, p. 9.

<sup>37</sup> Int. LP/ D. Rafube and G.Dube, Cape Town, 10.06.1997.

<sup>38</sup> ANC/SOM/1/Educ Dept/Minutes, NEDUC 1, p. 10, October 1978.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>40</sup> Int. SM, LP, BM / Mr. Tladi Ditshego, Johannesburg, 29 August 1997.

<sup>41</sup> Int. BM / Mr. W.M. Njobe, Bisho, 29 August 1996.

<sup>42</sup> Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades Against Apartheid*. p. 135. Ellis and Sechaba believe that Andrew Masondo's move from MK to SOMAFCO was a banishment as a result of his role in the handling of the Quattro Camp mutiny in



Angola in 1984.

<sup>43</sup> Int. Sindiso Mfenyana.

<sup>44</sup> NEDUC 1, p. 10.

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## Chapter 3

### The Role and Organisation of the ANC Women's Section

The African National Congress has always believed itself to be in the forefront in according women in its ranks their proper due in the struggle against oppression in South Africa. Probably the turning point for women's participation in the broader national question was on the 9<sup>th</sup> August 1956, when a large throng of women of all hues and backgrounds undertook a march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria, then the bastion of white supremacy in South Africa. Their main grievance was the extension of Pass Laws to African women. In the words of Mendy Msimang, in August 9, 1986, at the commemoration of the march at

SOMAFCO:



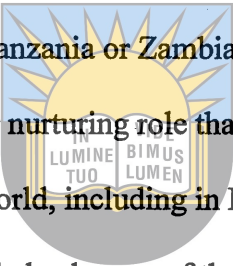
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The great surge in women's participation from the 1956 Women's March resulted in a much improved profile of general activists and resulted in the advent of new stalwarts in the struggle against apartheid. Women like Lillian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Lily Dederickse, Rahima Moosa and Sophie Williams emerged as new role models for those females long starved of pacesetters. In a way this was an advance in the phased development of the struggle, the ANC recognized this as a new era of united mass action by the women and as part and parcel of the forces struggling against oppression, for freedom and justice.<sup>1</sup>

The 1950s were followed by the difficult 1960s, which saw the intensification of attempts by the apartheid state to stamp out all dissent against its policies of separate development. After the banning of the ANC (and PAC) in 1960, the Women's League entered a relatively quiescent period as the ANC moved its operations outside South Africa. As a formally structured organ of the ANC it only re-emerged in the early

seventies. On the 3rd of September 1971 the first re-organised secretariat of the Women's Section (WS) met. This secretariat, based in Lusaka, was composed of five members: Florence Mophosho, Magdalene Resha, Edna Mgabaza, Kate Molale and Theresa Maimane.<sup>2</sup>

Interestingly, amongst the resolutions of this meeting was one advocating the opening of an educational institution. They urged that "the NEC should be approached on the question of a school for ANC children. Preliminary discussions have already started ... preferably the school should be in Tanzania or Zambia".<sup>3</sup> This concern demonstrated what could be called the maternal or nurturing role that would characterize the role of the WS in ANC missions all over the world, including in Mazimbu when it was finally opened. This aspect however would also be one of the basic contradictions that would dog the ANC, as will be demonstrated later.

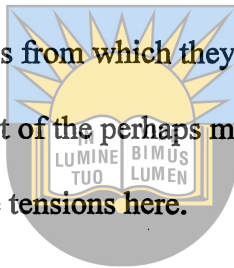


The logo of the University of Fort Hare is a circular emblem. It features a central sun with rays, positioned above an open book. The Latin motto "LUMINE TUO BIVMUS LUMEN" is inscribed across the book. The entire emblem is set against a blue background with a white border.

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The 1971 reinvention of the Women's League as the Women's Section was followed by its emergence as an active participant in broader debates within the ANC. For instance, on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1971, the Section sent an open letter to the South African Press, which was also a congratulatory statement to the women of China on the occasion of the admission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations Organization.<sup>4</sup> In this statement 'imperialists' were roundly denounced as stooges and enemies of peace, and the expulsion of Taiwan was applauded. It ended by stating that the WS was confident that "the progressive women of China, with the rich experience of a revolution, and in the struggle for the rights of women, will play their part in the international scene,

by contributing to peace in the world."<sup>5</sup> This declaration from WS reflected their self-image as a women's organisation within the ANC and in the broader world context, and their ideological position at that point. The language of the statement was not only Marxist - socialist, but also had definite traces of the masculinity common in revolutionary jargon. This statement also placed the WS in tandem with other women's organisations that were cropping up all over the world as part of the self-assertion of 'baby-boomers', and the organisation was thus related in part to the increasingly active feminist movement in the western world which was fighting for women's rights. They were also eager to join in the debates from which they had hitherto been excluded. On the other hand, the WS was also part of the perhaps male-oriented semi-Marxist discourse of the ANC at the time. There were tensions here.



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This new found enthusiasm of the WS is also reflected in an 'Open letter to the women in South Africa' sent out on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 1971. This letter reiterated the resolutions taken at an All-African Women's Conference (AAWC) held earlier that year in Congo Brazzaville. The conference had adopted three fundamental resolutions, that African women

denounce racism, Racial Discrimination and Apartheid as crimes which are the shame of the Century ... Categorically condemn the racist policy and call for the recognition of the right for employment for everybody ... [and] are obstinately opposed to and request that their governments take the position of opposition to dialogue with the minority fascist régimes in Southern Africa.<sup>6</sup>

Such developments might be expected to have led to an equally radical position by women on the SOMAFSCO campus. However, their characteristic role in that context was

in fact to play their part in the induction of female students into the uncertain existence of political exile.

It would seem that amongst the earliest inputs of the WS in relation to SOMAFCO was participation in the ANC delegation that was tasked with making a presentation to an Inter-Agency Consultation in Dar es Salaam in November 1979. The purpose of this presentation was to develop and cultivate links with two UN agencies, UNDP and UNESCO.<sup>7</sup> The presentation outlined how the ANC conceived the Mazimbu complex. As these agencies were there to help with funding, the statement focused on educational needs, construction, equipment and furnishing, and the development of the production units.



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This participation by women was obviously from a regional perspective, and was coordinated from the office that served the WS in East Africa. Now that there was an ANC community - Mazimbu - growing around SOMAFCO, it was inevitable that the WS should also widen its role to incorporate the women in the community. Also, that there were many female students who needed proper political grounding meant that there should be an organisation for their specific needs.

Initially, the efforts of women in Mazimbu were geared towards the welfare of the many children around the complex. On its opening there was only meant to be a secondary school. However, gradually the ANC realized that the portion of land given to them and the need to sustain the residents, necessitated other activities in the complex.

These included the farm, which helped with the supply of meat and some vegetables, and the furniture factory, which was to supply the residences and the classrooms with the necessary furniture. Most important was the construction unit, which was responsible for the core purpose of setting up the complex. With all these people converging on Mazimbu, this meant that there would inevitably be children as part of the community. These children were of different age groups, necessitating different types of care-giving facilities. These included a crèche, a pre-school and a primary school. The developing of these sectors in Mazimbu was to a considerable extent handed over to the women.



*The Women's Section and its role in the Primary school, Nursery School and the Kate Molale Mother's Centre*

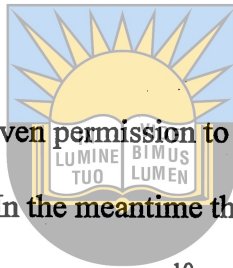
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The role of the WS overlapped with that of other elements at Mazimbu.

However, its main focus was on the mothers and younger children of the settlement.

By late 1981 there were more than 140 children needing nursery school care. Before this, the ANC had utilised a converted garage in Morogoro to look after children. Here, the children mainly of people who worked in Mazimbu, some living in the complex and others in Morogoro town, were looked after.<sup>8</sup> These were children who otherwise lived with their parents. Thus Morogoro did not only cater for children who were orphans or whose parents were in the front-line states in the service of the ANC, or whose parents were abroad in various tertiary institutions furthering their education.

There was thus an obvious need to have a nursery school that incorporated residential accommodation for the children, while other children would continue to reside with their parents. On the advice of a child psychologist, it was acknowledged that nursery school children with parents in Morogoro, should be allowed to live with their parents.<sup>9</sup> This decision also meant that housekeepers would attend more adequately to those children whose parents were absent. The residential area was set apart from the school, as this arrangement, it was felt, would be psychologically the best solution for nursery school children.

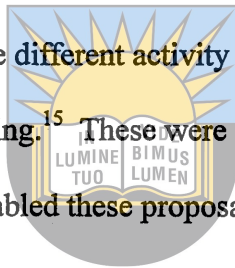


The construction unit was given permission to start with the building of the nursery school in December 1980. In the meantime they were able to renovate one of the older buildings to be used as a temporary facility.<sup>10</sup> Not everything went according to plan, and targets did not necessarily evolve into reality. The ANC was still in the process of marshalling its resources and organising fundraising all over the world, and this sometimes resulted in materials not arriving on time or monetary pledges from donor agencies not materialising speedily, sometimes getting bogged down in bureaucracy. Also, more importantly, the organisation was repeatedly faced with changing priorities as determined by the unfolding demands of survival in exile. They also had to attend to burning issues like guerrilla warfare, the upkeep of ANC communities in the forward areas and front-line states, and carrying the message of freedom to all institutions, governments and agencies that would listen.<sup>11</sup> Thus the school did not necessarily enjoy prominence in the list of ANC priorities.

One aspect, which cannot be overlooked in examining various problems within the complex, was the incompetence and laxity of some of the people in positions of authority. Incidents related by the interviewees of wasted goods and lost opportunities suggest that some of the bigger problems in the erection of the complex could have been avoided. An example is that of donor containers being left in the docks in Dar es Salaam for long periods, to the extent that valuable equipment got damaged due to exposure to the elements.<sup>12</sup> Also, negligence and laxity resulted in a thriving trade in stolen goods. Sometimes, even though suspects were known, they were not vigorously pursued, resulting in more people realising how lucrative it could be to involve themselves in these nefarious acts.<sup>13</sup> These and other blunders resulted in unnecessary delays in the work of the construction unit. The constant shortage of properly skilled personnel to oversee the various facets of the project compounded matters. This resulted in the overloading of responsibility on those few people with the necessary know-how. Sometimes they were so overworked that the resultant exhaustion necessitated either hospitalisation or forced rest breaks in Europe in order to recuperate in a more tranquil environment.<sup>14</sup>

The technical committee headed by Spencer Hodgson set about determining which building would fit the purposes of a nursery school. Their guiding principle was to arrive at a school plan which would, whilst fitting a normal school environment, allow also for more openness and informality stimulating to children of primary school age. Their decisions had also to adhere to the education guidelines set out in the ANC education policy document. Also, that SOMAFCO was a revolutionary school had to be taken into consideration so that notions of normality and orthodoxy could be quickly

dispelled. People were after all not in a conventional schooling environment, and forgetting this would result in people not being sufficiently vigilant against possible attack by enemy forces. With regard to the type of structure to be erected, it was felt that a plan that would allow maximum flexibility and choice of programme by the teacher would be most suitable. An open plan arrangement of activity areas was agreed upon, with removable walls and shelves that would act as partitions. This arrangement would allow most flexibility in the choice of educational programmes. A slow paced teaching programme would see the partitions removed for broader interaction, whilst a highly structured programme would see the different activity rooms separated as individual classrooms for more intensive tutoring.<sup>15</sup> These were all initiatives that were workshopped by the WS. Having tabled these proposals, units responsible for fundraising within the WS were galvanised into action, passing on their requests to sister women's organisations all over the world.



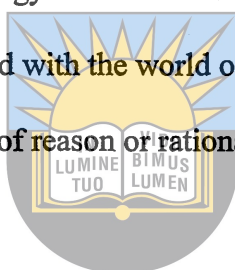
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The WS extended its involvement in Mazimbu to include a prominent role in the Kate Molale Mother's Centre (also known as 'The Charlottes'), the Day Care Centre and the primary school. This involvement was, as stated earlier, motivated by the maternal status ascribed to the WS. This status was emphasised by the principal of the primary school, Babu September, in a paper entitled 'Our Children's Welfare'. He stated that the welfare of the children of the primary school at Mazimbu was a question "that involves much responsibility on the part of the Women's Section, ... we want you to help in getting a fair deal for all the children when clothing and shoes are handed out. Children who have parents to fight for them are favoured over the others".<sup>16</sup> Babu also complained

about the inadequacy and irregularity of meals for the children. In effect this paper implored the WS to extend the traditional role of women from their homes to the whole complex, saying mothers were best suited to deal with domestic issues like clothing and food, as their male counter-parts deliberated on other more important, or at least more public, issues.

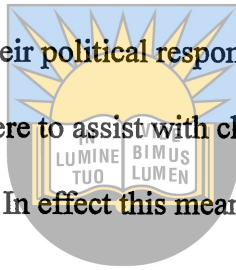
This request reinforced the usual hierarchical form of relations deemed normal in society, and corresponded to a typology of dominant male and subordinate female.

"Women, in other words, are equated with the world of nature, emotions and nurturing while men are equated to the world of reason or rationality".<sup>17</sup>



This raises questions about the sincerity of the ANC policy at the time of non-sexism and general equality between the sexes. The ANC urged women to be more active at all levels, thus concretising and contextualising their emancipation, and ending the exploitation of women by men. Perhaps, women themselves needed to be more proactive in charting out their destiny. Patricia Horn, addressing herself to problem of women's organisation, encapsulates the problem thus: "fear of creating divisions in the national struggle has led to the development of a women's movement which is afraid of seriously challenging patriarchal domination. ... The political situation today requires a more assertive level of women's organisation, to guide the ANC ... in a more gender-conscious struggle for a new democratic South Africa".<sup>18</sup> This may apply retrospectively to the situation at SOMAFCO.

In Mazimbu there were at some stages attempts to take the gender debate forward. In a paper presented at a seminar in Mazimbu on 'The Political Participation of Women' on 20 June 1982, several positions were put forward suggesting ways through which women might assert themselves. It was suggested that all committees in SOMAFCO should have equal numbers of males and females, and that the "traditional division of labour between men and women should be consciously avoided at SOMAFCO. It should be obligatory for students to do all kinds of work, regardless of sex. For example, women should be involved in cement unloading and men in cooking and vice versa".<sup>19</sup> Women were also implored not to neglect their political responsibilities because of their social activities. Both men and women were to assist with childcare to allow mothers to attend meetings or to fulfil political tasks. In effect this meant that domestic work should affect men and women equally.

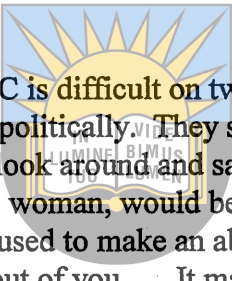


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This approach to gender relations was definitely progressive and probably ahead of its time where African households were concerned. It was put in the context of the ANC's orientation towards the socialist bloc, as illustrated by another recommendation of the paper that the WS "should also have women from socialist countries addressing us on the way in which women have overcome inferiority in those countries".<sup>20</sup>

If this was what women set out to achieve as emancipation, why was it then that the welfare of children should be the domain of the WS? September's paper appealed for the intervention of women in ways characteristic of role divisions in paternalistic societies: did this not reaffirm the old division of labour, wherein women looked after children's

well being? These questions are not necessarily meant to criticise September's recommendations, but do serve to raise the question about how much political theory affected actual day to day activities in the complex. And, once again, in this context as in others, the fundamental question is raised, how political was SOMAFCO compared to other similar centres of education? These are questions that dogged the ANC more generally. For instance, Frene Ginwala, in an interview in Hilda Bernstein's *The Rift - The Exile Experience of South Africans* reflects on her feelings about the ANC's perception of women. She states that:



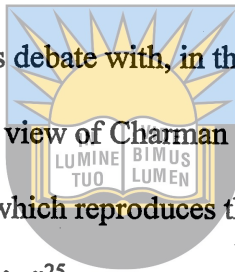
Working as a woman in the ANC is difficult on two counts. As a woman people don't take you seriously politically. They see you as a technician. ... if a committee was set up, they'd look around and say that so-and-so, a man, would be the chair, and you, the woman, would be the secretary to take the notes. In fact, for many years I used to make an absolute point of refusing to take the notes. ... It takes a lot out of you. ... It makes you aggressive, it makes you prickly when it's not necessary.<sup>21</sup>

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The WS was grudgingly aware that the ANC dealt with women simply as another sector that had to be mobilised for the struggle against apartheid, instead of mobilising them for women's liberation. Shireen Hassim argues that this mobilisation process had the effect of reinforcing rather than challenging patriarchal relations of domination.<sup>22</sup> The popular ANC slogan which recognised women as facing triple oppression - class, race and sex - was not fully adhered to. Dealing with the latter was to wait until the first two had been solved by the dissolution of apartheid.<sup>23</sup> Political analysts Charman, de Swardt and Simons suggest that what undermined and undermines the ANC approach to gender roles can be grouped under three theoretical and methodological assumptions:

- it is assumed that an analysis of apartheid and capitalism in itself explains gender oppression and exploitation,
- women are defined in relation to patriarchal roles within the family, namely, as mothers, wives, daughters and sisters, and
- an orthodox Marxist-Leninist analysis is considered to be appropriate in explaining gender oppression and exploitation in South Africa.<sup>24</sup>

In short, they argue the ANC was failing to grapple with the gender issue for its own sake, but tended to overshadow this debate with, in their eyes, the more important national liberation question. In the view of Charman et al. this was wrong, as it led to a "non-gendered class-race analysis which reproduces the existing confusion in the use of race and class as concepts in analysis."<sup>25</sup>



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It can be argued that the WS, rather than being a political arm of the ANC looking after women's affairs, was actually a pressure group geared towards safe-guarding the rights of the children in Mazimbu. Its role tended to be focused on children at primary school level and below, including the nursery school, day-care centre and the Kate Molale Mother's Centre. That they acted as a pressure group tended to lead them into clashes with the administrating directorate when it came to the boundaries of their responsibilities.<sup>26</sup> It could be, however, that quarrelling over such boundaries was in the long run less significant in terms of real power and authority by women than would have been real involvement by the women in matters of overall policy and practice. Another assertion by Charman, de Swardt and Simons does seem to express the real stumbling

block in the way of the WS:

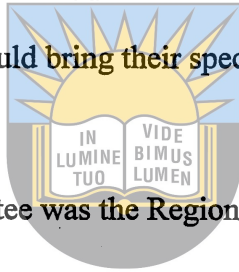
Irrespective of the motives for the establishment of women and youth sections of organisations and the establishment of national women's and students' organisations, the consequence of such developments is the division of the political terrain and the inevitable composition of political leadership positions along gender lines. This affects women's participation in decision making. The ensuing gender and class division of political labour become restrictive practices limiting the availability of ... women ... for political office.<sup>27</sup>

Before examining these interesting dynamics more fully it is important to consider how the WS was formally structured to fit into the Mazimbu context and how this structuring was meant to delineate the different responsibilities and tasks.



