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OUR STAND ON FOREIGN ARTISTS

AZAPO

(Azanian People's Organization)

The Black people of Azania have always regarded Black Americans as their soul brothers and they have always admired their stand against apartheid. These blacks took vows never to come to Azania as long as there was apartheid. It must be understood that apartheid is not merely barring physical contact, but it is also a vehicle of exploitation and humiliation of the indigenous people of this country i.e., the Black people who are the rightful owners of the land.

Today the law has not changed, in fact it has worsened. But the Americans have changed their stand, thereby collaborating with the oppressive, racist regime of Pretoria. For, indeed, from all the artists and sportsmen who come to this country, only the individual white or black capitalist and the government benefit. The capitalists get the money, the government the good window dressing and the tax.

We in AZAPO believe that the liberation of this country is in the hands of the Black people inside the country. We expect that outside people should listen to us when we call for boycotts against this government, unless they are prepared to support it. We are doing our spring-cleaning and we do not want people to be moving in and out of this country. We want the Black brothers and sisters in America to come back when we have cleared the house, they must come to a clean, comfortable house. Right now the country stinks, it is full of muck and filth. Granted, most of them are talented but, must they stoop so low as to side with the enemy?

There has been a move by the South African government to window-dress, that apartheid laws are gradually been relaxed. There has also been a move by some of the overseas artists and sportsmen to come and see for themselves that the laws have changed. In fact, some of them who have been here have claimed that things have changed for Blacks in Azania.

In the past eight years the government has allowed mixed audiences in theatres and sportfields, especially when the artist or sportsman is from outside the country.

In these eight years we have witnessed the influx of these overseas artists who disregarded the call from the Blacks of this country not to come here. Some of them have confessed that they

were here "just for the dollar," that they came because now they can sing for mixed audiences like "back homo," or that they could be seen by anybody who liked, or that they can perform anywhere they liked irrespective of the kind of government because they are not politicians but artists, and many such stories.

Some of them have encountered incidents of racism, like Betty Wright, who was asked to leave the white canteen of the SADC. They have seen the difference between the living conditions of Blacks and Whites, but one wonders what messages they have carried back home because their brothers and sisters still come here.

There have been arguments from some of these artists that they will only perform for Blacks and will only come when brought by Black promoters. Some have said that they will not take all the money to their country but will pump some of it for the Black cause. We cannot accept these sugar-coated reasons for the rejection of cultural exchange with overseas and foreign artists is not only economic, but political.

If these overseas artists are concerned with the plight of the Black nation in this country they have to listen to them, they should not tell them what they should be doing. In fact, the Blacks in this country have lost faith in them, especially our brothers and sisters in America. They have talked against oppression, they have talked of human rights, of freedom but, have failed to impress us in that they have always acted against us. I will mention Jesse Jackson who came here to tell us that we should unite with the homeland leaders against the government.

We want total support and commitment in our move to have S.A. completely isolated in sport, culture, etc. We are urging the international community to support us in our struggle by bringing this government to its knees by breaking ties at all levels with it. We have also realised that most governments pay lip-service to the isolation.

By coming here, these people present themselves as part of the exploitative system. They have to recognize the laws. Thus, they help perpetuate them.

They have also come to help the capitalists empty the already empty pockets of the Blacks.

The multiracial shows give people a temporary and false feeling. That for a while Black people can be equal to whites, sitting side by side after paying equal admission fees, while the law regards them as unequals. After the show Blacks are faced by the terrible laws that are laid down for them--curfew laws, influx control, to mention but a few. All this makes people

think that the freedom they want is the freedom of mixing with the Whites and not of letting the whites stay in this country on their terms. We do not want our people exposed to these dangers.

We shall continue talking against cultural, economic and sporting ties between the S.A. government and countries abroad until our country Azania is free. We want these artists to realise that the Black masses are angry and are acting against anything and everybody who interferes with their wishes, efforts and hopes of getting their country back. You either support them or oppose them. The likes of Champion Jack Dupree who had a contingent of police to protect him and his audience will be accordingly dealt with by us and by posterity of course.