Basically, the WS in East Africa used a similar model to those of other ANC structures. The different areas with settled ANC communities were to be formed into units, each unit consisting of about twenty members. Having elected the usual office bearers (chairperson, secretary, treasurer, etc), they would automatically assume the position of being a Branch Committee Executive.<sup>28</sup> Then the office bearers of all the units combined would meet to elect the executive of the branch. This decentralisation was meant to enable discussions on contentious issues, not from the top down, but from the units up. This also meant that in the case of Mazimbu there would be units for the different sectors of the community, such as teachers, students, and residents of a certain area, all of these finally coming together to form the constituents of the Mazimbu branch of the WS. Also, the units were intended to be effective in addressing the specific problems of its members, which, when combined, would set the tone and the formal agenda of the whole branch.

An example of an issue in a localised unit was a report from the Charlottes unit that brought its problem, via the branch, to the directorate of the complex in March 1983. The problem cited was that of young mothers who did not abide by the rules of the local unit. Amongst other things they were accused of bringing their boyfriends into the Centre, refusing to carry out their work duties and disregarding general rules on cleanliness. This example shows that had there been no localised units, people not directly involved with the facility might not have been able to appreciate the depth of the problem. Thus, local women had a forum where they could bring their specific complaints.



Above the Branch Committee was the Regional Committee. The executive of this committee would be elected at a Regional General Meeting. A representative of the National Scholarship Committee (NSC) and the chairperson and secretary of each branch sat on the Regional Committee. The insistence on a representative of the NSC was because the WS as a body was actively involved, through its linkages with other women's organisations, in lobbying for scholarships, sometimes female specific ones. The inclusion of people from the branches was to make sure that executive processes and decisions were as inclusive as possible. Overall, the East Africa Region comprised the Mazimbu, Dakawa and Dar es Salaam Branches. The Regional Women's Committee (RWC) would automatically fall under the Regional ANC office and Regional Political Committee. The RWC was thus responsible for the coordination of all the political work of the branches, and also from time to time was called upon to resolve problems and disputes that arose in the branches. Added to this,

they had the task of approving all policy documents in the region, and they were also to raise funds for the WS and submit quarterly reports, which included financial statements, to the Women's Secretariat.

Another contentious issue in which the WS became involved was the complex's approach to pregnancies and abortions. The WS organised a seminar on the topic on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 1982. The reason put forward for the seminar was that most of the staff was not entirely satisfied with the National Education Council's policy on pregnancies. The WS felt therefore that it was necessary to discuss these matters and forward any recommendations that resulted. NEDUC 3's recommendation on pregnancies was that in the case of a student falling pregnant both the male and female students affected would be suspended for a period of two years after the birth of the child.<sup>29</sup> This policy did not mention anything on writing examinations, and whether there was any specific position on abortions. So far the administration of the complex had implemented the policy by suspending both students immediately, and sending the males to work at the construction site with the females being sent to the Charlottes. There was no consistency on allowing suspended students to write exams, and students who aborted were suspended for one year.<sup>30</sup>

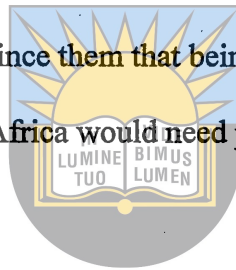
In a youth conference held earlier in 1982 the students had highlighted the need for the inclusion of sex education in the school curriculum. They had also called on the complex to allow everybody to be allowed to use contraceptives, with the campus medical facility playing an active role in advising the students on the best methods for

individual cases. The option of an abortion, they said, should be made available to students where contraception failed. They also urged that all students involved should be allowed to write their examinations.<sup>31</sup>

The seminar's position tended to echo some of the recommendations from the Youth Conference. They resolved that the administration should introduce sex education, which would neither encourage nor discourage sex.<sup>32</sup> Its main purpose would be to discourage and prevent pregnancies. The suggestion was that a lecture be given to the whole student body one evening a month. These would be as informal as possible, allowing time for questions and answers after every lecture. The more mature members of the Mazimbu community would lead all the discussions, and would then summarise the proceedings, which would act as the barometer of progress. From time to time medical experts would be called in to give talks and demonstrations.

It is quite obvious that the ANC needed to tackle this issue vigorously as the complexities of Mazimbu led to many dilemmas. The students that made up SOMAFCO tended to be older than the usual school going children as most of them had had their education stalled by the uprisings of 1976 and were thus several years behind. This meant that the normal rules governing students in residence would not always make sense to people in their middle to late twenties. A case in point is that of a student who, with his wife, decided to come and resume their studies at SOMAFCO. The rules governing the campus meant that they would have to live separate lives.<sup>33</sup>

Conversely, there were also those much younger students who were not used to being away from strict family control and were finding relative independence a novelty to exploit to the fullest. Thus, Mazimbu needed a good policy and constant review of strategy to deal with these eventualities. Some amongst those involved in these problems maintained that it was not their fault that they were getting into trouble, as they had gone into exile not to study but to fight for their country. These found the ups and downs of the camp discouraging and were apt to get into trouble. The movement specially asked O.R. Tambo to come and address the students on some of these contentious issues and also to convince them that being in the school was a terrain of struggle, as an independent South Africa would need properly qualified people to run it.<sup>34</sup>



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More distressing was that pregnancies were also affecting very young students. There was, in 1986, the case of the pregnant 13-year-old primary school pupil. This situation, it was felt, would send the wrong message to the other youngsters who lived in the same unit as the girl. Also, that she was so young meant that she could not be sent to the Kate Molale Mothers Centre, as she was still too immature to take care of the infant herself. One of the older matrons was asked to look after her until she gave birth. The WS also asked and got another matron to look after the child once it was born.<sup>35</sup> Another result of this pregnancy was that the head of the boarding section immediately called for a pregnancy test for all the girls at Mazimbu.<sup>36</sup> This would have been traumatic for the children, especially those still too young to comprehend what was going on. The girl was to be allowed to go back to

school as soon as possible, and that decision meant that they also had to let the 16 year old boy, who was responsible for the pregnancy, remain in school. These were the ambiguities that caused some of the students to feel that their treatment was inconsistent.<sup>37</sup>

Another matter that put considerable strain on the WS was that of a matron who was accused of severely beating a toddler in her care, whose mother was away on a scholarship. The beating was such that the child could neither sit down nor walk properly.<sup>38</sup> That the woman was old made the question of punishment extremely debatable because it emerged in an inquiry that she was stuck in outmoded methods of handling discipline, and that she was convinced that the rod was the only way to make children obey the rules. The WS called her to a meeting, and lectured her on the shortcomings of physical assault as a form of discipline. She was told of the psychological scarring that might result from such beatings. She was also told that young mothers would in future be reluctant to trust the ANC with their children when they were awarded scholarships to go abroad to study.

These issues thoroughly tested the WS, and it is not hard to see why they experienced one crisis after another. They dealt with pregnancies, issues of abortion, the welfare of the youngest children and the political development of all women in Mazimbu. It became impossible to sketch out a clear policy outline. Their actions tended to be reactionary rather than proactive. Making matters that much more difficult was that the people at branch level were all part-time and had to contend with

their other regular jobs. But still, under the circumstances, they managed to do a commendable job, bar mishaps now and again. When time came for people to go back home, the WS was there, and back in the country, they managed to reconstitute themselves and revert to their pre-banning name, the African National Congress Women's League, in August 1990.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> ANC/SOM/4/99/Women's Struggle - Miscellaneous, German Mission. ND.

<sup>2</sup> ANC/SOM/4/1/Women's Section, Minutes, 3 September, 1971.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Mayibuye/10/5/ANC/Women's Section, Secretariat, Morogoro Provisional Headquarters. ND.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> ANC/SOM/4/5/Women's Section, Secretariat, "open letter to the Women of South Africa", 13<sup>th</sup> November, 1971.

<sup>7</sup> ANC/SOM/4/2/Women's Section, Correspondence and Statements, Zambia/Tanzania, 1978-1981.

<sup>8</sup> ANC/SOM/4/1/Women's Section, Minutes, The Women's Secretariat, ANC Morogoro Technical Committee. N.D.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> ANC/SOM/160/5/School Building Project, Progress Report, 1981.

<sup>11</sup> In *The Rift - The Experiences of South Africans in Exile*, Hilda Bernstein describes 'the forward areas' as an ANC term for countries which were springboards for attacks on South Africa.

<sup>12</sup> Inter. SM,LP/Andre Proctor, Cape Town, 09.06.97.

<sup>13</sup> Inter. SM,LP,BM/Richard Jurgens, Johannesburg, 25.06.97, Inter. LP/Palmiro Coedie, Cape Town, 10.06.97, Inter. BM,LP/Lajabu Kasimbazi, Dark City, Morogoro, 13.06.97.

<sup>14</sup> The case in point of Oswald Dennis, the overall project manager responsible for construction, is instructive. He suffered such a severe case of exhaustion that speedy arrangements had to be made for him to go to the GDR on an extended leave of absence.

<sup>15</sup> ANC/SOM/4/4/Women's Section, ANC Morogoro Technical Committee. The decision to think of a multi-pronged approach setting was also influenced by recommendations of Terry Bell, then Principal of the Primary School, who was totally against traditionally structured schools. See Inter. SM, LP, BM/Terry Bell, Cape Town, 10.03.98.

<sup>16</sup> ANC/SOM/1/3/Women's Section, Joint Meeting- Administration/WS/Sector Heads, 12.02.85.

<sup>17</sup> D.H. Coole, *Women in Political Theory: From Ancient Misogyny to Contemporary Feminism*, p.1.

<sup>18</sup> P. Horn, "Post-Apartheid South Africa: What About Women's Emancipation?" *Transformation*, 15(1991), p.37.

<sup>19</sup> Mayibuye/ANC/50/3/Women's Section, 1980-83, Report on East Africa Women's Section, SOMAFCO Hall, 20<sup>th</sup> June 1982.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

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- <sup>21</sup> H. Bernstein, *The Rift: The Experiences of South Africans in Exile*, p. 11.
- <sup>22</sup> S. Hassim, "Gender, Social Location and Feminist Politics in South Africa", *Transformation*, 15 (1991), p. 65.
- <sup>23</sup> S. Meintjes, "The Women's Struggle for Equality During South Africa's Transition to Democracy" *Transformation*, 30 (1996), p. 57.
- <sup>24</sup> A. Charman, C. de Swardt, M. Simons, "The Politics of Gender: Negotiating Liberation" *Transformation*, 15,(1991), p.41.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.
- <sup>26</sup> ANC/SOM/8/4/Women's Section, memorandum, 'Major issues concerning control, role & conception'.
- <sup>27</sup> Charman et al., "The Politics of Gender," p.58.
- <sup>28</sup> ANC/SOM/8/40/Women's Section - East Africa, Correspondence, 'Structures as agreed in August 1984, Ammended 17.03.85.'
- <sup>29</sup> ANC/SOM/Central Administration/NEDUC 3, Minutes, 1980.
- <sup>30</sup> ANC/SOM/WS/MINUTES, "Staff recommendations on Pregnancies and Abortions to the National Education Council." N.D.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>33</sup> Int. SM,LP/Mrs Njobe.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>35</sup> ANC/SOM/WS/Memo,05.05.86.
- <sup>36</sup> ANC/SOM/The Boarding Section,Memo,29.04.86.
- <sup>37</sup> Int. LP/ Pule Motsabi, Cape Town, 07.06.1997.
- <sup>38</sup> ANC/SOM/WS/Minutes,01.07.83.



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## Chapter 4

### The Funding of SOMAFCO

It goes without saying that had there been no sources of finance for the SOMAFCO project it would have ended as an unfulfilled dream. However, amongst the aims of the project was to foster a reconsideration on the part of the world powers about the real image of the ANC, and indeed the packaging that was eventually presented to the world ensured that even the most parsimonious countries in Europe were eventually compelled to assist. SOMAFCO was packaged in a manner that highlighted the backgrounds of the proposed beneficiaries of the planned educational institution and their contribution to a free South Africa. Even the education policy was in line with this in stating that one of the objectives of the school was "to produce such cadres as will be able to serve society in all fields".<sup>1</sup> Thus all prospective helpers and donors were made to feel they were already assisting in the reshaping of the future South African society. The result of this was probably one of the widest support bases of any of the liberation movements seeking international help. In the end SOMAFCO was able to muster support from more than thirty major world donor organisations.<sup>2</sup>

For an understanding of how these organisations assisted in this wide and varied project they should be sub-divided according to the specific area for which the donations were intended. As Mazimbu was such a big complex with diverse activities taking place at the same time, different donors tended to concentrate their efforts in realising specific sub-projects. Thus in focusing on individual donors the consolidation in the development

of the complex through the marshalling of many sources of assistance will become apparent.

Even before referring to the roles of all the donors it is important to note the part played by the Tanzanian government in making land available to the ANC to start the school. Tanzania had for a long time maintained a close relationship with liberation movements from Southern Africa. Tanzania had played a significant role in the realisation of independence in Malawi, Zambia, Angola, Mozambique and Namibia. These relations stemmed from far back in the sixties. Tanzania could thus justifiably claim to have been "a home of nationalists".<sup>3</sup> In fact SOMAFCO was a late comer in the dealings that Tanzania had had with South African liberation movements. The first external headquarters of the ANC were in Morogoro, and the camps of the earliest cadres were also there. Thus, the founding of this ANC school in Tanzania was not altogether unexpected.<sup>4</sup>

The next natural step was to look for other donors for the actual erection of the school because Tanzania, being a desperately poor country, could not be expected to give financial support. This is why the activation of the foreign donor community became very important.<sup>5</sup> Help from this quarter would not only be for the physical structures of the school: there had also to be provision for feeding the students and the broader Mazimbu community, and for developing other sectors like the farm, furniture factory, transport section and many other cognate areas. Broadly speaking, initial support for the school emanated from several United Nations agencies; the many agencies in the Nordic

countries like Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland; the Netherlands, and many Eastern Bloc countries who gave support in the form of scholarships and sometimes in actual goods, like the shipload of Siberian timber from the USSR that kept the Mazimbu furniture factory in operation for several years.<sup>6</sup> Since the UN agencies, UNESCO and UNDP, were the major players in the project, their role will be examined first and in most detail.

The ANC's contacts with UNESCO and UNDP dated back to 1977 when the idea of a school was still in its infancy. With a project coded ANC 77 001, UNESCO undertook to take care of all stipends and scholarships for South African youth recently exiled in the wake of the 1976 uprisings.<sup>7</sup> At this stage in the SOMAFCO project, the school merely acted as a staging post for students who were being redirected to other countries to continue with their education. Plans for a comprehensive school complex had not yet been made concrete and the pressing issue was finding schools for the young people.<sup>8</sup> Students that arrived then were mostly taken to schools in Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Cuba. Those still in high school were taken to schools in Africa, and the Cuban scholarships were for advanced and tertiary education.<sup>9</sup> Thus the stipends would be used for fees and living expenses in the areas of schooling. Alongside this project there was also project ANC 76 002 ANILAM, which was general aid for liberation movements and for the livelihood of exiles. A similar arrangement existed for the PAC, which also had a sizable presence in Tanzania.<sup>10</sup>

Project 77 001 was exhausted at the end of 1978. In order for it to be extended a review was necessary to consider the shortcomings of previous arrangements, and also to give the ANC a chance to revise their requests. In this regard the ANC asked for fellowships, better stipends, and for a special training component for the teaching staff. This would include training of personnel for the Department of Education who were based in Lusaka at the Headquarters of the ANC.<sup>11</sup> This request also covered travel, holidays for teachers and students, and study tours.

Subsequently, project ANC 79 001 F/01/13 was approved and with it came provision of requisitions for such items as gas cylinders, medical equipment, kitchen utensils, books, and laboratory equipment. UNESCO and UNDP insisted that the ANC submit a proposal that would cover the years to 1982 so that they might have a clear picture of where the project was heading. The result of the updated project was that more funds were made available to Mazimbu. The overall amount for 1980 came to \$250 000 US, which UNDP divided between UNESCO and FAO. FAO, which was given the task of developing a farm, was allocated \$102 400. UNESCO was allocated \$74 000: \$32 000 for staff and student maintenance, \$12 000 for school materials, and \$30 000 for staff and student travel.<sup>12</sup> Later on, project ANC/82/002 was approved, whose main emphasis was to be on looking after expendable and non-expendable equipment, more student maintenance, servicing of construction equipment, and salaries for support personnel and the like. This was to cover the period July 1982 to June 1984.<sup>13</sup>

The next major project within the school was the erection of a library. The ANC submitted the first project proposal in September 1981. Their initial estimate for the construction of the building was \$100 000. In a paper entitled *Mazimbu Library Project* released in October 1982, the ANC traced the deprivation of African children from the massacre of 1976 "when thousands of young African school children - protesting against the introduction of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in their schools - were brutally attacked by the police of the apartheid regime".<sup>14</sup> They noted that a library was an essential and integral part of the education facility, which would make available resources previously denied to those children by the Bantu Education system. They foresaw the project eventually including a reference section, reading rooms, and a music room. They stressed that initially the critical requirements for the opening of the library were reference books, encyclopaedias, subscriptions to international journals and newspapers, and books related to the general curriculum of the school. Eventually, Finnish aid assisted greatly with the stocking, staffing and running of the library.

This initial examination of the affairs of UNESCO and UNDP does not explain the terms of reference that make up their relationship, nor does it explain their outlook and *modus operandi*. UNESCO's involvement in this project, generally called 'Educational Assistance to National Liberation Movements of Africa', was as an executing agency of the United Nations with the mandate for and expertise on education. With its expertise on educational issues it was in a good position to advise the liberation movements on the proper execution and drawing up of a project proposal document.<sup>15</sup> UNESCO had its own outlook and objectives on what the project should be striving for.

They saw the major objective as being the improvement of placement opportunities at SOMAFCO for the growing number of students being sent there. By the end of 1984 they were looking at providing places for close to 800 students, from pre-school to secondary levels.<sup>16</sup> There was also provision for assistance for 21 teachers and 11 support personnel. Looking to the future UNESCO envisaged providing SOMAFCO with more and better operational equipment and more user-friendly teaching materials. The report noted the project's achievements. As far as physical facilities were concerned, a day-care centre was reported as complete, consisting of four blocks to cater for about 64 infants. The nursery school with four blocks, and 18 classrooms already in use in the secondary school, had also been completed. The secondary school boasted 3 laboratories and a library was already under construction, to be finished in 1985. Dormitories had a capacity for 576 students and 5 more units were under construction. As far as the administration block was concerned, projections were that it would be ready by August 1985.

The fundamental difference between UNDP and UNESCO was that whilst UNESCO was an executing agency, UNDP was the agency which provided the funds to make possible UNESCO backed projects. UNDP's brief was outlined in a document entitled *Guidelines for the Approval, Implementation and Monitoring of UNDP assistance to National Liberation Movements*. Here was spelt out their broad purpose as follows:

The purpose of UNDP assistance to African National Liberation Movements (NLMs) recognized by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) is to prepare the members of the NLMs for full and responsible participation in the social, cultural, economic and political life of their respective countries of origin when

independence is achieved, or conditions are otherwise right in those countries. Since National Liberation Movement members have as a rule tended to reside in countries of asylum, UNDP assistance has the purpose also of assisting them to develop adequate infrastructures aimed at enabling them to attain a reasonable level and standard of living, productivity, civic responsibility and self-reliance in those countries.<sup>17</sup>

This proposed assistance was envisaged as mainly of a developmental nature, directed at skills promotion and manpower development through education at all levels. It would also be imperative that vocational and technical training with a view to empowering people for eventual administrative, technical and managerial responsibility when they returned to their countries of origin should be implemented. Obviously this was a long-term goal as far as the South Africans were concerned and the immediate concern was training that would help them to survive in the foreign environment in which they found themselves. On that level UNDP assistance included the development of an adequate capacity for self-reliance, particularly in the areas of agriculture, food production, and vocational trades like carpentry, masonry, mechanical repair and maintenance, health and other community services.<sup>18</sup>

More important for SOMAFSCO though was the general policy concerning educational facilities. The UNDP committed itself to the development and strengthening of educational infrastructure for the exiles at primary and secondary levels. The main justification for this was the fact that the language of instruction for South Africans at these levels was different from that commonly used in Tanzanian schools. Alternatively, the reason might be that it was inappropriate to send these children to Tanzanian schools as they were already overburdened with providing for the needs of their own citizens.<sup>19</sup>

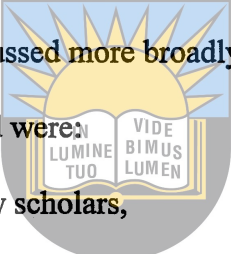
Probably to forestall accusations of preferential treatment from the host countries, the statement added that the assistance provided would only be to enable the liberation schools to provide levels and standards of education comparable to those of the host countries. This was obviously not accurate where SOMAFCO was concerned. The whole Mazimbu complex stood in stark contrast to the Tanzanian community that surrounded it. The levels of infrastructure in SOMAFCO were comparable to the best in the world.<sup>20</sup> Even the students of SOMAFCO regarded themselves as better off than their Tanzanian counterparts.<sup>21</sup> The ANC later used the complex with pride to show it off to prospective donor organisations. Tanzania, as was stated earlier, was desperately poor and could never have been able to match SOMAFCO's facilities made possible substantially from UNDP assistance. However, though UNDP connived in providing facilities to the ANC that were far above the standard of local schools, they did insist that scholarships for liberation organisations would be granted only in respect of school attendance in African countries, and secondary school pupils were never sent out of the continent on UNDP money.

The UNDP also had in place mechanisms for regular evaluation of the projects with which it was involved. They stated that in project documents a specific mention of in-depth evaluation at mid term and at the end of the project would be required. Continued UNDP assistance to any ongoing project would be determined by the findings and recommendations of a joint evaluation mission, which would take place at periods deemed appropriate by all the parties concerned. In a typical evaluation conducted in

September 1983 the UNDP reported on many areas of the project and developments up to that stage. They were generous to the ANC with praises of how they had conducted themselves. They further stated that the

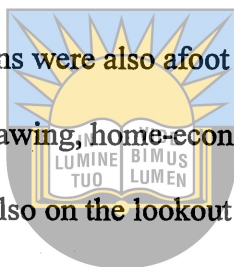
ANC has been very successful in attracting assistance from bilateral donors and national associations in Europe. With this assistance it has been able to establish well-planned and well-managed settlements in Tanzania and Zambia, with such social infrastructure as medical services, full-fledged educational systems catering for pre-school, primary and secondary school children, and offering education classes, vocational training and production services, and farm production units.<sup>22</sup>

A later mission, conducted in 1985, further reviewed aspects of development in Mazimbu. The report summary discussed more broadly areas that needed to be looked at in detail. Among the points discussed were:

- 
- procedure for the approval of new scholars,
  - a Tripartite Review Meeting to be held twice a year,
  - Feedback to UNESCO/UNDP on scholars who had completed their courses,
  - The need for a detailed Manpower Development Plan,
  - The need for budget increases,
  - The supply of two ambulances,
  - The need for a consultant to advise on how to remedy low student achievement, and,
  - The implementation of educational guidance.<sup>23</sup>

This UNDP report was also accompanied by Mazimbu's own self evaluation report drafted by the director of the complex. This report gives insights on development and achievements to date at the complex. It acknowledged that through the sustained and growing aid received, the ANC had a stable and relatively well established series of

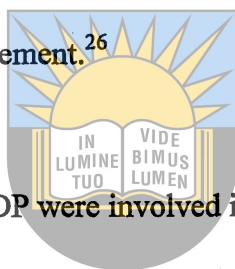
institutions. It stated that viable schools had been established where systematic instruction was provided in accordance with ANC Education policy, which set out to create a new person dedicated to a future non-racist, and democratic, South Africa. This report also alluded to the degree to which the ANC had progressed in the development of a viable curriculum, showing a marked improvement on what the students were used to in South Africa. There was ongoing modification of the educational programme to take into account the growing demand for other alternatives to existing educational sectors. The Secondary School was already in the process of including a few vocational subjects like office practice and typewriting. Plans were also afoot to introduce woodworking, metalwork, electronics, technical drawing, home-economics and agriculture. Scouts in the ANC missions in Europe were also on the lookout for good art and music teachers.<sup>24</sup>



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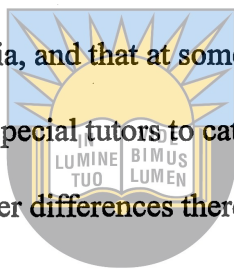
The report also noted the need for more attention to be given to staff development. With the help of UNESCO and ILO, in-service training was planned for several Mazimbu sectors including administration, career guidance, multicultural education and other aspects of the curriculum. Short courses on health, driving and storesmanship were also planned whilst others had already been to some Tanzanian institutions which had these on offer. The report sums up by listing areas that needed to be attended to in future. These included the strengthening of adult education, recruitment and/or training of more teachers, career guidance, more books, better transport, support of various kind for the hospital, and more storage facilities.<sup>25</sup>

Both these reports showed UNDP's determination to show both sides of what was really taking place in SOMAFCO. By, for instance, calling for ways of improving the low achievement rate in the sciences, it was implicitly acknowledged that problems were occurring up in this area. Also, the emphasis on more in-service courses recognised that the majority of the teachers were not necessarily properly qualified to teach at the school. Most of the graduates who taught at SOMAFCO were only experts in their fields as specialists but not necessarily as teachers. Thus, by increasing the level of methodological competence, the result, it was expected, would be better rapport with the students and better academic achievement.<sup>26</sup>



By 1988 UNESCO and UNDP were involved in four more support programmes attached to the SOMAFCO complex. There was project ANC/86/002 which was implemented in conjunction with the ANC's post-secondary and professional training endeavours. It was particularly meant to provide for the training of ex-MK cadres in various fields. Project ANC/86/006, *Primary and Secondary Education for ANC Students*, sought to provide support for pupils who were in schools in various Frontline States. These were those children who had not yet been relocated to SOMAFCO. The project document stated that it was expected that the ANC would eventually find places for all their primary and secondary school pupils in their own school at Mazimbu.<sup>27</sup> The third project, numbered ANC/86/005 was for support for the Education Orientation Centre in Dakawa, another ANC situated sixty kilometres north of Mazimbu. This centre, amongst other functions, was meant to be a reception school for students destined for admission to SOMAFCO.<sup>28</sup> The fourth was a Teacher Training Project for the

teaching staff of SOMAFCO. This was meant to be a three year project aimed at training twenty secondary school teachers and twenty primary school teachers in teacher training institutions in Tanzania.<sup>29</sup> Amongst the colleges to which they were taken in Tanzania were Korokwe, Marangwe, Mkwawa, Coboro and Montuli.<sup>30</sup> These were institutions chosen for them by the Tanzanian Ministry of Education. The trainees were deemed in need of a specialised approach because they were dealing with a special type of children, exiles, some of whom had physical and emotional scars from apartheid South Africa. In teaching these children there was also a need for an acknowledgement that they were not going to live permanently in Tanzania, and that at some stage they would have to go back home. In these colleges there were special tutors to cater for the South Africans. These tutors were meant to remedy whatever differences there were between the South African students' educational needs and what Tanzania had available.<sup>31</sup>



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One of SOMAFCO's most consistent problems was with staffing, and UNESCO was approached by the ANC to help in this area. UNESCO requested help from the Tanzanian government. They were looking for the very best teachers, people who could deal with children from a different background, with different problems and temperaments, and who did not have their parents with them. SOMAFCO got some of its teachers from the pool of Tanzanian school inspectors. They reasoned that "those inspectors are experienced in the teaching and that is why they are promoted to be inspectors, so let them go and teach these young people from different backgrounds and who have been away

from their classrooms for quite a long time".<sup>32</sup> To ensure that the people that were being utilised were maintaining their standards, UNESCO from time to time sent its own inspectors to evaluate among other things the use of resources that were given to SOMAFCO. This was in addition to the annual progress reports from the school. The ANC was also able to get teachers from overseas and volunteers from all over the world. Such was UNESCO/UNDP support that by January 1989 SOMAFCO acknowledged receiving a school bus and a land cruiser, ten primary and ten secondary school teachers, two adult education teachers, musical instruments, and some of the requested school equipment and spare parts.<sup>33</sup>



UNESCO also broadened its role into organising seminars which dealt with developmental aspects of an exile community, in an attempt to empower the liberation organisations to deal more effectively with their problems. One such seminar, organised jointly with the ANC, was on 'Early Childhood Care and Education', held in SOMAFCO. The major recommendations that it brought forward were that ANC early childhood education should strive to help children cope with conditions of exile, to make child-care service and early education instruments of the struggle for liberation, and to prepare young people for a liberated South Africa.<sup>34</sup>

Another organisation closely linked to the two United Nations organisations was the International Labour Organisation (ILO) which offered programmes of technical co-operation. ILO's connection with SOMAFCO started in June 1981, at the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of their Conference, where they adopted a declaration concerning the policy of apartheid

in South Africa. This declaration stipulated that ILO should increase its educational activities and technical assistance to the liberation movements in South Africa, in the field of vocational training. Subsequent to this declaration the ANC presented a request for assistance in organising a training and skills upgrading programme for ANC secretaries employed at the movement's headquarters in Lusaka. After that the ILO was asked to organise a similar training programme for the staff in Tanzania, including, and especially, SOMAFCO. The target group for these envisaged projects was ANC secretarial and office staff, men and women, employed in Tanzania, mainly at SOMAFCO.<sup>35</sup>



In a report entitled *ILO Assistance to ANC in Morogoro* which resulted from a visit to SOMAFCO from 27<sup>th</sup> June to 6<sup>th</sup> July 1983, the ILO undertook to organise three intensive programmes for Mazimbu, namely a four month training and upgrading of book-keeping and accounting staff; a repetition of a four month upgrading of clerical and secretarial staff in Lusaka, and a long term 18 month programme to train and develop another pool of secretaries. Apart from the preparation of curricula and training material, and as well as the training of two secretarial instructors, the project proposal also envisaged the organisation of pilot courses for typists, secretaries and other office staff. It seemed that SOMAFCO was seen as being best served by an ongoing secretarial programme, training beginners from elementary, intermediate and advanced levels. The beneficiaries would man the ever developing Mazimbu infrastructure which would benefit immensely from staff fully versed in efficient office procedure.<sup>36</sup>

The ILO was also heavily involved in the realisation of the ANC Vocational Training Project (VTC) in Dakawa. Pertinent to the ILO brief, the VTC aims were to train skilled artisans for both short and long term objectives. Its immediate aims were to co-ordinate and develop skills acquisition, develop two hundred trainees in different trades, design training modules, train instructors and develop skill tests. This would include inculcating a healthy attitude to practical work and manual labour.<sup>37</sup> This was important to the ANC as manual labour was proving quite problematic in the debates in Mazimbu. As mentioned in an earlier chapter, the ANC was having difficulties in convincing the students at Mazimbu to adhere to 'education with production', which sought to overcome the artificial separation of education and manual work. In actual fact South Africans tended to detest any form of strenuous manual labour.<sup>38</sup> It was also important in the particular case of Dakawa, because some of the male students who impregnated female students were sent there, with the result that the centre began to be seen as a place of punishment, which led to people regarding the place as a dump for the discards of the ANC. Added to this, most of the people who failed to qualify in universities all over the world, due either to misbehaviour or failure to cope, were sent to Dakawa on their return. This served to strengthen this notion of a punishment camp.

Dakawa, therefore, had problems, and perhaps badly needed the psychological benefits constituted by the programmes offered by the ILO. The ILO recognised that the people of South Africa who were in Dakawa would ultimately return home. Due to one of apartheid's contradictions, though South Africa was a highly industrialised country requiring a skilled workforce, there was an artificial restriction on the growth of a skilled

labour force amongst the majority of the people. Thus the ILO sought, in a small way, to establish a core group of reasonably skilled people who could begin the process of change back home.<sup>39</sup>

It was estimated that the building of the VTC would take from July 1982 to December 1988 with an overall budget of \$7 186 489 US from the UNDP. The UNDP justified their involvement in this project as:

An initial major step in providing assistance to the South African liberation movement, the African National Congress (ANC) in the vocational training of what might be considered as a nucleus of ANC men and women qualified in various skills or specialities within their own movement and who may also be better integrated into the economic conditions of Tanzania or other frontline States until independence is attained or apartheid is abolished in South Africa and who, upon attainment of independence or abolition of apartheid will contribute actively to development and progress in their own country.<sup>40</sup>

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The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHRC) also assisted the development of Dakawa. Through project 85/AP/TAN/MA/3/A they provided \$200 000 US for assistance in the realisation of the ANC Development Centre in Dakawa.<sup>41</sup> The objectives of this project were to see the ANC in Dakawa achieving self reliance and a standard of living identical to that of the surrounding population, for a South African agricultural community of 1000 people, through development of a settlement, infrastructure, animal husbandry and agricultural production. The aim was for them to have achieved self-sufficiency by the year 1987.<sup>42</sup> More immediately, the grant was meant to enable the ANC to purchase urgently needed domestic articles like tents, mosquito nets, blankets and utensils.

In the Nordic countries, the deployment of Lindiwe Mabuza to Sweden as the Chief Representative of the ANC opened many doors. Through her work the ANC became known throughout that country.<sup>43</sup> Sweden's assistance to South Africa was co-ordinated through the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), a government agency which was given the task of planning and administering Sweden's bilateral programmes with the liberation movements of Southern Africa. Sida organised two important training programmes for SOMAFSCO students. Through the University of Linköping's Teacher Training Department, they organised for eight students to be taken into a teacher-training programme which would target the problematic areas of Mathematics and the Natural Sciences.<sup>44</sup> There was also an ongoing programme to train nurses in Sweden. These people were intended for the Dutch Solidarity Hospital in Mazimbu, whose relatively sophisticated level of equipment required skilled working staff.

Sweden's late Prime Minister, Olaf Palme, was particularly keen on fostering good relations with the ANC. On opening the Swedish People's Parliament Against Apartheid on the 21<sup>st</sup> February 1986, he recommitted his country to support the ANC in the years until the apartheid regime was overcome.<sup>45</sup> This was one of his last engagements before his mysterious assassination later in 1986.<sup>46</sup>

The Norwegian NGO, NORPLAN, was involved mainly at the Dakawa VTC. They were responsible for coordinating programmes for developmental courses that the

VTC would be offering. They also, from time to time, organised consultancy missions to Mazimbu, which were meant to identify areas with which the Norwegian government could assist.

The Association of Finnish Adult Educators organised what they called a "Peace Symposium" from the 12th to 18th of June 1983. This symposium adopted a declaration which, amongst other things, called for support for the efforts of National Liberation Movements in Southern Africa to achieve self-determination and national independence.<sup>47</sup> This was intended to translate into material support for these movements in realising this objective. It should be noted that this kind of support from these adult educators is an example of the smaller groupings from all over the world who felt the need to contribute to the efforts of the liberation organisations. These smaller efforts, when combined, resulted in a significant input into the coffers and infrastructure of the SOMAFSCO Complex.

Another important role-player in this search for sponsorship was the Italian mediating NGO, the Centre for Information and Education for Development (CIES). Like most western countries, Italy was reluctant to assist the ANC until late in the eighties. CIES played a leading role in convincing the Italian government to support the ANC in its endeavors to make SOMAFSCO a success.<sup>48</sup> As a result of their goading, Italy reformulated their Law on Co-operation and Assistance. Direct Italian assistance came in the form of the complete financing of the construction of residential block five. Later, on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 1990, the ANC and CIES signed a co-operation agreement for "education

and training for the transition from exile to repatriation and for the construction of a post apartheid society".<sup>49</sup> This was meant to examine the preparation of South African citizens in Mazimbu for reintegration and integration in South Africa. It would also look at the long-term objective of upgrading and reforming the education system, and the creation of job opportunities. It was also intended that it should look at the feasibility of the continuation and adaptation of the SOMAFSCO project in the actual South African situation for which it was meant to be preparing.<sup>50</sup>

As for scholarships for the students in SOMAFSCO, the Otto Beneke Stiftung (OBS), West Germany, played a very important role. Sponsorship by this organisation was initiated in 1981. The assistance received from OBS was mainly used to sponsor individual high performing students within SOMAFSCO.<sup>51</sup> For instance, in 1984 it sponsored 120 students, from forms 1 to 5. In return it required the SOMAFSCO staff to fill in a complete progress report on the students that it sponsored. It also required the names of all students whose scholarships were withdrawn, with reasons for that action. The OBS would only effect payment when all its requirements were satisfied. Obviously these stringent requirements must have gone a long way towards ensuring that funding meant for SOMAFSCO students did not get committed for activities other than those relevant to these particular students.

There were many SOMAFSCO sponsors and it would be almost impossible to recount in detail all their roles and inputs. Here follows a shortened list of some of these role-players and aspects of their assistance to Mazimbu:

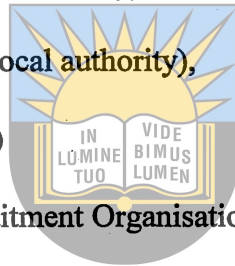
- ⇒ AAM (Holland) - household goods,
- ⇒ NPA (Norwegian Peoples' Aid) - administrator of food to the ANC from the Norwegian government, tarring roads, sewage system etc.,
- ⇒ IDAF(Holland) - bought a Land Cruiser for SOMAFSCO.
- ⇒ APHEDA (Australia) - in 1986-87 sponsored students for a Librarianship course in Dar es Salaam,
- ⇒ EMMAUS (Sweden) - provided second-hand clothes and books.
- ⇒ NOVIB (Holland) - sent agricultural equipment,
- ⇒ DANNIDA (Denmark)- construction material,
- ⇒ FDJ (Finland) - built Dakawa Day Care Centre,
- ⇒ FINNIDA (Finland) - humanitarian aid,
- ⇒ AAM (Anti Apartheid Movement) (UK) - second-hand clothing, toiletries,
- ⇒ SAEU (Southern African Education Unit) - Commonwealth distance learning project for South African adults in Mazimbu and all over Tanzania,
- ⇒ WUS (World Universities Service) - tuition for best qualified South Africans for degrees,
- ⇒ COMSEC (Commonwealth Secretariat) - vocational skills and degrees for South Africans under programme known as the Nassau Fellowship,
- ⇒ AAI (African American Institute) - offered twenty or more scholarships a year,
- ⇒ GDR & USSR Solidarity Committees - scholarships
- ⇒ AET (Africa Education Trust) - scholarships.<sup>52</sup>



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NGOs and local authorities responsible for the recruitment of teachers for SOMAFCO were:

- ⇒ APHEDA
- ⇒ SYL (Finland)
- ⇒ NORAD (Norway)
- ⇒ ILEA ( Inner London Education Authority)
- ⇒ Brent County (another London local authority),
- ⇒ VSO ( British volunteer service)
- ⇒ Africa Groups of Sweden Recruitment Organisation.<sup>53</sup>



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The numbers of helpers in the SOMAFCO project reaffirms the earlier assertion that without outside donor assistance, SOMAFCO would never have been realised. Another aspect raised by this level of support is that quite a number of people wanted to be involved with these idealistic attempts to build a model of education for post-apartheid South Africa. This inevitably translates to a huge responsibility on the part of South Africans to see that the education system in place in this post apartheid era lives up to expectations as there are many interested onlookers who would like to see the rewards of the seeds they planted at SOMAFCO.