To our brothers and sisters who went into exile after they could not tolerate the laws of the country or, when they wanted to further develop their talents abroad because of limitations here, we will not allow you to come and perform here. Firstly, you have taken up foreign citizenship and fall within the category of the laws of the countries which gave you citizenship. Secondly, because you left because of the laws that were against you as Blacks, and because the laws have not changed, your coming here will only be exposing you as inconsistent and spineless people. You will be welcome after we shall have achieved our freedom.

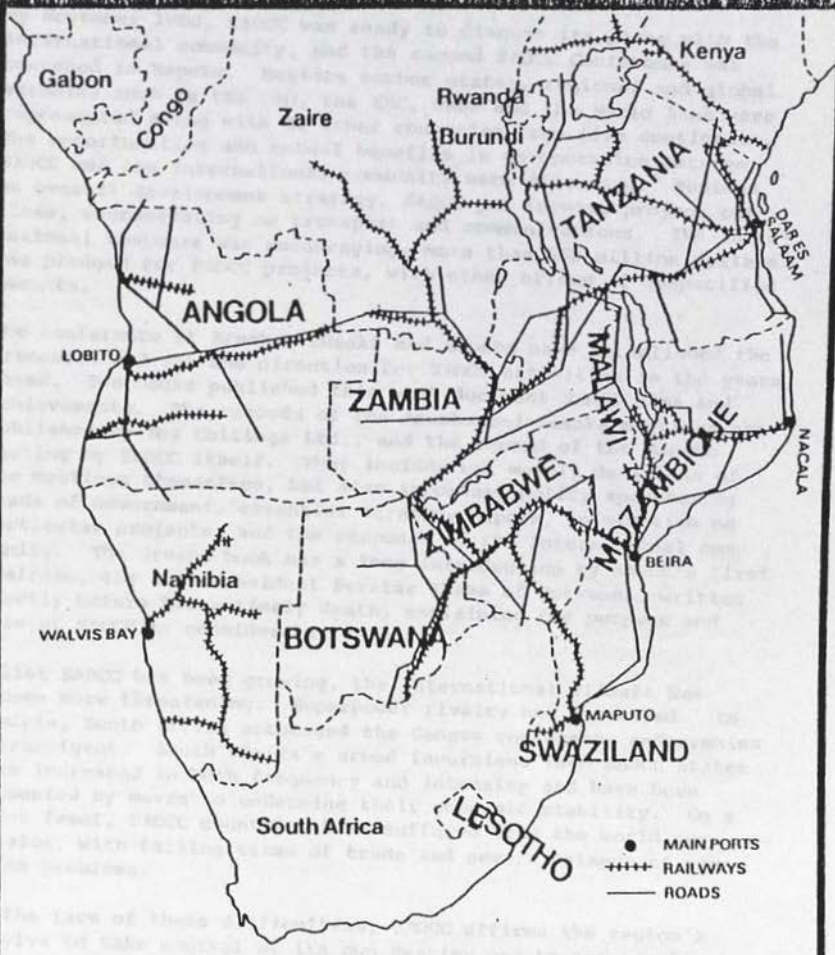
DO NOT COLLABORATE WITH THE FASCIST, RACIST REGIME.

Released by the department of Youth And Culture
AZAPO, Johannesburg

In July 1978, the first SWAC Conference was called in Durban in the Natal province, as a direct way to extend the struggle for liberation from the political to the economic sphere. It marked the beginning of international co-operation in developing and restructuring the economic structure of the region. It was followed by the first SWAC summit in Durban in April 1980, which besides adopting the SWAC declaration, also decided on a plan of action.

It has been acknowledged from the start that, in the words of the Chairman's opening speech at Durban, "regionalism is 'built on concrete projects and specific programmes rather than on guidelines' which are 'vague and nebulous'." The result accordingly identified areas where regional co-operation was most urgent and would be most fruitful. The most important was transport and communications, and a Southern Africa Transport and Communications Commission was set up in August. The other

SADCC 2-Maputo



Edited by Aloysius Kgarebe