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## ***Endnotes***

<sup>1</sup> ANC/SOM/1/1/ NEDUC 1, 3<sup>RD</sup> October 1978.

<sup>2</sup> ANC/SOM/174/846/ Education Department, ND. The number 30 is derived from counting organisations in the file marked 'sponsoring NGOs', and does not count direct assistance from governments. This number also excludes smaller groupings like schools, churches, youth organisations etc. that developed ties with SOMAFCO over the years.

<sup>3</sup> Int. LP / Mr. L. P. Kaihula, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 9<sup>th</sup> May 1997.

<sup>4</sup> Int. SM, LP, BM / Brig. H. Mbita, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 6<sup>th</sup> May 1997.

<sup>5</sup> Int. SM, LP, BM / Mr. Mohammed Tikly, Pretoria, 31<sup>st</sup> August 1997.

<sup>6</sup> Int. SM, LP / Mr. Sindiso Mfenyana, Cape Town, 10 June 1997. (Hereafter Int. Mfenyana),

<sup>7</sup> ANC/SOM/Sec. Sch./UNDP/NESCO/ Reports, Ad Hoc Meeting re UNDP/UNESCO projects, 2nd March 1981.

<sup>8</sup> Int. Mfenyana.

<sup>9</sup> Int. SM,LP/ Ms Ntombikayise Carneson, Nelspruit, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1997.

<sup>10</sup> ANC/SOM/UNDP/UNESCO/ Reports.N.D.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> ANC/SOM/78/344/ UNDP/UNESCO. SOMAFCO Project.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Int. LP/ Mr. R. J. Mwinuka, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 10.05.97.

<sup>16</sup> ANC/SOM/UNESCO - Progress report, July - December 1984, Project ANC/ANC/82/002.

<sup>17</sup> ANC/SOM/SEC SCH/UNDP- Reports.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Int. Tikly.

<sup>21</sup> Int. LP/ D. Rafube and G. Dube, Cape Town, 11.06.97. For a further examination of the views of the students see B. Maaba's *The Students of Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College, University of Fort Hare* MA Thesis, 1999.

<sup>22</sup> ANC/SOM/UNDP, Reports, 'Report of Joint Mid-term Evaluation Mission (UNDP), 6-24 September 1983'.

<sup>23</sup> ANC/SOM/Sec Sch/UNDP - Mid Term Evaluation, 11-13 September 1985, Report Summary.

<sup>24</sup> ANC/SOM/Sec Sch/ UNDP Evaluation Mission, 11-13 September 1985, Self-Evaluation Report.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Int. Tikly.

<sup>27</sup> ANC/SOM/Sec Sch/ "The report of the Education Officer for liaison with UNESCO/UNDP to the viith National Educational Council of the African National Congress", December 1988.

<sup>28</sup> See S. Morrow, "Dakawa Development Centre: An African National Congress Settlement in Tanzania, 1982-1992" *African Affairs*, 97, (1998): 497-521.

<sup>29</sup> ANC/SOM/Sec Sch/NEDUC 7, Dec 1988.

<sup>30</sup> Int. Mwinuka.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> ANC/SOM/1/9/UNESCO/UNDP, Progress Report, January - June 1989.

<sup>34</sup> ANC/SOM/37/337/ UNESCO, 1980-90.

<sup>35</sup> ANC/SOM/Edu. Dept./ NGO'S, ILO. June - December 1983.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, See also Morrow, "Dakawa Development Centre".

<sup>38</sup> Ints. SM, LP, BM/ Dominic Tweedie, Johannesburg, 19.08.97; Terry Bell, Cape Town, 10.03.98.

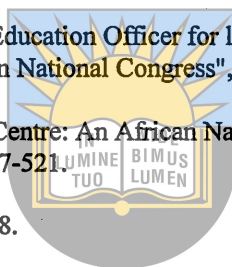
<sup>39</sup> ANC/SOM/Sec Sch/educ. Dept. / ILO - VTC (1983 & 1984)

<sup>40</sup> ANC/SOM/ Reports - Ad Hoc Meeting UNDP/UNESCO projects, 02.03.81.

<sup>41</sup> ANC/ SOM/ Educ Dep / "Assistance to ANC Development Centre, Dakawa, Tanzania, 1985.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Int. Tikly.



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44 ANC/SOM/54/215,5/SIDA-ANC Cooperation, 1982-87.

45 *Ibid.*

46 This assassination came up during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings in South Africa. Some of the apartheid regime's death squads were accused of being behind Palme's killing. Though they denied any involvement in this, it remains to be seen how this issue will be resolved (if it ever will be.)

47 ANC/SOM/Sec Sch / NIEO MURRIKA SEMINAR, FINLAND, 1983.

48 ANC/SOM/Education Department / CIES-ANC Co-operation Framework, 1982-92.

49 *Ibid.*

50 *Ibid.*

51 ANC/SOM/Secondary School/ OTTO BENEKE STIFTUNG. N.D.

52 This list was compiled with the help of files in ANC/SOM/174/846/ Education department/ Sponsoring NGO's.

53 *Ibid.*



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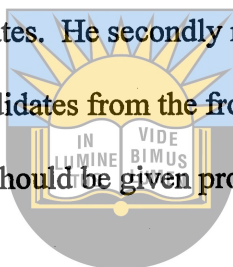
## Chapter 5

### SOMAFCO Policy on Scholarships

Amongst the more important functions of SOMAFCO was to ensure that the process of developing proficient cadres to take up the process of rebuilding a future non-racial South Africa did not simply finish at secondary school level. Rather, opportunities of further academic development were to be secured from relevant donor countries where SOMAFCO graduates would pursue their studies. As there were so many ANC people inside and outside SOMAFCO, the necessity arose for the formation of a proper committee that would oversee the running of the whole scholarship programme. The Education Department of the ANC, through the annual meetings of the National Education Committee (NEDUC), invited submissions on the remit and composition of the proposed committee.<sup>1</sup> In response to this, the staff of SOMAFCO made several recommendations, submitted on the 12 September 1979. They proposed that the committee be based in Mazimbu at the College. This would require the services of a permanent secretariat composed of "a secretary/typist and an elderly comrade knowledgeable in matters of education, to direct the work of the secretariat [who would]... devote his full time to the work of the scholarship secretariat".<sup>2</sup> This committee, they suggested, should enjoy wide representation in the complex, not only in its formal deliberations, but also in dealing with other school issues. The Commissariat, the guidance teacher and the Principal should have formal membership of the committee. The question of student representation would also have to be considered. Finally, the underlying factors governing consideration for an award would mainly be merit, and the

academic and political needs of the organisation.<sup>3</sup> Merit, in this instance, was vested with a meaning which encapsulated both the academic component and unquestionable political credentials.

The Principal of SOMAFCO, W. Njobe, later made his own submission to the Department. His emphasis was on three main issues: he argued that when the proposed Scholarship Committee was formed, it should be the only body to place ANC students anywhere. This, he felt, would help eliminate possible future accusations that bias might be shown in the selection of candidates. He secondly recommended that special attention be given as to how to deal with candidates from the frontline states. Finally, he felt that the various Education Committees should be given prominent roles in the placement of students.<sup>4</sup>



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After considering submissions from relevant stakeholders, in 1980 NEDUC 3 made some recommendations to the ANC National Working Committee (NWC) on the proposed membership of the committee. In all they recommended that there be 12 members. These were to be the Chairperson, Secretary, Principal, Vice-Principal, Project Managers, a representative of the Women's Section, a representative of the Person-Power Commission, a co-opted teacher on an ad hoc basis, and finally the Education Officer in Dar es Salaam.<sup>5</sup> The Working Committee approved the idea and set out tentative terms of reference which appeared on the 16 June 1980 from the office of the Secretary General of the ANC, Alfred Nzo. The Secretariat was to be based in SOMAFCO, and would be vested with the power to have direct access to the individual student's records; the right to

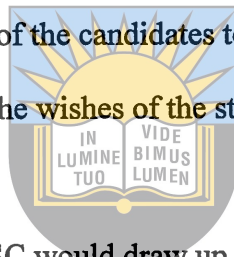
attend staff meetings when students' progress was under discussion; the right to attend disciplinary meetings so as to be fully aware of the individual student's disciplinary problems, and, most importantly, direct access to the students for their inquiries and problems.

By the 5 February 1982, the NWC, some time having elapsed since their initial examination of the NSC, went ahead and made further changes that would be more compliant with the state of the complex. It took several steps that it was felt would not only streamline the NSC but would also make it more effective in dealing with problems as they arose in the immediate environment of the school, and also hopefully resolve ongoing complaints about the partiality of the structure. In doing this, the NWC resolved to take certain measures:

The scholarship committee as originally structured is dissolved and the Scholarship Secretariat is reconstituted and renamed the Scholarship Committee. The Committee, including its secretary will be based at Mazimbu. One of the deputies of the Chief Representative will, under the Chief Representative, handle contact with embassies in Dar es Salaam on questions of scholarship and placements. The committee will be composed of the Director (convenor), Secretary, Head of Projects, Boarding Master, Career Guidance Officer and the Principal (ex-officio). The committee will draw on the teaching staff as its ad-hoc academic consultants. The National Working Committee may increase the size of the committee up to a permanent group of 7/8.<sup>6</sup>

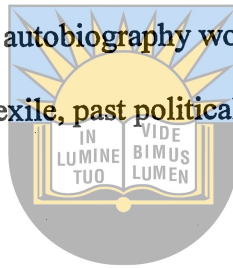
The interim structure was composed of four core full-time members, with the Principal allowed to attend meetings. The four would be a Secretary, a youth representative, a career guidance counsellor, and a clerk. The clerk would be the key member of this group and was expected to be "an experienced mature person, preferably a professionally trained teacher with basic understanding of career guidance and manpower problems".<sup>7</sup>

Added to the full-time secretariat were other members of the National Scholarship Committee (NSC). These were the head of the Education Department of the ANC, the Co-ordinating Secretary of Professional Bodies, a representative of the National Commissariat Department, a representative of the Manpower Commission, three guidance counsellors, a representative of the students, and the Secretary of the Committee.<sup>8</sup> Overall the Committee would have the responsibility of selecting and placing students on the basis of merit, the manpower needs of the ANC, available scholarship places, the competence of the candidates to benefit the ANC in taking up these awards, and consideration of the wishes of the students.<sup>9</sup>



Following from this, the NSC would draw up final lists of student scholarship awards and placements and submit these to the Department of Education for approval by the Secretary General. Another obvious requirement of the NSC was the continued monitoring of students and necessary guidance on academic progress after placement until final completion of studies. This entailed involvement in the activities of students even outside SOMAFSCO. It required that links with education ministries of host countries were developed so that official reports could be forthcoming on the progress of the students. The NSC also had the responsibility of dealing with all queries related to scholarships and placements.<sup>10</sup> This was a necessary mechanism because, with so many students waiting for a chance to further their studies, complaints of one nature or another were bound to be plentiful.

Applications for scholarships, for students not studying in SOMAFSCO, were to be made through ANC missions and submitted to the Secretariat of the Scholarship Committee, with copies to the Education Department, the Youth Secretariat, the Manpower Development Commission (MDC) and the Office of the Secretary General. Where no Mission existed, applications could be channelled through any existing ANC organ.<sup>11</sup> The application would contain the following documents: two copies of completed ANC scholarship application forms, certificates of academic qualification (if available), a curriculum vitae, 10 passport-size photos, an autobiography, and a current medical certificate of health.<sup>12</sup> The autobiography would sketch a more detailed history of the student, reasons for being in exile, past political involvement in South Africa and family circumstances.



Finally, all candidates applying for scholarships were expected to await the awarding of scholarships at SOMAFSCO. This was meant as a means of facilitating proper political orientation, career guidance, easier processing of scholarships and travel arrangements.<sup>13</sup> More than anything though the inclusion of this clause was the result of two things: the complaints of students, and the defections of some students in host countries. Many students awaiting scholarships complained that they were being easily awarded to the children of leaders who were not in SOMAFSCO, but who were rather attending prestigious private schools. The gist of the complaints was that students not previously based in SOMAFSCO did not possess the necessary political credentials to be able to act as ANC envoys in the host countries where they were studying. This shortcoming of not having a strong political grounding had a direct bearing on the

defections of some of these students, it was argued. SOMAFCO, it was felt, provided a better environment for the inculcation of political vigour.<sup>14</sup>

With all these developments within the NSC, the structure itself was gradually beginning to show the signs of maturity and consistency it had lacked before. Specifically, policy outlines and considerations became more regularised and were based on the strength of the existing personnel and material limitations and constraints. General policy considerations implied that certain goals had to be set out which would reflect the needs of the broader ANC organisation. This logically meant that scholarships were not an automatic right for members of the ANC but were granted subject to the fulfilment of certain criteria, determined primarily by organisational needs and philosophy. Broadly, the main requirements would be the overall personnel needs of the ANC in its struggle, the academic merits of applicants which would render them suitable for future deployment, and the acceptance of the predominance of the needs of the organisation over those of individuals.<sup>15</sup>

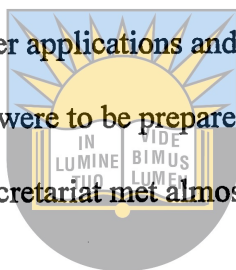
In ensuring that these objectives were met, safeguards were built into the system which were meant to ensure adherence to certain minimum requirements for acceptance into the programme. The committee took it upon itself to ascertain that candidates met the precise academic requirements for courses of study.<sup>16</sup> This would be in the long-term interests of the students because improper channelling would delay academic progress. A good record in secondary school, consistent work, good behaviour, regular attendance and punctuality would also enhance the chances of selection. Political work and commitment would further encourage selection due to the ambassadorial nature of

appointments. Finally, for good measure, all recommendations from the heads of departments at SOMAFCO would render them (HoDs) accountable to the NSC. In the case of a student failing or deserting, questions would be asked of the head of department who had recommended the individual concerned.<sup>17</sup>

Given the sensitive nature of the work of the NSC, specific guidelines on principles of operation were needed to eliminate doubt as to the probity of the office bearers. On no account were officials or members of the NSC to offer scholarships to or discuss scholarship matters with individuals. Strict lines of communication were to be adhered to. Applications had to go from prospective candidates to the Head of Department, then to the NSC in writing on the necessary application forms. For prospective students from outside Mazimbu and Dakawa applications would go via the ANC mission offices. In the process of considering the candidates' applications, there would be no informal communication with the prospective student. The NSC would make all decisions on scholarships and no correspondence would be sent out on behalf of the NSC without prior approval of the chairperson.<sup>18</sup>

Obviously these developments were taking the NSC beyond the interim phase into a more permanent structure as time elapsed. By 1983 this structure had reached a stage when it could become an important permanent organ of the ANC. It could now claim to be following the mission statement of the ANC Education Department in training cadres for the struggle for liberation in South Africa. In its restructuring it suggested eleven members of the NSC. These comprised the Chairperson, Secretary,

Assistant Secretary, SOMAFCO warden, Project Manager, Education Officer, a representative of the Regional Political Council, a representative of the National Youth Secretariat, a representative of the Women's Section, the Chief Administrator and the SOMAFCO Commissar.<sup>19</sup> This committee acted as a think tank for the NSC, their representivity clearly meant to discourage notions of corruption in the awarding of scholarships. Of these, the core full-time secretariat would be made up of the Chairperson, Secretary, the Assistant Secretary and the Education Officer. The operational schedule was also clearly charted. Relevant members of the NSC were to meet once every fortnight to consider applications and attend to correspondence and other relevant matters. Quarterly reports were to be prepared and distributed to all the relevant structures of the movement. The Secretariat met almost on a daily basis to deal with matters arising.



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The selection criteria changed gradually over the years. This was linked to the question of the academic qualities of the entrants. From 1983 the countries which had been the traditional providers of scholarships began to demand higher entry qualifications and the presentation of school certificates.<sup>20</sup> This was probably as a result of some students, coming from South Africa, claiming to have passed their secondary qualification, but failing to bring proof of this after leaving the country abruptly under pressure from the apartheid police. On arrival in these sympathetic countries without certificates, some were proven to be far below the standard necessary to succeed in a tertiary institution.<sup>21</sup> This in turn forced the NSC to apply even stricter criteria in vetting applicants for academic suitability and, as a result, fewer met entry requirements. The

absence of certificates, poor grades, the age factor, poor health and the time that had elapsed since a candidate last studied formally, contributed to the decline in the number of students in some countries. However, in some cases, the NSC was able to conduct assessment tests for applicants without school certificates. As a report noted in 1983-4, '... we prefer that this practice be formalised for all candidates without certificates. Applicants for mature entry must be known to be competent and able to cope with advanced study'.<sup>22</sup>

To ensure a smoother placement of students the NSC also set out deadlines for the submission of applications for certain committees and institutions. However, this had to take into consideration the uncertain movements and places of abode of cadres from outside Mazimbu. In reality, this schedule was impossible to adhere to because of poor communication, and because many missions and departments simply ignored it.

One of the most important functions of the NSC was the monitoring of students on scholarships. There were several ways in which this was done, such as through standardised forms that were sent to mission offices, education committees and student unions. Normally progress reports could be expected at the end of the first term for students who had just arrived and at the end of the academic year for all students.<sup>23</sup> One way of assessment was to personally visit countries with a large concentration of students, which enabled the NSC to attend to student problems on the spot. The National Youth Secretariat (NYS) was to co-ordinate with the NSC to provide feedback on future student development.

The NSC also felt obliged to reposition itself to be able to deal with the later influx of scholarship offers from parts of the world that had previously disregarded the ANC. Some of these countries, including India, China, France, Nigeria and the USA pressed hard for students to take up their scholarships, in some cases catering even for some candidates who were not properly qualified. Special offers, claiming to be tailor-made for the needs of the ANC and its cohort of potential students, like training in vocational skills and specialised practical skills like health care and formation of trainee instructors, were received.<sup>24</sup> This helped broaden the base from which future ANC personnel could be drawn.



In further utilising these new opportunities the NSC also had to liaise with the department of Manpower Development. Since this department had the responsibility of placing students on completion of their studies, they developed a proactive policy of recommending which areas had priority manpower needs. African countries in particular were offering more opportunities for placement and these offers were rapidly pursued as the monitoring of progress was relatively easy and cost effective in countries within the region. The placement of students in western countries had to be done with great deliberation and selectivity. Care had to be taken that two criteria were considered - the academic quality of institutions, and the political maturity of students being sent to these countries. On academic quality, the ANC felt compelled to look for the best institutions and avoid the many that were keen to confer certificates, diplomas and degrees but that could not nurture development. It was felt that, in the US in particular, there were many

institutions with doubtful credentials. On the political maturity of students, it was noted that disappointments continued, with some of the students returning with hostile attitudes towards progressive ideas.<sup>25</sup> Thus not only were politically mature students to be sent to these countries, but ANC missions in these countries had to pay additional attention and give guidance to the political development of students. The political climate in the West, it was felt, was unlike that in the socialist countries, where great opportunities for rapid all-round development of students were available.

Although the debate on which side of the ideological divide was best for the students was distorted by the fact that the ANC received the bulk of its support from Socialist Bloc countries, that socialism lost out in the end, due mainly to the discontent of Eastern Bloc citizens, inevitably begs the question: which society was better for nurturing ANC students? Should it have been the closed societies of the socialist east, or the open (even if 'decadent') west? Another question arising from this is, with the advent of post-apartheid South Africa, which qualifications have more recognition and prestige? Obviously any conjecture will be advantaged by hindsight. Even so, with the post-apartheid ANC government rapidly disassociating itself from ideas previously regarded as progressive, it could be asked, what, if anything, was the characteristic ANC contribution to its educational policy in the midst of these undoubtedly very influential ideas from the Eastern Bloc? These questions, however, expressed in ideological terms, are quickly brought against the reality of the fact that the ANC was involved in a difficult struggle, not only for the liberation of the country, but also for mere survival in foreign countries that were not necessarily obliged to help, but did so out of goodwill. Thus it is

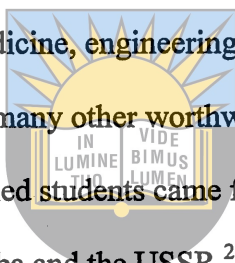
an oversimplification to compare the west and east when instincts for survival and many devious secret agendas of key players forced the ANC to manoeuvre between apparently opposite camps. Whilst the ANC might have been one of the pawns in these dangerous games, they did enough to survive and live to see the realisation of their aspirations.

The NSC also had to chart clear guidelines as to how qualified students were to be utilised by the movement. This, as stated earlier, was done in conjunction with the Manpower Department. To prevent confusion about the redeployment of these individuals, the NSC demanded that they must all report to the NSC in East Africa, and in turn the NSC undertook to report all such students to the Secretary of Education, who had the task of notifying all the relevant departments of their availability. Those students who could be readily deployed would be referred to the Department of Manpower Development for deployment, preferably in any of the Frontline States.<sup>26</sup> Another advantage of requiring qualified students to report in Tanzania was that with the construction of Dakawa under way in earnest, most students could be temporarily occupied there whilst waiting for their dispersal.

To ensure that returned students were gainfully employed, the NSC recommended that surveys be conducted now and again to determine the extent of the usefulness of their deployment. Further, in order to rationalise the deployment of qualified students, regular quarterly consultations were held with the Department of Education and all the other relevant structures.<sup>27</sup> Judging from the bureaucratic constraints within the structures of the ANC, with a thinly-stretched administrative structure operating in

several countries under very difficult conditions, probably most of these recommendations never came to anything and ended up where they began, on the drawing board. This can also be gleaned from the many reports handed in during the meetings of NEDUC, which were never acted upon.

The work of the NSC, however, showed tremendous strides as the years went by. Between 1983 and 1986 more than 150 students were sent out and returned from scholarships. The majority of these came back with higher degrees in a variety of specialisations. These included medicine, engineering, communication, architecture, finance, agriculture, chemistry and many other worthwhile areas.<sup>28</sup> Save for a few individuals, the bulk of these qualified students came from Communist Bloc countries like Bulgaria, Poland, the GDR, Cuba and the USSR.<sup>29</sup>



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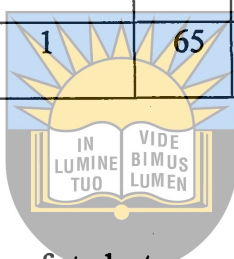
**TABLE 1** Number of students on scholarship from 1983-86<sup>30</sup>

Yr.	ANC non SOMAFCO students enrolled in courses in a particular year	Total No of ex-SOMAFCO students enrolled in a particular year	OVERALL TOTAL
1983	38	12	50
1984	24	16	40
1985	64	17	81
1986	154	22	176

Besides the students who had returned, there were more than 200 students who were on scholarships abroad. Table 2 illustrates the overwhelming support for the ANC coming from the Eastern Bloc countries.

Table 2<sup>31</sup> ANC Students on scholarship abroad in 1986

Place	Bulgaria	Cuba	Canada	GD R	Hungary	Poland	CSSR	USSR
St. No	43	66	1	65	8	6	9	11



The ever-increasing numbers of students meant that the numbers of those withdrawn or expelled from scholarships also increased. Reasons for this were varied and included misconduct, academic weakness and ill health. Students withdrawn for ill-health or academic weakness were no longer to be sent to the Rehabilitation Centre at Dakawa, but were to be redeployed and reconsidered for study after a reasonable period of observation and on the recommendation of the medical team or head of department. "Some academically weak (*sic*) students are encouraged to enrol at SOMAFCO's secondary or adult education divisions or to undertake private study", it was stated.<sup>32</sup> The issue of giving further chances to study abroad to those who had failed or otherwise dropped out was a subject of much wrangling amongst the students. Most students felt that granting of multiple chances to some people, especially to those who had been expelled because of misconduct, constituted favouritism, because there were always

people queuing for scholarships, some having had to wait for several years unsuccessfully.<sup>33</sup> This raised the ire of the students in the same way as had the issue of the absence of the children of the leadership as pupils in SOMAFCO.

Table 3 Expelled/Withdrawn Students from September 1983 to July 1986

YEAR	MISCONDUCT	ACADEMIC	HEALTH
1983	12	4	1
1984	9	-	4
1985	8	1	-
1986	1	-	-
Total: 4	30	5	5

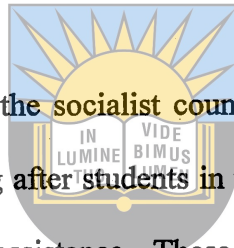
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Table 3 shows that misconduct was the reason for the majority of withdrawals from scholarships. Misconduct was related to several misdemeanours including non-attendance at lectures, disregard of regulations, dissent, desertion, and similar activities.<sup>34</sup> There were many discussions about misconduct. In June 1989 the NSC held a four-day seminar in Mazimbu to try to make sense of the situation and they came up with several resolutions on how to combat this affliction. They felt that

due to poor selection, counselling and monitoring of our students made by the organisation, it is recommended that before the delegation of students to school: recommendations be made by political structures, academic recommendation from SOMAFCO and the Adult Education Division, recommendation from the Health department, recommendation from the Heads of Departments.<sup>35</sup>

Through this rigorous process they hoped to be able to limit the bad elements receiving scholarships. Whether this added bureaucracy really helped the situation is another matter. What is clear though is that some students still carried with them all the traits of South African life. This tendency is cited by Ellis and Sechaba, who state that "they took with them into exile the macho culture of the South African townships which has become a distinctive part of the ANC style and the identity of the ANC young".<sup>36</sup> Thus tendencies for discipline to lapse were common even amongst MK soldiers, who were the subject of the above quotation.

With the difficulties facing the socialist countries in the late eighties, the NSC also had to devise means of looking after students in these countries. It was agreed that they needed financial and material assistance. These uncertainties caused those seeking scholarships to be wary of accepting placements in these countries. On noticing this tendency, the NSC felt that it needed to conduct research to get to the bottom of this reluctance.<sup>37</sup> This was probably futile because conditions in these countries spoke volumes on their own. To try to find reasons was without doubt self-deception, suggesting that it was a harrowing ordeal to watch erstwhile supporters of the ANC crumbling in a wave of popular insurrection by the masses of those countries. It was extremely fortunate that at about the same time, the South African government, under an increasing avalanche of condemnation for its apartheid policies, decided to release political prisoners and unban political organisations, thus paving the way for the return of exiles to South Africa.



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## ***Endnotes***

<sup>1</sup>ANC/SOM/NSC/1/1/ Reports, Proposal, 1979.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>ANC/SOM/NSC/5/3/ Minutes, 'Composition', 06.1980.

<sup>6</sup>ANC/SOM/Central Administration/ NEDUC 4 Recommendations, 1983.

<sup>7</sup> ANC/SOM/Central Administration/Report, Principal, NEDUC 3, 1982.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Int. SM, BM, LP/ Ms. Karin Pampallis, Johannesburg, 29 August 1997 ( Hereafter Int. K. Pampallis).

<sup>11</sup> ANC/SOM/NSC/15/4/Reports, The Scholarship Committee of the ANC (S.A.), 1982.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Int. SM, LP/ Mr. Sindiso Mfenyana, Cape Town, 10 June 1997.(Hereafter Int. Mfenyana)

<sup>14</sup> Int. SM, BM, LP/ Mr. Tladi Ditshego, Auckland Park, 29 August 1997 ( Hereafter Int. Ditshego)

<sup>15</sup>ANC/SOM/NSC/9/1/ Minutes, ND.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> ANC/SOM/Central Administration/Report, NEDUC 6, 1986.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Int. SM, BM, LP/ T. Bell, Cape Town, 10 March 1998. The SOMAFCO archive also provides ample evidence of this.

<sup>22</sup>ANC/SOM/NSC/17/3/Report, 1983-1984.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> NEDUC 6, 1986.

<sup>25</sup>ANC/SOM/NSC/15/1/Reports, 1982-1983.

<sup>26</sup>ANC/SOM/NSC/19/3/Report to NEDUC, 1984-1985; Int. Mfenyana.



## Chapter 6

### The Organisation of Development Projects in Mazimbu

The existence of the Mazimbu project spanned a period of about fourteen years from 1977 until 1992. Probably very few of those involved with the project at its beginning believed that the 1990s would see them returning home. Thus the endeavor to form a school took on a certain permanence in the minds of its proponents. Also, that the motivating idea for the project was development of structures that would lead to self-reliance means that the expected life of the school was much longer than fourteen years. Thus, the development of this quasi-permanent complex required a well thought-out plan and programme of action.

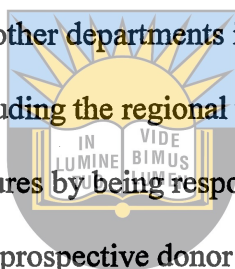


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The ANC realised as early as 1979-80 that more elements were needed for the Mazimbu settlement than merely a secondary school. They needed a crèche, a pre-primary, a primary and an adult school. They also realised that if their proposed education system were to move away from Bantu Education, vocational schools offering more technically based learning would also have to be developed alongside formal academic education. This in turn implied the need for venues for practical training: which eventually resulted in vocation-based centres like garment and leather factories, mechanical and carpentry workshops, a farm and similar enterprises. In addition, they would need a centralised health-care system to care for South African exiles unused to the harsh Tanzanian environment. For all these purposes the ANC in 1980 initiated a

Projects Management Department (PMD), whose main focus would be to co-ordinate all the different projects that would in the end make up the Mazimbu complex.

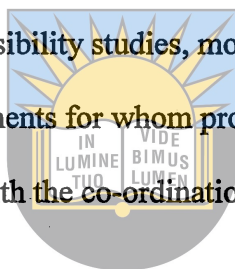
More broadly, the regional PMD's main brief was to concern itself with all ANC projects in Tanzania, the biggest being SOMAFSCO. The individual appointed to head this department would be a member of the Regional Treasury Secretariat, all of whose meetings he or she would attend. He or she would also be expected to submit periodic reports on the progress of individual projects and on project work in general. In co-operation and consultation with all other departments in the region, such as the building and technical departments, and including the regional treasury, the PMD would thus formalise its operations and procedures by being responsible for the task of drawing up draft project proposals to be sent to prospective donor agencies.<sup>1</sup>



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The main responsibility of the department was the establishment, as soon as possible, of projects that would serve the essential needs of the developing settlement. The vision was to provide an opportunity for South Africans to control their own environment in a way impossible at home in South Africa and to allow them to plan and operate their settlement on a non-discriminatory and communal basis. Another objective was to enable them to gain experience in organising and managing a large community and its necessary social services. All this would necessitate the training of skilled masons, carpenters, electricians, sanitation engineers and community planners, to name but a few. Also, in the spirit of self-reliance, there was a need to impart to all in the community certain building skills, concern for their environment and the need for

community organisation.<sup>2</sup> All these lofty ideals required concerted planning and co-ordination. The PMD, whose fundamental aim was "to provide effective and efficient administration and co-ordination of projects undertaken by ANC departments and maximise donor assistance" was the instrument to realise these ideals.<sup>3</sup> Specific objectives were to co-ordinate with donors, provide project accountability, and assist departments with the management of existing projects. Existing projects were mainly those to do with ongoing construction of the complex, a task that continued until the South Africans went back home. Cognate with the responsibilities of identifying new projects, was that of conducting feasibility studies, mostly through project and development research. The departments for whom projects were envisaged were to be assisted with project staffing and with the co-ordination of staff training and development.<sup>4</sup>



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Whilst the department was started in 1980, there had already been a flurry of activity in the complex dating back to 1977 emanating from the first phase of development, mainly sponsored by UNDP under project number ANC/78/001 as mentioned in the chapter on funding. During that phase design and construction capacity had been put in place, which included planning, programming, purchasing, stores, construction and site supervision departments. By 1980, the site of the complex was cleared and seven existing houses had been renovated. Also, a temporary water supply and sewage system was in place, as well as the main electricity supply. There was a poultry unit for 100 layers, and maize had been planted; a vegetable garden and a fruit orchard had already been initiated. The construction of three dormitory blocks for 144

students and four teachers' houses was in progress.<sup>5</sup> These developments set the pace for future project developments.

### *The Farm*

There is no doubt that the realisation of the objective of self-sufficiency lay in ensuring that food production was stabilised and regularised. This in turn meant that the development of the farm in all its aspects was priority. Self-reliance also depended on a healthy and disease free community, thus necessitating the establishment and maintenance of a high quality health centre. The continued construction programme required that some, if not most of the equipment which were to make these houses and other structures habitable be made available within the complex. This led to the concept of a furniture factory. These three projects would come to constitute the main essential services in support of the whole Mazimbu project.

The revised project ANC/78/101/D/01/56 of 1980 called for several short-term objectives that would carry the work forward. These would be the completion of the buildings in progress; the construction of more dormitory units, houses, a kitchen and dining block, a medical centre, a children's centre for 230 children and the VTC; the renovation of the existing village and the setting up of a joinery workshop to produce all doors, door and window frames, as well as school furniture. All this would be done in conjunction with on-site training of carpenters, masons, electricians, plumbers and painters.<sup>6</sup> These objectives delineate the route that would be taken in the formulation of

projects for the next ten years. In line with this, several donor agencies were to be approached with requests for help in the fields in which they showed interest or where they were deemed to possess a specific competence. For instance, the World Health Organisation (WHO) was to be approached to provide help with the clean water and sanitation project and a health centre for Mazimbu whilst UNESCO would be asked to carry the burden for educational projects and the building of a library.<sup>7</sup>

The ANC spelt out the aims of the farm project as being:

To achieve a standard whereby the whole complex would be self-reliant to maintain a population of approximately 2500 people through development of crop and animal husbandry production and related manufacturing of products. To develop and manage the farm to a standard which can provide up to date training for ANC cadres in all aspects of agricultural activities. The farm...[would] not only feed the community in Mazimbu, but also generate funds to pay for running costs, seeds, fertiliser, fuel etc. for subsequent years. The agricultural activities are divided into three main sections: crop production, livestock, agricultural planning and implementation.<sup>8</sup>

To get the farm project off the ground, a farm manager from the Swedish agency Sida, Hans Jurgen, was made available to Mazimbu. The terms of reference of the farm manager specified that he would head the Agricultural Department, co-ordinate all agricultural activities and advise on long-term planning and development through the Farm Committee which was to meet on a monthly basis. A comprehensive project proposal for a well-structured farm was submitted to the UNHCR in 1981. By this time the total land area that had been allocated by the Tanzanian government to the ANC for the development of the Mazimbu complex was 4000 hectares, the bulk of which was intended for crop production and animal husbandry. Projects already established by this

time included a piggery, with 600 pigs, a poultry unit producing regular but inadequate supplies of broilers and eggs, and approximately 150 hectares of land under crops.<sup>9</sup>

The proposal sent to the UNHCR was entitled "ANC Farm for self-reliance". Amongst the objectives were that by 1984 the farm should achieve for an agricultural community of 2500 ANC members a level of self-reliance and a standard of living identical to that of the surrounding population through development of animal husbandry and production. As already seen, there was a strong element of collective self-deception about equating the South African and Tanzanian standards of living. For 1982 the target was that 400 hectares of land would be cleared and cultivated with grain crops; fruit trees and vegetables would also be planted. In animal husbandry, the target was that by the end of 1984 a dairy with 100 highly bred cows, a beef herd with 400 cattle, a poultry unit with 3000 layers and 5000 broilers, and a piggery with 100 breeding sows would be in operation. The first phase of the construction of the dairy and the purchase of 50 cows was the target for 1982. The following year would see the construction of fences, drinking troughs, the poultry unit and the breeding pens for the piggery. Concurrent with this a beef herd would be purchased. 1984 would see the completion of the second phase of the dairy for the other 50 cows and the construction of fattening pens for the piggery.<sup>10</sup>

Already in progress in 1981 was the construction of a complex included an animal feed mixing plant and a grain storage unit. Here, also, all machinery would be safely stored when not in use. The yard would also have repair workshops, a metal workshop for the production of spare parts and several service bays. Within this secure

environment would also be located fuel and oil storage tanks geared specifically for the needs of the farm equipment. This complex would be the heart of the farm. The total projected budget for this phase, envisaged to last from 1982 to 1984 was \$3 849 612.00 US.

Besides UNHCR assistance, Scandinavian support was already in place. Sida pledged to support the creation of a modern dairy that would cater for all the needs of the inhabitants in this sphere. They promised a milking parlour that could accommodate 50 cows.<sup>11</sup> Added to this, Sida mobilised support from the Swedish Co-operative Centres for several pail-milking machines plus accessories.<sup>12</sup> Another Sida recruit, Finn Flensted Nielsen, prepared a document on 'Suggestions on the Organisation of Personnel of the Agricultural Department'. In it he envisaged the department as having a total of 8 sub-units, namely, stores, mechanical workshop, field, crops, cattle, piggery, poultry and hatchery.

Whilst Sida was to be responsible for the costs of the dairy buildings the Norwegian Agency for International Development (NORAD) offered to fund most of the agricultural machinery. The ANC also activated an Italian agency, Movimento Liberazione e Sviluppo (MOLISV) to be part of the dairy production drive.<sup>13</sup> In project proposal FH/ANC/OO2 the ANC motivated that

in order to support the healthy growth and development of the children in SOMAFCO, it is essential also that the farm establish a small dairy enterprise that will produce some 200 hundred litres of milk daily and provide each child with at least half litre of milk per day. This will necessitate the establishment of

a foundation herd of dairy cows, ...supported by an intensive forage crop production, animal housing and dairy facility.<sup>14</sup>

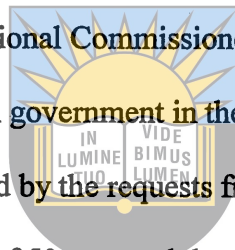
The farm also had to take into consideration the need for incorporating the training component into the food production process. In a report entitled "Food Processing: Possibilities for Production/Training Unit at SOMAFCO in Central Tanzania", compiled by H. Tudor-Evans in October 1983, the importance of the concept of production - training was emphasised. The report said that:

The primary aim of the food project at SOMAFCO is to obtain self-sufficiency in foodstuffs, generate collective employment and increasing and diversifying production. It is also intended to extend the concept and practice of education and training with production, the aim of the training is, of course, to feed members with skills for similar rural food processing projects and not to train people for formal sector industry or employment. Each unit would be run on an autonomous commercial basis and although the main market outlet would be within the college, to generate additional income from neighbouring communities would be of mutual benefit to both parties.<sup>15</sup>

It is interesting that where the farm was concerned, this was the first time that commercialisation was mentioned in the same breath as self-sufficiency. The realisation of this possibility was of course triggered by the large-scale failure of the Tanzanian agricultural industry to accommodate the needs of the country. As a result, with Mazimbu producing more than fifty tons of surplus maize, they were inundated with requests from several quarters to buy their maize. For instance the Likobe Primary School in Morogoro requested that they be supplied with 20 bags of Maize by Mazimbu.<sup>16</sup> The same request was made by the Mchikichini Hostel in Morogoro which housed 250 students. The hostel authorities added that their supplies were short as the National Milling Company in Morogoro had no maize. These requests were not limited

to Morogoro. For instance the Coastal Salt Works Company in Dar es Salaam also wrote, bemoaning the shortage of food for their workers and asking to buy 200 bags of maize. They were followed by the ARDHI Institute which also requested 300 bags.<sup>17</sup> Clearly it can be argued that the call to commercialise was not necessarily planned, but that conditions presented the farm with the opportunity to think seriously about the matter and thus refocus their vision to incorporate a market related outlook.

To test the Tanzanian government's feeling about this new venture, Director Mohammed Tikly wrote to the Regional Commissioner for Dodoma on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 1985, offering to sell the Tanzanian government in the region maize flour, which was evidently in short supply, as attested by the requests from individual institutions. He stated that Mazimbu had a surplus of 50 tons and that they were willing to sell this to the Tanzanian Government at the market price of 10/- per kg plus the transport charges.<sup>18</sup> In response, on 06.09.85, the Regional Commissioner 's officer felt that "currently the maize situation in this region is somehow healthy promising (sic)".<sup>19</sup> This rebuff though did not stop the requests from individual agencies which wanted maize and is an interesting comment on the government's unwillingness to admit to the very real problem in this area. The situation even led the Farm Committee in the same year to formulate a policy regarding the selling of farm produce. They decided that they would only sell maize to the National Milling Corporation and to Tanzanian nationals working in Mazimbu. This decision was arrived at as a means of imposing controls to the process as otherwise failure to do so would lead later on to difficulties in meeting demand for produce in the wake of the ever increasing food shortage in the region.<sup>20</sup> To take the entrepreneurial

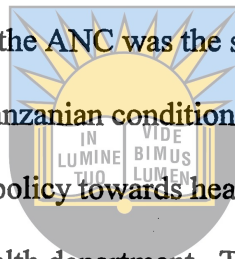


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spirit further, the Farm Manager wrote Tikly to say the farm was also willing to hire out one tractor and disk-plough with one driver at 250 shillings per hour. This would not only benefit institutions mentioned before as even the surrounding villages could band together to raise these funds and have their land tilled and ploughed for them.

### *The Health Unit*

Another element that was intrinsically important, and also sustained the self-reliant image that was so crucial to the ANC was the setting up of a health unit to forestall the ravages of the harsh Tanzanian conditions. This specific aim should be seen within the context of overall ANC policy towards health matters at the time, the instrument of which was to be a health department. The inaugural meeting was held in Lusaka on the 27 August 1977 in the presence of the Secretary General, Alfred Nzo and the Treasurer General, Thomas Nkobi. This meeting set up a Health Committee comprising people within the ANC who had medical backgrounds. The four office-bearers chosen were Peter Mfelang as chairman, Manto Tshabalala as secretary, and Nomvuyo Nokwe and Fiki Radebe-Reed as additional members. In December 1980 a meeting was held which led to some restructuring, and the committee was re-designated as a Department which had as its highest organ a secretariat made up of Mfelang and Tshabalala, together with elected delegates from all health teams located wherever there were ANC settlements.



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All members of the ANC in the medical profession (doctors, nurses, medical assistants, medical aides etc) within each given centre, locality or region were to constitute themselves into a health committee with a secretary. This committee would be obliged to meet at least twice a year.<sup>21</sup> The main objectives of these committees were health surveillance and social welfare, mobilisation and recruitment, training and deployment, health education, information and publicity. These committees were also meant to develop well structured co-ordination strategies geared at ensuring that all the relevant stakeholders were fully briefed about the activities of the Department, especially the Solidarity Groups whose assistance was vital in the provision of equipment and medicines. At the core of the health policy formulation was that the Health Department was being called upon to critically analyse the health status of the cadres and people in general, to analyse the health care delivery system that was being administered to the membership of the ANC, and to evaluate critically the objectives of all the education programmes, measuring them against the health needs of the people. Expanding on these expectations, Mfelang added,

We were to generate an awareness amongst ourselves and the ANC membership at large, on the close relationship between health and the prevailing socio-economic, political, cultural and any other related factors, medicine could no longer operate in isolation, but was an integral part of the very tapestry of the existence of humanity. Health programmes and activities had to be geared towards the reduction of human suffering. ...The department was therefore to identify the health needs of our people, promote and support good health. More than that it had to develop a high level of organisation and commitment in the delivery of health care to our people.<sup>22</sup>

Although these rather lofty ideals were in place the realities on the ground placed the department in a precarious state. In a consultative committee meeting (CCM)

held from 30 November to 2 December 1982 in Lusaka, Zambia, Manto Tshabalala presented a paper entitled *Objectives and critical analysis of the present state of affairs in the Health Department*. Regarding services, she stated that health care in general left much to be desired. Health teams were deemed unable to solve problems locally. Working relations with local health institutions were not being fully developed. The department was not augmenting its personnel and as a result had not improved the quality of health care to ANC communities.<sup>23</sup> Another input at the conference entitled *Problems within the Department of Health, and recommendations for solutions*, tabulated other problems within the running of the department. Amongst these were the lack of transport for the secretariat, absence of adequate staff housing, the restrictions to referrals abroad which was exacerbated by the habit of some patients of choosing where they want to be treated and indifferent procedures in health education and administration.<sup>24</sup>



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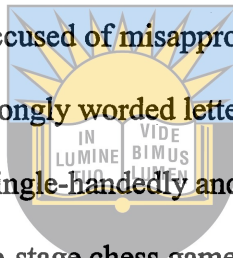
Even more worrying were interpersonal conflicts that seemed to develop amongst some members of the department. An example of this acrimony can be seen in a letter of resignation by Tim Naidoo who was a professional nurse at the Mazimbu Clinic. In it he writes:

I feel I can no longer work where whatever I do as a health worker is seen as wrong. I simply find it impossible to work in an atmosphere of dishonesty, insecurity and non-cooperation. Explanations are not sought, we are reprimanded and condemned in stories and rumours.<sup>25</sup>

Later on when Naidoo was asked to substantiate his claims, he added that even since he had written the letter of resignation there had been further deterioration of conditions to such a level that he felt ashamed to belong to such a society.<sup>26</sup> He cited as an example

the behaviour of the 'powers-that-be' over a cholera outbreak that had befallen Mazimbu. His accusations of incompetence during the cholera outbreak were further corroborated by a memorandum from T. Bell to the Directorate on 16.03.82, which reflected his outrage over the fact that even whilst Mazimbu was quarantined busloads of primary school children from Morogoro were allowed into the complex.

There also appear to have been many running battles between the Secretary of Health, Tshabalala, and other members of the Health Department. A case in point is the example of S. Mthembu who was accused of misappropriating funds whilst on official business. In response he wrote a strongly worded letter on 31.05.82, accusing Tshabalala of sowing confusion, doing things single-handedly and using members of the medical team as "pawns in a one-man-on-the-stage chess game".<sup>27</sup> There were also complaints by the Regional Chairperson of Health for Mazimbu, Regina V. Nzo, that, for instance, the secretary did "a one man job" in the choice of students for the Maternal and Child Health Course, even choosing students who were mothering young children. She also charged that even when problems were raised with her about certain irregularities, she took from minutes what suited her and sent copies to leadership, making others appear as if there was a power struggle or that people were envious of her position or hated her.<sup>28</sup> Mrs Nzo later on tendered her resignation citing her conflict with the Secretary as being her main reason.<sup>29</sup> With the conflict between Mrs Nzo and Tshabalala out in the open, the ANC decided to set up a commission into the whole Health Team in East Africa in October 1982. For this purpose witnesses were called, who were part of the health establishment



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in Mazimbu. One witness, on being asked, what were the causes of problems in the Health Team, responded,

They are not on good terms Manto and Ma Nzo. Personal problems and they involve so many people. You don't know which way to go. When Nomava was still alive [she] also clashed with Manto. [There are] also problems with Manto and Edith - physical fight. ... Manto wants to show she is the boss and Ma Nzo likewise. Manto doesn't seem to agree with a lot of people, Nomava, Fieke Radebe, Edith, Nzo. ... Manto wants to always be in control. I don't think she can work with other doctors.<sup>30</sup>

As if this was not enough, the next witness went to say that "in my experience Manto never finished anything, only half-half. What I fear most is Manto personalises problems, She can't deal with people at grass-roots. Most people are fed up. There is demoralisation".<sup>31</sup>



Obviously these personal conflicts did not help with the problems that the health professionals faced. They had to deal with a litany of ailments which required intensive and continuous support from their donors. There were many recurrent diseases that made it that much more difficult to come up with the patient profile of the community. Amongst the diseases were those of poverty like tuberculosis, rheumatic heart disease, gastroenteritis, uncontrolled diabetes, malignant hypertension, malnutrition, substance abuse, depression and schizophrenia. There were also diseases of a people displaced from their natural environment like malaria, and severe asthma.<sup>32</sup> There is no doubt that malaria was at the top of this list and that it called for most resources in terms of manpower, drugs, and in-patient facilities. It can also be assumed that malaria represented tremendous costs to the community as a whole in reduced capacity for work

and loss of man-days. With all these diseases they were faced with chronic shortage of drugs resulting in a series of crises, moving from one shortage to the next.

Superimposed on this profile was the reality that, in the apartheid state many people had been tortured, brutally beaten, maimed and denied medical treatment for injuries so sustained. On top of this was the refugee situation with its uncertainty, restlessness, and deprivation of family relations. Even the camp setting was in itself depriving despite the obvious efforts to build a genuine community. Thus there was a high incidence of physiological and psychological post-traumatic diseases. This psychological strain was probably worse among the children and the youth. The majority of children above the age of three lived separated from their parents. In most cases the parents were away receiving education either in Europe or in other African countries. In the absence of their parents the children had little opportunity to interact with adults, there being only a small staff engaged in the boarding section with no social-pedagogic training.

To combat this situation the ANC decided to build a hospital. Officially opened in May 1, 1984, it was named the ANC-Holland Solidarity Hospital.<sup>33</sup> It replaced a minor and at the time highly insufficient clinic in Mazimbu. A medical solidarity committee in Holland planned and financed the hospital, whilst additional hospital equipment was supplied by a combination of Dutch supporters. At the opening of the school, Henk Odenk, the representative of the Solidarity Group, stated that the Hospital symbolised the support of the people of Holland to the ANC. He said the Dutch people

financed the hospital as part of the struggle against capitalism and that the people of Holland would continue to support the project.<sup>34</sup> The ANC was responsible for the construction. The hospital was intended as the central institution in the regional health supply, it was planned as a fully fledged hospital offering the following services:

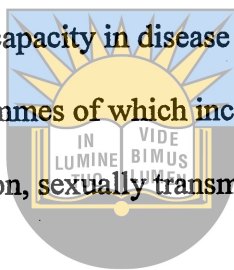
- diagnostic services – facilitated by laboratory techniques and x-ray.
- in- and out-patient treatment including medical and surgical treatment.
- Mother and Child Health (MCH) services including deliveries and immunization.
- dental services.
- health education.
- preventive health.<sup>35</sup>



The hospital acted as the referral centre for the East Africa region. To Mazimbu, the hospital offered both primary health and more specialised hospital services. First and foremost, the hospital was occupied with curative activities. With the stock of equipment they were able to obtain and the manpower at its disposal, the hospital was only able to offer a very limited range of services like the diagnosis and treatment of infectious and parasitic diseases, the treatment of wounds and minor surgery, and dental services. The hospital received 2500-3000 patients per month with the local Tanzanian population accounting for roughly 75%.<sup>36</sup>

The hospital included a ward with twenty beds. In addition to the maximum of twenty in-patients, there was usually a similar number of “in-out”-patients who stayed in

bed at home and were brought to the hospital for observation and medication once every 24 hours. To further increase the capacity of the hospital the ANC submitted a project proposal to the UNDP entitled *Strengthening Health Services in Mazimbu, Dakawa and Lusaka* scheduled for implementation in August 1988. Its objective was to assist the ANC in strengthening its capability to provide efficient and adequate health services for its exiled communities and to assist in efficiently managing health services in a post-apartheid South Africa. The grant that was being applied for, amounting to \$1 703 391 US over a three and a half years period, was to be specifically geared to upgrade the ANC/Holland Solidarity Hospital's capacity in disease prevention and health promotion activities, the more common programmes of which included MCH, family planning, mental health and social rehabilitation, sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS prevention programmes.<sup>37</sup>



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Another important challenge for the health staff was family planning for the students. The escalation of pregnancies among the teens (as mentioned in the chapter on the Women's Section) necessitated the adoption of a more proactive approach to family planning. To this end, in May 1984 a committee was appointed to draw up a programme for youth and students, and to compile teaching materials for a family planning programme with students graded according to age groups.<sup>38</sup> In November 1985 a working document entitled *Taking Care of Yourself* was circulated which spelt out a series of sessions towards the enlightenment of the youth in health matters. This series dealt with issues like exercise, sexuality, health and fertility. The individual sessions would deal with a wide range of topics like:

- Body Image - Environmental stresses - Sickness eg. Malaria, anemia, alcohol and mood altering drugs, school performance anxiety, poverty etc.
- Mechanisms for coping with stress - Exercise
- Relationships and Sexuality eg. Building relationships, sexuality vs sex, politics of sexuality etc.
- The anatomy and physiology of sexuality and reproduction
- Birth Control
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases.<sup>39</sup>



To get the views of the Mazimbu community on the issue of family planning the directorate had decided to compile a questionnaire entitled *Pregnancies/Abortions/Miscarriages* for discussion, comment and recommendations. Through this process they were hoping that all the people in the complex would use the opportunity to voice their views and opinions. These would then be considered by the Directorate which would help them in their recommendations to headquarters in Lusaka.<sup>40</sup> This step was also important because there was some difficulty in reaching consensus on the issue of birth control. Views veered between the conservative elements who regarded family planning for youth as an encouragement of promiscuity, and those who believed that the ANC as a revolutionary organisation should pursue a more enlightened policy unhindered by religious sensitivities. This document examined issues like suspensions for pregnancies, punishment as/or rehabilitation, abortions, miscarriage, what measures to be meted out to the impregnating male partner, and the like.

By the early 90s when the ANC was faced with the prospect of returning home, the health department also had to reposition itself and come with its own guidelines towards the development of a health policy. In June 1991, at the National Conference, they produced a tentative document encapsulating their principles guiding health policy formulation.<sup>41</sup> In essence this document contained most of the policy formulations developed since the formation of the Health Department in 1977. The core elements contained in the principles were the promotion of good health, the creation of a comprehensive national health service, the role of the private sector, a national medicines policy, a personnel policy, the promotion of neglected areas of health care and democratisation in health care. Some small part of this health policy position can be assumed to have been based on the experience at Mazimbu of running an actual health service in miniature. As with the ANC's educational policy, however, it can be asked how much the exile experience in Tanzania in fact influenced the ANC when faced with the reality of coming to power in a free South Africa?

### *The Vuyisile Mini Furniture Factory*

Another important element in realising SOMAFCO was the Joinery and Furniture Factory, named the Vuyisile Mini Furniture Factory in August 1981.<sup>42</sup> It was set up in 1980 and it was meant to support the construction programme in Mazimbu. It consisted of two major sections, the machinery and joinery sections, which supplied Construction with doors, windows, frames, furniture and all products of wood. This in-

house programme helped in cutting down the expenses incurred by construction. They also did repair work on any broken furniture in the compound. The importance of the factory to the ANC was spelt out in a letter by Oswald Dennis to the resident UNDP Co-ordinator on the 27 January 1982. In it he explained that:

Of particular importance has been the arrival of the woodworking machines for our carpentry and joinery factory. This factory is of considerable value to the process of our construction programme since it provides the building site with all joinery parts and fixtures required. The coming online of these machines will represent a substantial saving since it means we can dispense with the services of contractors in this regard. In the future, as our building programme nears completion, the factory can begin to produce for the market, thus providing funds for the maintenance of our complex.<sup>43</sup>

By 1985, Dennis, as Project Manager felt that standards should be improved, and for that purpose he approached the International Solidarity Foundation of Finland. The ISF had played an important part in the building of the furniture factory and installation of machinery. They next sent two experts for training and evaluation purposes, T. Lantamatti and Leo Sonderquist, the latter a skilled metal worker with experience in quality supervision and foremanship.<sup>44</sup> The ISF also agreed to assist with on the job training and the introduction of management skills, to buy and install new machinery at the workshop, to improve the quality of the products, and to train ANC personnel both on the job and abroad.<sup>45</sup> The items produced were to be distributed to the site office in the form of doors, door frames, window frames, ceiling and ceiling strips. Other items would be sent to Dakawa for their own construction needs. Later on they would supply furniture to the completed houses and buildings, and opportunities would open up for the marketing of excess products. The ISF also sent regular supplies of timber, which had previously been

bought in Sao Hill in Iringa. Later on the Soviet Union became the sole supplier of timber on a regular basis. In 1986 the ISF installed a Dust Extraction System and new machinery. The immediate result was that new models of furniture were produced and the record system was improved. The ISF also saw to the day to day items like glue, nails, screws and other types of hand tools.<sup>46</sup> In the end one can surmise that the ANC had to spend very little on the factory.

In 1988 a project analysis of the VMFF was commissioned by the ISF. The purpose behind this was to determine the measures that would change the factory into a market oriented enterprise. By this time the factory produced 1000 items such as chairs and tables per month.<sup>47</sup> In its employ it had five ANC members, 39 Tanzanians, two experts from Finland and one from Norway. The ISF continued to be the major donor and there was a concerted effort to convince more ANC members to join the factory. The move towards setting up a marketing structure was a result of the response of the market to the few items that had already been put for sale. The possibility of having a financially independent and profit making production unit was sufficient incentive to pursue commercialisation.

Having examined the role of the service sections of Mazimbu it is quite obvious that the success of the whole project cannot be gauged from the academic programmes and their viability alone. A symbiotic relationship between the academic and other aspects of the complex was essential in ensuring that communal life remained balanced. Without the Project Management Department there could

not have been a coherent work schedule and delegation of responsibility. The farm was there to make sure that food production was assured in the face of rampant shortages in the surrounding Tanzanian Villages; the hospital and the whole health care system was there to combat not only the prevalent tropical diseases in East Africa but also played a proactive role in birth control activities; the furniture factory saw to the carpentry needs of the complex and beyond. All these sectors made SOMAFCO into a fully-fledged community with a diverse character and distinct identity, instead of being an educational institution alone.

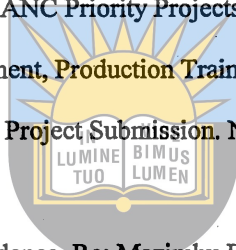


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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> ANC/SOM/Project Management Department( hereafter PMD)/1/4/Manager's Office, The Regional Projects Department - Tanzania, Guidelines. N.D. (probably 1980)
- <sup>2</sup> ANC/SOM/PMD/5/30/UNDP, Projects Documents. June 1980.
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- <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*
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- <sup>21</sup> ANC/SOM/Health Department(HD)/2/7/Directorate - Health Matters, Report of the East African Team, Kurasini, 10.05.81.
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- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid*



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- <sup>25</sup> ANC/SOM/HD/2/7/Directorate – Health Matters, 1982, Letter to Secretary of Health, 23.02.82.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.03.82.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.05.82.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.04.82.
- <sup>29</sup> ANC/SOM/HD/2/7/Minutes, Regional Health Team, mazimbu, 12.09.82.
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- <sup>32</sup> ANC/SOM/HD/6/Medical Notes. N.D.
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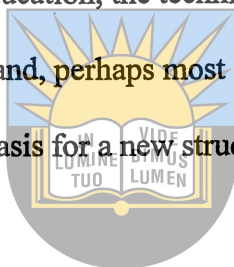


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## Chapter 7

### Tensions and Conflicts in Mazimbu

There is no doubt that SOMAFCO's conception, noble though it was, faced the ANC with many problems and dilemmas. The original idea behind the school was mainly to see to the educational needs of the many young South Africans entering exile in the aftermath of the 1976 revolt. It was not possible for the ANC to just settle for a conventional school: there were other issues to consider. These included the security concerns of the exile community, the obvious shortcomings of Bantu Education, the technical requirements of the ANC in the furtherance of its struggle objectives, and, perhaps most importantly, the opportunity to develop a model which could be the basis for a new structure of education for post-apartheid South Africa.



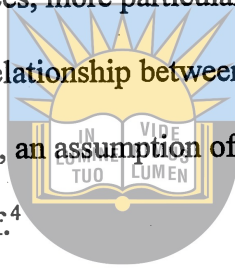
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The ANC moved swiftly in pursuit of some of these aims, especially when one considers that the Education Department was only formally established in October 1978 and that in the following year SOMAFCO was opened.<sup>1</sup> Through proposals from education committees scattered throughout the world, but especially from London, Lusaka, Maputo and Dar es Salaam, attempts were made to examine all the contentious issues deemed crucial in the operation of the school. The overriding point in all these proposals was that there was a need for recognition of the deeply political nature of education; a rejection of the conception that education is a 'technical' matter best left to educational experts; and an explicit insistence that the ANC school must be a school for political cadres.<sup>2</sup> Obviously the insistence on this recognition was an attempt to stamp out calls from some sections of the ANC that the school serve the conventional requirements of providing basic knowledge, simply preparing students

for the world of work or further tertiary education.

It is one thing to theorise about the necessities of a 'cadre school', and another to actually implement the idea, and this question was among the most vigorously debated within ANC circles. The debate led to some tensions and disagreements. From the first Council meeting of the ANC, held from 1-3 October 1978, there was an intense debate revolving around the complex issues of the political versus the technical approach to education.<sup>3</sup> At times the issues were explicit and at times implicit. In relation to certain questions there was immediate agreement. In other instances, more particularly where the political content of the issue was implicit (for example, the relationship between staff and students, and the organisational structure of the school), an assumption of the non-political character of the school and of education asserted itself.<sup>4</sup>



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*Differences resulting from the early NEDUC meetings*

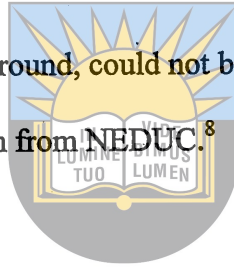
The first Council meeting laid down specific aims, which asserted the predominance of the political imperative. It stated that the main objective was to "prepare cadres to serve the national liberation struggle of the people of South Africa in the phase of struggle for seizure of political power".<sup>5</sup> It further stated that, in serving economic, educational, scientific and other objectives, priorities would be dictated by the needs of the liberation struggle in the pre- and post-liberation periods.

By the second Council meeting in April 1979 it became obvious that there were major deviations from earlier decisions, specifically on the political outlook of the school. Some

delegates felt that a number of political decisions and approaches adopted at the first meeting were reversed without adequate discussion. Points of contention included staff and student recruitment, the role of political commissars, and student discipline. On staff recruitment, the London Education Committee (LEC) registered its concern about approaches that had been made to two applicants, although it was known that they had connections with a political movement hostile to the ANC. They also referred to one appointed teacher having "a very non-political approach to education and [she] operates within a conventional, authoritarian relation with the pupils".<sup>6</sup> This stance by the LEC, whilst proper and to the letter of the Education Department's regulations, was somehow one-sided. Considering that SOMAFCO, throughout its existence, laboured under a debilitating shortage of teachers, there could be no way of extricating the pupils from the shortcomings of Bantu education, at least in the early stages of the school activities, without being fairly eclectic in choice of staff. Bantu Education thrived through under-qualified teachers who were similarly spawned by sub-standard teachers colleges.<sup>7</sup> To insist on a completely orthodox ANC political outlook even at the expense of teaching skills would be extremely limiting to the already over-stretched resources of the ANC.

The complaint concerning student recruitment was not about the method but rather about what some considered an omission. The second Council meeting dwelt at length on the relationship between the Youth Section of the ANC and the Education Department, and the assumption developed that the Youth Section had a political role in recruitment and the Department a technical/educational role. The concern that some had with this was that this stance again revived the conception of education as apolitical. This was deemed an artificial separation of education and politics, contrary to the policy on education adopted at the first

conference. Political commissars who were to be attached to each residential block, thus rejecting the warden or 'house-master', were eliminated in the second meeting and wardens were reinstated. This was seen by the London Committee as a reflection of a further retreat from politics, even though commissars were supposed to play a very important role in nurturing political discussions in the dormitories. Similarly, the first meeting had rejected the idea that a social worker be appointed to look at the discipline of students, instead stressing that as part of their political development, students were to devise their own structures dealing with matters of discipline. Now, the appointment of a welfare officer for students was deemed by some to be contrary to the earlier decision. These complaints mainly served to emphasise that conditions, on the ground, could not be expected to be picture-perfect as conceived by the programme of action from NEDUC.<sup>8</sup>



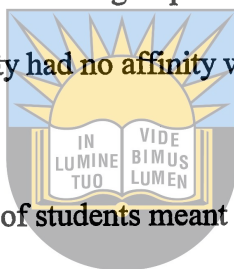
#### *Problems caused by the Diaspora*

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Obviously, problems at SOMAFCO were further compounded by teaching staff not being suitably trained to operate within a 'revolutionary school' context, as no training facility for such professionals existed. Teachers needed to approach their work creatively, deconstructing previous rigid, hierarchical and authoritarian approaches to teacher-student relations, and accepting that their students came from a wide variety of backgrounds. It was generally accepted that there were four types of students at SOMAFCO: the directly involved, the environmentally influenced, those with involved parents and the non-committed.<sup>9</sup>

The directly involved referred to those who had recently left South Africa and had had direct experience or knowledge of the oppressive apartheid system. These were most easily

amenable to political education, though some of them may have been suffering from the after-effects of their traumatic experiences. The second group, the environmentally influenced, were those students who had grown up in areas like Maputo and Lesotho, who had been influenced by local politics and had an insight into the conditions of a liberation struggle. Those with involved parents comprised students of ANC parents who grew up in exile, and who knew something about the ANC and the necessities of the liberation struggle. The last, non-committed, group was deemed to be those students who knew virtually nothing about South Africa and the ANC. They usually came from mixed parentage, with only one parent being South African.<sup>10</sup> Students from this last group only came to the ANC because of family and educational problems, but in reality had no affinity with the objectives of the movement.



The reality of these categories of students meant that the teacher had to wear different hats as the situation required. Besides being teachers, they had to be counsellors and guidance instructors, surrogate parents, take the lead in sports, manual activities, political debates and generally be role models for the students.<sup>11</sup> This was no easy task and resulted in some teachers complaining of being "overworked to the point of collapse".<sup>12</sup> Compounding this problem was the shortage of teachers mentioned above. There was also, among the teaching staff, resentment and suspicion about volunteer teachers who did not belong to the ANC, and yet received preferential treatment. That volunteer teachers received better remuneration than their ANC counterparts made matters even worse. This was viewed as institutionalised elitism, which skewed living standards within a group of people doing the same job. Of course the complaints about salaries by some sectors of the teaching staff were regarded as mere whinging by the ultra-left sections of the Mazimbu community. Terry Bell feels that some of the teachers who came to SOMAFCO from similar teaching jobs elsewhere came

with expectations of certain standards, and that such views had no place at Mazimbu. He feels it is the same people who destabilised and thus stifled the successful implementation of the programme of Education with Production. They considered manual labour somewhat demeaning.<sup>13</sup> Another shortcoming was allowing staff without qualifications to go into the classrooms with no preparation or guidance. It was felt that more attention should be given to developing adequate and relevant teaching techniques.<sup>14</sup>

### *Education with Production*

Another area of friction in SOMAFSCO, alluded to above, was the question of balancing work and study, or the notion of education with production, popularly known as "bridging the gap" by the Mazimbu community.<sup>15</sup> Among the guiding principles is pursuit of the stated aim of the ANC of producing "such cadres as will be able to serve the society in all spheres ...", was combating within education the allegedly artificial division between mental and manual training. Of course, it was accepted that apartheid education had so deprived students in areas of science and technology that any meaningful time allocation would recognise this shortcoming and allocate more:

Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College... [has]... to rectify this situation as one of its priorities. This means in its teaching it must draw on the most advanced scientific knowledge, that is, teaching science in depth with thoroughness. Increasing teaching time to effect this emphasis reduces time available for food production and extensive involvement of students into vocational skill production of a level that could make the project 100% self-sufficient in most areas of its material needs.<sup>16</sup>

This document entitled "Problems of balancing work and study at the Mazimbu ANC school Project", with its somewhat guarded discussion, was circulated within ANC circles early in 1981 as a response to certain problems that surfaced in the implementation of the production

side of education with production. As early as the second NEDUC conference held in April 1979, it was reported that "the students are reluctant to co-operate either on the farm or at the building site".<sup>17</sup>

There is no doubt that the students of SOMAFCO did not really share this positive attitude towards self-sufficiency and manual labour. At the most basic level students still associated manual work with being uneducated and lacking sophistication, and felt that it was undesirable for would-be intellectuals.<sup>18</sup> Others honestly felt that SOMAFCO was an educational facility and that as they were students, their main preoccupation should be to study their books. Others, they felt, should take up the manual tasks, invariably these 'others' being Tanzanian labourers. Obviously this outlook was a reflection of typical apartheid South African thinking, where manual labour was reserved for the lowest classes of society.



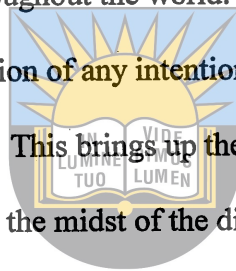
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This thinking about labour even extended to the choice of academic subjects, where an area like agriculture was roundly abhorred by students as it carried with it elements of physical labour.<sup>19</sup> Of course a less contentious appraisal of this phenomenon would be to concede that as the majority of students at SOMAFCO came from an urban background, which emphasised the virtues of working in the industrial or commercial world, agriculture did not really feature in their world view. Still, that argument overlooks the fact that SOMAFCO was a political school where these issues of manual labour should have been properly contextualised within the quasi-socialist outlook of the organisation at the time. Also, the backdrop of financial constraints due to involvement in a long-term revolutionary struggle made self-sufficiency a necessity, not an option. It could be argued that any issues that touched on the survival of the exile community, and intrinsic to this, the issue of

attaining relative self-sufficiency and independence, should not have been hard to propagate in the minds of the students of SOMAFSCO. If the students were really obliged, as stated by O. R. Tambo, to "... carry out their responsibilities in a manner befitting the pioneering role in which history has thrust them...", then it should not have been difficult to persuade them to partake enthusiastically in the general upkeep of the complex and in the production of food and other necessities.<sup>20</sup> If they would or could not, then the question arises as to what had led to this attitude or outlook which could not be reversed.

To start with, there were many contradictions as to the boundaries of student participation in the terrain of struggle. The Education Department was barely on its feet and the institution had no precedents or experience to draw on. In this situation any novelty, perhaps untenable, might have its proponents. The post-1976 students still had a certain self-image, amounting at times to arrogance, after having, in their eyes, revitalised the struggle inside South Africa. Their outlook still led them to rebel against overt authority, and they regarded some of the methods of the leadership as out-dated and unenforceable. They associated manual labour with South African 'baaskap', where black people's main purpose in life was to serve the aspirations of the white minority. Thus, they hated any kind of regimented labour. Instead they preferred communal joint activities like '*letsema*' where everybody took part and which was only held on certain occasions.<sup>21</sup> Even in the final report of a seminar on 'The Role of Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College Students in the Struggle for National Liberation' dated 17<sup>th</sup> April 1982, nothing definite was said about participation in labour activities at the school except for one vague sentence which stated that amongst their goals was being "... prepared to respond to any call by our leadership to serve in the non-academic fronts".<sup>22</sup>

What permeates the documents of the early '80s is their main objective, which was simply stated as being to 'consolidate peoples' power' in the post liberation phase. The achievement of these goals would be attained by involvement in issues like contributing to the formulation of a new education system, participating in disciplines which were deemed as essential for the advancement and preservation of a progressive society, combating sectarianism and chauvinism, mobilising internally and internationally, availing themselves of regular press and radio interviews, and establishing and strengthening relations with progressive student organisations throughout the world. These goals were quite progressive in their outlook, but the blatant omission of any intention to be self-reliant served to further highlight distaste for physical labour. This brings up the whole question of the relative opulence of the Mazimbu complex in the midst of the dire poverty of Tanzania and its nationals.



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As stated in an earlier chapter, the Mazimbu Complex was important to the ANC cause, because it offered a more humanitarian side to an organisation engaged in an armed struggle. It also strengthened attempts to gain material assistance from the West, which was reluctant to be seen as supporting a 'terrorist' organisation. The result of these fundraising attempts made SOMAFSCO a showcase which many organisations endeavoured to support in different ways. Some supplied books, others clothing, building materials, food, household equipment and just about anything that could be of use to that community. The result was that SOMAFSCO tended to have an oversupply of some materials (like medicines, clothes, *etc.*) which were in very short supply elsewhere in Tanzania, particularly Morogoro.<sup>23</sup>

Considering that the communities surrounding Mazimbu were composed of peasants, living

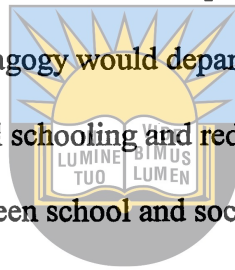
very difficult and hard lives, the differences in standard of living were stark, to say the least. The employment of Tanzanian labourers to do the dog's work in the complex tended to perpetuate the feeling of superiority amongst the South Africans.<sup>24</sup> These feelings went completely against the prevalent ideas of the committed left of the time. Of course the overwhelmingly predominant discourse at SOMAFCO was precisely that of the left, with most propounding various strains of Marxism.

The polytechnic approach was touted by the GDR, a model of education which sought to destigmatise manual labour. Three East German scholars, G. Dietrich, R. Kustner and H. Voigt presented a paper at a UNESCO conference in Paris on The 28th May 1980. Entitled *On the Democratisation of Education in the GDR, Experience in, results and tendencies of the democratisation of education, especially through the close linkage of school and life with special emphasis on the role of productive work*, it outlined the aims behind instilling the combination of mental and manual work.<sup>25</sup> They felt that

there is no doubt that polytechnic training is directly connected with the production practice, the pupils become immediately faced with a decisive phase of struggle in the construction of a socialist society. The high value of the means of production put into the pupil's hands and the strict demands made on the pupils' discipline, perseverance and reliability by the technological requirements of work in production, the demand of their instructors and teachers to terminate a finding in practice.<sup>26</sup>

This paper went on to emphasise that, through this instruction, students would be able to realise the economic importance of standardisation and co-operation, which showed itself in the international socialist division of labour. Obviously the perspective shown here firmly placed the approach in the socialist paradigm, which demanded that education be for the greater good of the whole society. It also appears to assume an essentially urban and industrial form of social organisation.

In contrast, the ideas of Patrick van Rensburg were predominantly posited on a rural environment. Van Rensburg, who started the Swaneng Hill School in Botswana in 1974, was probably responsible for introducing the education with production concept into the discourse of the ANC.<sup>27</sup> He later went on to form the Foundation For Education with Production (FEP) early in 1981. The premise of the Foundation was that education is never neutral, and that it either reproduces existing society or contributes to its change. Thus he felt that there was a need for a mass based pedagogy which would raise the cultural level of the whole population and give them the tools to understand and control the political, economic and social forces which determine their lives. This pedagogy would depart from the elitist forms and authoritarian methods of conventional schooling and redefine the relationship between teachers and learners, as well as between school and society.<sup>28</sup>



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Van Rensburg's endeavours and the general spirit of the time saw similar initiatives introduced in several African countries including Zambia, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Guinea-Bissau. In the case of Tanzania, FEP was instrumental in persuading the country to continue with its 'Education for self-reliance', which was akin to Julius Nyerere's Ujaama policies.<sup>29</sup> Zimbabwe's ZANU took the approach with it to government from its days in the bush war. Their liberation schools in the refugee camps in Mozambique, Zambia and Botswana laid the foundation for the education with production pilot schools.<sup>30</sup> Zimbabwe went on to found its own Zimbabwe Foundation for Education with Production (ZIMFEP), their patron being the then President Canaan Banana. They were "given mandate to experiment with projects that link education with production in order to provide models for a new school system which will be more relevant to the needs of independent Zimbabwe".<sup>31</sup>

The ANC was formally invited to nominate a trustee to FEP in the Board of Trustees meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 1983. FEP was also behind moves to establish a small plant producing cooking oil from sunflower at Mazimbu.<sup>32</sup> There is no doubt that the Zimbabwean example was encouraging to the FEP as it showed that initiatives taken during the liberation war facilitated their introduction in the post liberation period. Van Rensburg also attended some of the earlier annual NEDUC conferences and made some input in the implementation of the concept of Education with Production in the South African exile context.

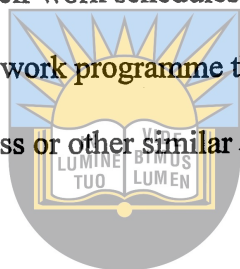
All the same, the SOMAFCO terrain was completely different to the experiences of the Zimbabwean liberation schools. Although SOMAFCO had a core group of highly politicised students who had practical experience of the struggle from home, this very understanding probably made them rebellious against any ideas that that might have appeared to be even remotely contrary to their well being. In South Africa manual work was deemed to be the natural occupation of black people and thus aversion to its institutionalisation in SOMAFCO cannot be underestimated.

Others feel that education with production fell on its face because the ANC "didn't really have pure ideas on how to do it".<sup>33</sup> That this idea was mainly political must have clashed with the perceptions of some of the teachers who had gained their experience of teaching in the old school, which discouraged 'corruption' of pure academic pursuits. The fact that SOMAFCO's whole conception was experimental enabled this issue to remain a topic of discussion for some time. Some argued that it was important to integrate vocational and intellectual work. They felt that getting to know the work in the farm and factories would

result in development of complete beings who appreciated their environment. On the other side were those who insisted that SOMAFCO was a school, that the primary objective of the students should be to learn, and that they should not be burdened with tiresome manual work which would not play any role in their examinations and in the subsequent search for scholarships in highly competitive, though accommodating institutions.

Also, manual labour could not be separated from the whole exile context, and from people's backgrounds and needs and the situation in Tanzania. The school complex was everything to most of the students. They were all far from home and did not have anything to call their own, being completely dependent on the ANC. Although they did not want for the necessities to keep body and soul alive, this type of existence must have been oppressive. To compound this, that the complex was surrounded by mountains made it seem the loneliest spot in the world.<sup>34</sup> Add to this the fact that some of the people in the community had very disturbed backgrounds, having been tortured, imprisoned or having lost loved ones to the system of apartheid. There were also very few people trained to help people cope with their demons from the past. Different groups on the campus tended to take political positions on Education with Production and the resultant polarisation led to divisions within the campus. These divisions tended to be latent, and were perhaps all the more irritating as a result, because Education with Production was in many ways a shibboleth which could not be overtly questioned in the political atmosphere of the place and time. This resulted in the issue becoming a sham, so that every time donor agencies from the Scandinavian or European countries came for a visit "suddenly everybody would flood out into the fields and pretend to dig, put on this wonderful apparent show of self-reliance".<sup>35</sup>

Also, SOMAFCO was in its early stages when education with production was being introduced, and there was obviously a lot of work to be done. The buildings for the whole complex had to be constructed as a matter of great urgency, and this needed serious, concerted daily effort. Bringing the students in at different stages and having to monitor their input to fit in with the requirement to learn would probably have needed extra personnel to act purely as trainers if the work was not to be delayed or disrupted. As students they might not have been able to take their work as seriously as would full time workers. It is thus not a coincidence that it was not only the students who resisted the work, but that the workers also complained that students disrupted their work schedules.<sup>36</sup> Eventually students were excluded from construction and their work programme therefore consisted of one period a week when they went out to slash grass or other similar landscaping activities within the campus.



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It could be said that in the end the whole concept of Education with Production fizzled out, especially when the demography of the complex became less homogenous with the advent of students from other parts of Africa, the sons and daughters of exiles. These students, some never having been to South Africa, did not really have the political grounding necessary to embrace selfless ideas like Education with Production. That the idea never really took off is borne out by the 1990 Consultancy Mission Report commissioned by UNESCO. In its chapter on 'Evaluation of Developments at SOMAFCO and Dakawa', in the section reporting on School Production Units, it is simply stated that "Students are not yet practically involved in Education with Production. The farm runs on paid labour".<sup>37</sup> Thus, to all intents and purposes the idea of education with production was stillborn.

## *Corporal Punishment*

Another area of conflict at Mazimbu was the issue of corporal punishment. The ANC, as a revolutionary organisation influenced by humanitarian educational ideas, readily accepted the abolition of corporal punishment. Dialogue with the students was deemed to be preferable to beating them. Paulo Freire, the guru of revolutionary education, enjoyed a strong following in ANC educational circles. Many of his precepts were adopted and used at SOMAFCO. He stated that:

Dialogue with the people is radically important to every authentic revolution. This is what makes it a revolution, as distinguished from a military coup. ... Sooner or later, a true revolution must initiate a courageous dialogue with the people. Its very legitimacy lies in that dialogue. It cannot fear the people, their expression, and their effective participation in power. It must be accountable to them, must speak frankly to them of its achievements, its mistakes, its miscalculations, and its difficulties.<sup>38</sup>

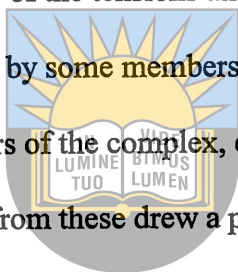
The president of the ANC, O.R. Tambo, also subscribed to this notion of dialogue. In conversation with the then Secretary of Education, Sindiso Mfenyana, he related to him an example, taken, interestingly, not from some proponent of left-wing educational ideas, but from his experience of mission education, of school governance at St Peters, the school in South Africa where he had been a teacher. He stated that though other black institutions like Healdtown, Lovedale, and St Johns were sporadically involved in strikes, St Peters had hardly any, because the students were made to feel that this was their school and they were given a role in deciding on some of the issues that affected them.<sup>39</sup>

At SOMAFCO, when students were given opportunities to decide on their own code

of conduct, they were able to come up with resolutions which were calculated to contribute to the school giving them proper education, and they in turn undertook to keep their dormitories and rooms clean, and not to smoke in the classrooms and halls. This outlook made the implementation of the policy of no corporal punishment seem quite easy. But in practise, things were more difficult.<sup>40</sup>

### *The Simons 'Commission'*

There was an incisive analysis of the tensions and problems at SOMAFCO in a report compiled by Jack Simons after a visit by some members of NEDUC in September 1986. He carried out an assessment of all sectors of the complex, conducting interviews with students, teachers and the administration, and from these drew a picture of the conditions and morale that permeated the school environment.



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From his interview with the students Simons heard that they were unhappy with the alleged failure of the school authorities to solve any of the problems presented to them. They also complained that leadership and guidance was absent, and that the teachers were remote and unable to socialise with the students.<sup>41</sup> 'The Vice-Principal was singled out for criticism for his apolitical stance and malice to students ...[they] proposed that he be relieved of his duties as Vice-Principal and be asked to make the teaching of English his full time occupation. The vice principal should be somebody who can solve political problems of both the staff and students'.<sup>42</sup> The students also complained that the school was not giving the required attention to their political upbringing. Because of this neglect, attendance at school was poor and student participation in ANC political gatherings was very low. A Student

Representative Council member also spoke at length about the shortcomings and inadequacies of staff and administration. Simons concluded, 'the spirit of adventure and excitement that stimulated the first intakes of students has dwindled, leaving only apathy, despair and symptoms of withdrawal'.<sup>43</sup>

Simons' next meeting was with 28 teachers, out of the staff compliment of 83 from the various sectors of SOMAFCO. The teachers agreed that they did not serve pupils to the extent they should, that they did not form a collective and that leadership was lacking. Some expressed resentment and suspicion about volunteer teachers. They felt that though students they did not belong to the ANC they were receiving preferential treatment as in the allocation of houses. One teacher complained of being grossly overworked. Though the teachers agreed that they had failed to enter into social relations with students, they pointed to the lack of time, which made them unable to offer the necessary remedial classes to students handicapped by poor grounding and inadequate preparation for the work they were called upon to do. The teachers also complained that they were cut off from the administration, which was generally viewed as an autocratic bureaucracy.

When Simons met with nine members of the administration there were several overall conclusions which he presented to them. In an apparent change of tone which may seem surprising to the reader, but which was very much a part of the discourse of the ANC in exile at the time, he argued that there was an urgent need to look into the operation of subversive forces, as well as into weaknesses in the administrative structure. He also alluded to the negative attitude of the students and their refusal to co-operate.<sup>44</sup>

Outside these meetings there were also general meetings with other members of the Mazimbu complex. One of the more bizarre complaints was about the activities of a secretive grouping calling itself the Social Order Committee (SOC), also known as the Law Enforcement Group. They were accused of conducting arbitrary arrests of suspects and of removing them at night to Dakawa. The students also complained bitterly about the actions of the SOC, which they accused of creating an atmosphere of terror, causing the students to withhold co-operation with the administration.<sup>45</sup> This is probably the same grouping that Terry Bell said carried out vicious beatings of people in Mazimbu.<sup>46</sup> In a letter of resignation dated 23 March 1982 to the then principal, Tim Maseko, the Bells listed their indignation about the gruesome assaults meted out to people who were accused of dagga smoking, even though their case was before the college disciplinary committee.<sup>47</sup> These people, like the victims of the SOC, were dragged out in the early hours of the morning, the perpetrators, according to Bell, still trapped in the psychological past of dawn raids carried out by the apartheid henchmen. It can be argued that exile, with its dangers and uncertainties, brought about various levels of anxiety and neurosis, manifested by some in ways that completely overstepped the bounds of duty. This no doubt heightened the already depressed and apprehensive atmosphere in Mazimbu.

### *Conclusion*

All these factors, though disruptive, did not stop the daily grind in Mazimbu. The struggle to survive carried on and more projects were conceptualised that it was hoped would make Mazimbu a better place. Teachers continued coming and going and students continued to strive for scholarships. The community manifested all the common problems that

accompanied compound existence.<sup>48</sup> In the meantime, tensions continued to permeate the complex, until it was time to go back home.

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Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> ANC/SOM/1, NEDUC 1, 03.10.78.

<sup>2</sup> ANC/SOM/75, "Role of Somafco" - Discussion Paper, May 1979.

<sup>3</sup> ANC/SOM/NEDUC 1, 03.10.78.

<sup>4</sup> ANC/SOM/20, " An assessment of the organization, work and political direction of the ANC education department", London Education Committee, October 1979.

<sup>5</sup> ANC/SOM/NEDUC 1, 03.10.78.

<sup>6</sup> ANC/SOM/20, London Education Committee, NEDUC 2 Supplement. September 1979.

<sup>7</sup> Interview, SM, LP / Mrs. Njobe, Cape town, In this interview Mrs. Njobe related an anecdote from her teaching days in a South African Teachers College where, for their teaching materials they were told to use books from white primary schools, and in other instances to 'improvise' (read, make up their own methodological approaches).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Mayibuye Centre Archives, ANC papers, Box 4, Department of Education, Reports, 1978-1981, 26.03.80. (Hereafter Mayibuye Box 4)

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Int. SM, LP / Mrs. Njobe.

<sup>12</sup> Mayibuye, Box 4.

<sup>13</sup> Int. SM, LP, BM / Terry and Barbara Bell, Cape Town, 10.03.98.

<sup>14</sup> Mayibuye, Box 54, Department of Education (1986-89) file 1, June-December 1986.

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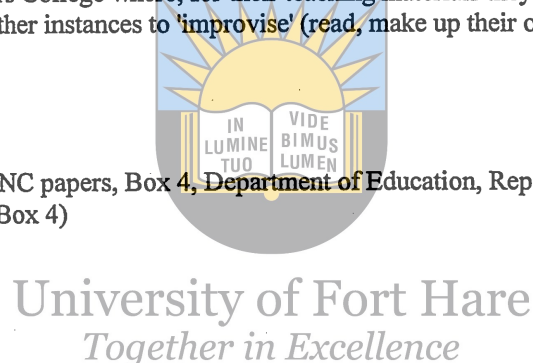
<sup>19</sup> Int. Mwinuka.

<sup>20</sup> ANC/SOM/20/Reports of the Secretary General at NEDUC IV.

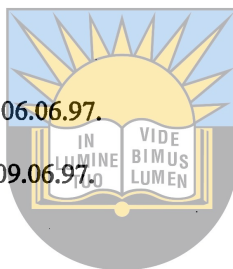
<sup>21</sup> *Letsema* - concept used to signal days of joint communal work, mostly in the farm during harvest time, usually on special commemorative days.

<sup>22</sup> Mayibuye, Box 50, Dept of Educ. (1981-1983), File 4, January-June 1982; Int. LP, BM / Dr Spokazi Sokupa, East London, 02.06.97.

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- <sup>40</sup> For a more in-depth examination of the corporal punishment issue see B. Maaba's *The Students of Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College, 1978-92*, M.A Thesis, 1999, specifically the chapter entitled *The Secondary School*.
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- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p.3.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6.
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## Conclusion

The task of documenting the history of SOMAFCO is complex. Throughout this study the approach has been to try and reconcile the political-cum-revolutionary aspirations of the school with the actual realities that faced the residents of the complex. On one level, the immediate reason for constructing the school was to accommodate the deluge of students who were coming out of South Africa in the wake of the 1976 student revolts. This is the task Sindiso Mfenyana, head of Professional Bodies, was given, in particular through developing a Department of Education and Culture. Previously, educational work had mainly consisted of the acquisition of scholarships through which the ANC could place its aspirant students, and no attention had been given to actually nurturing these students academically in the bosom of the organisation. This had been a comparatively simple bureaucratic task of allocating people to places that were available.

The ANC realised, however, that by opening a school they would open up other avenues through which they could garner support for their cause. The organisation continued to rely on the Eastern Bloc for support after the foundation of the school, but, ironically, the school was an important component in attempts to woo the West. Even though Eastern Bloc countries did their best to provide adequate support for the ANC, this could never have been enough. With South African armed strength, it must have been obvious that military capitulation was not going to take place in the near future. The route to take was to galvanise the support of world governments, which would result

in more pressure being exerted on South Africa to desert apartheid. SOMAFCO was an element in this strategy.

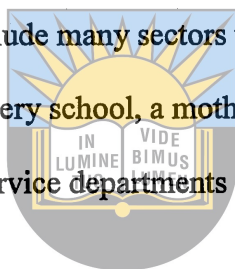
The South African retort to the ANC international onslaught had been to constantly brand the organisation and those in it as communist. The '*rooi gevaar*' (red danger) syndrome was so thoroughly ingrained in the South African psyche, that all known communists within the ANC, like Joe Slovo and Chris Hani were portrayed as devils incarnate. South African school children, youth clubs, the civil service and other groupings were continuously exhorted as to the dangers of communism. Anti-communist sentiments easily permeated into white life, in that it was easy to connect these to the perpetuation and protection of their privileges and good life.

SOMAFCO offered the ANC the chance to display their versatility and to demonstrate that they were a mass based organisation with a variety of sectors, not all of which were necessarily involved in the military struggle. The ANC must also have realised that SWAPO and ZAPU received substantial support from the United Nations because of their acknowledged exile communities that required help. The plight of seemingly helpless children was a potent medium through which to attract support from a variety of organisations and governments.

The ANC claimed that their education was aimed at producing well-trained professionals who would be capable of taking on essential responsibilities both during the struggle and after. They also felt that education should aim to promote and develop a

revolutionary consciousness through the cultivation of the spirit of community service. This latter objective was meant to move ANC cadres away from perceived capitalist tendencies such as individualism and the pursuit of personal wealth. Those in the ANC who inclined towards an africanist perspective, tended in the same fundamental spirit to call on people to return to allegedly traditional African values of collective sharing.

SOMAFSCO faced many challenges. The immediate task in 1978 was to educate secondary school children who were not old enough to work or join MK. Over the next thirteen years the place grew to include many sectors that make up a normal integrated society. There was a crèche, a nursery school, a mothers' centre, a primary school, a furniture factory, a farm, several service departments and typical ANC substructures like the Youth and Women's Sections.



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The people who made up the working staff came through the years from all over the world. There were the so-called solidarity workers, comprising people sponsored by organisations and governments sympathetic to the ANC cause, who came to assist in those areas where specialised knowledge was needed. These included architects, engineers, doctors, teachers and instructors in specific vocational areas. These people gave up years of their lives to be part of the SOMAFSCO experiment. There were also the Tanzanian workers who made up the bulk of the working force. These, bussed in from the surrounding villages, unwittingly came to be the lowest strata of the Mazimbu community, expected to do all the menial work in the complex.

This study has also attempted to build up a picture of the SOMAFCO phenomenon. On one level, particularly in chapters one and four, there has been a narrative of the events and activities that took place and the effect this had on the people who lived there. Dealing with the formation of operational structures has necessarily required this clinical account of the steps taken to realise objectives.

On another level, this thesis has examined peoples' backgrounds, developments in curriculum design, the organisation of the Women's Section, and the grappling with tensions inherent in the operation. This has been done so as to probe the imagined future inherent in policy, and to compare this with the intractable reality which actually confronted the school. In all these encounters the aim has been to see to what extent the guiding principles of ANC education policy have been successful, and the hindrances that at times denied them the chance to germinate. Similarly, it has been suggested that political purity frequently came up against complications generated by the introverted nature of an enclosed compound. The realities of isolating people in a politically friendly but environmentally and to some extent socially difficult context like Mazimbu, with the extreme weather patterns, the prevalence and recurrence of diseases like malaria, and the ever present threat of South African Defence Force cross-border raids can never be underestimated.

However, creativity and tolerance must be stressed as well as difficulties. Within SOMAFCO there were numerous ongoing debates about the appropriate educational and organisational theories upon which to base practice. These debates, and even the failure

at times to enforce policy, demonstrated the flexibility of the organisation and the recognition that people could agree to disagree.

Having said that, there was a disturbing tendency at times of enforcing, even in the face of clear opposition, issues that were unpopular with the general mass of students. For instance, the presence of sinister groupings like the Public Order Unit, which carried out corporal punishment, sometimes dragging the presumed sinners out of their beds at midnight, suggests other problems. Even though the ANC clearly stated that corporal punishment was to be abolished, there were still some people who indulged in it. It became one of those problems that would not go away throughout the history of the school.

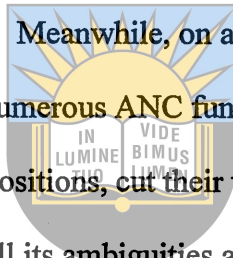


Another interesting issue which dogged the ANC continuously was the degree to which their women's organisation could claim to have moved out of the paternalistic overlordship of the parent body. Despite claims to the contrary, the ANC never really dealt with the women's question and was forever sidelining it in favour of the national question. The debates raised in this study do not attempt to extol the virtues of one approach over another, but simply compare the stated intent to the practical application, that is, whether the WS did in fact practice, or was allowed to practice, the avowed non-sexism of the ANC in the context of Mazimbu.

Another major bone of contention that is briefly examined is the attempt of the ANC to inculcate a holistic approach to education, by breaking down the artificial

boundaries between mental and manual work in the school environment. The reasons for failure of the undertaking have been examined and explained where it is possible to do so.

The one major question that remains unanswered is whether the whole project was worthwhile, and to what extent the ANC, now that it is in government, has transferred its experiences in SOMAFCO to the present education system? These are issues that remain to be studied by scholars, whilst also grappling with the realities that have confronted the ANC in office. Meanwhile, on another level, the legacy of SOMAFCO cannot be in doubt. Numerous ANC functionaries, in politics, administration and other spheres, some in senior positions, cut their teeth at SOMAFCO, as students, teachers, or administrators. With all its ambiguities and even contradictions, SOMAFCO remains a fascinating and important experiment in building a new educational model for a free South Africa.



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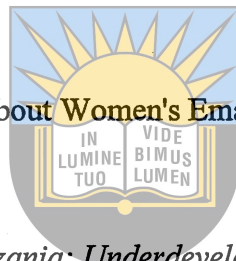
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Project Management Department: 1-25

Tanzanian Farm Department: 1-7

Health Department: 1-7

Works Department: 1-5

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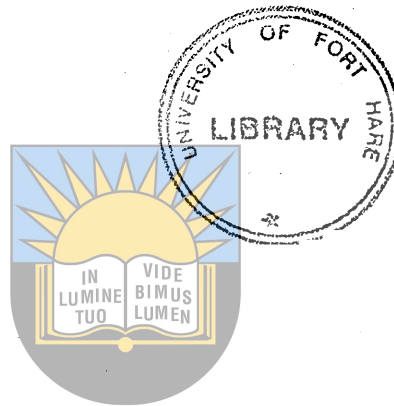
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