

ANC Elects a Balanced Leadership

by Keith Somerville

HERE were no surprises for delegates to the African National Congress's first national conference inside South Africa for 30 years. But President Nelson Mandela gave them what they wanted — pride in their movement and a firm commitment that the ANC would stick to its conditions on the resumption of constitutional talks with the government.

Later, at a rally in Durban, he emphasised that negotiations had not been ruled out. Once the government released remaining political prisoners and took action to end township violence, the ANC would return to negotiations with its head held high and not as paupers begging for crumbs.

Mandela's position was enhanced by the national conference, which ended on July 7. Although he came under some criticism for autocratic attitudes, Mandela's approach to negotiations was endorsed. His unanimous election to succeed the ailing Oliver Tambo as president has put him on a par with F.W. de Klerk as the elected leader of his movement.

The long election procedure at the conference was notable for its honesty and its production of a balanced leadership. This was no accident. Nobody stood against Mandela as president, but the post of deputy president was more problematic.

Commentators had predicted a fight between the pro and anti negotiation forces, with the head of the ANC's international department, Thabo Mbeki, representing the negotiators, and Chris Hani, chief of staff of the military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, representing the militants.

Mbeki, son of the veteran ANC and communist leader Govan Mbeki, had for years been seen as the most able and

Changes in South Africa have started to come thick and fast. In the past few days the long-standing sports boycotts have been lifted, and Washington has relaxed some of its economic sanctions. In the meantime the African National Congress has held a historic conference in Durban and has elected a leadership which reflects the approach the ANC will take in the crucial month ahead.

modern-minded of the ANC leaders in exile. Prior to the legalisation of the ANC inside South Africa, he had been tipped as a possible successor to the Tambo-Mandela generation at the top of the ANC. He may still achieve that, though

he has denied any ambitions in that direction.

After the return of the leading exiles, Chris Hani grew in stature as a possible competitor for influence and power. Unlike the commander of Umkhonto, Joe Modise, he had prospered as chief of staff. Modise had been seen as inefficient, authoritarian and as someone likely to abuse power, whereas Hani was seen as energetic, radical and effective. He was popular with many of the guerrillas and, more strikingly, among the comrades in the townships.

Since his return and his adoption of a posture which is strongly critical of compromise, Hani's support among the comrades has grown. Operating mainly from Transkei (where rumours suggested that he was maintaining Umkhonto forces in readiness should negotiations break down), Hani has been seen as the voice of the militants against Mbeki's position of negotiating the ANC into power.

A fight between them for the post of deputy president would have been damaging at this stage, when the ANC needs to overcome its failure to organise quickly and efficiently, its problem of merging the exiled and the internal wings of the movement and of reconciling the negotiators with the militants. So shortly before the conference, it was stated that they would not be

standing, and instead 79-year-old Walter Sisulu was elected deputy president.

Mandela and Sisulu make up an experienced and resolute team. They embody the old ANC but also a commitment to negotiations, though on the ANC's terms. They are leaders with whom both the moderates and the radicals can work.

But Sisulu, six years older than Mandela, can only occupy the position for a couple of years. He looks frail and cannot take the workload that Mandela can, let alone Mbeki or Hani. So he may step down within the next couple of years, and the race will be on again.

This was clear from election for the national executive committee. Hani topped the list of 50 elected members (140 candidates stood for 50 elected positions — 40 others are members by right of the offices to which they have been appointed or elected in the provinces and different ANC organs). Hani received the vote of 94.7 per cent of the 2,000 or so delegates. Mbeki was a close second with 93 per cent. Third was Joe Slovo, with 89.8 per cent.

Nearly 30 of those elected are members of or have close links with the Communist Party, but this does not indicate CP control. Many CP members are ANC members first and are fiercely loyal to the movement, and see no contradiction in joint mem-

bership. They like Slovo, favour negotiations, while some non-Communists are more radical.

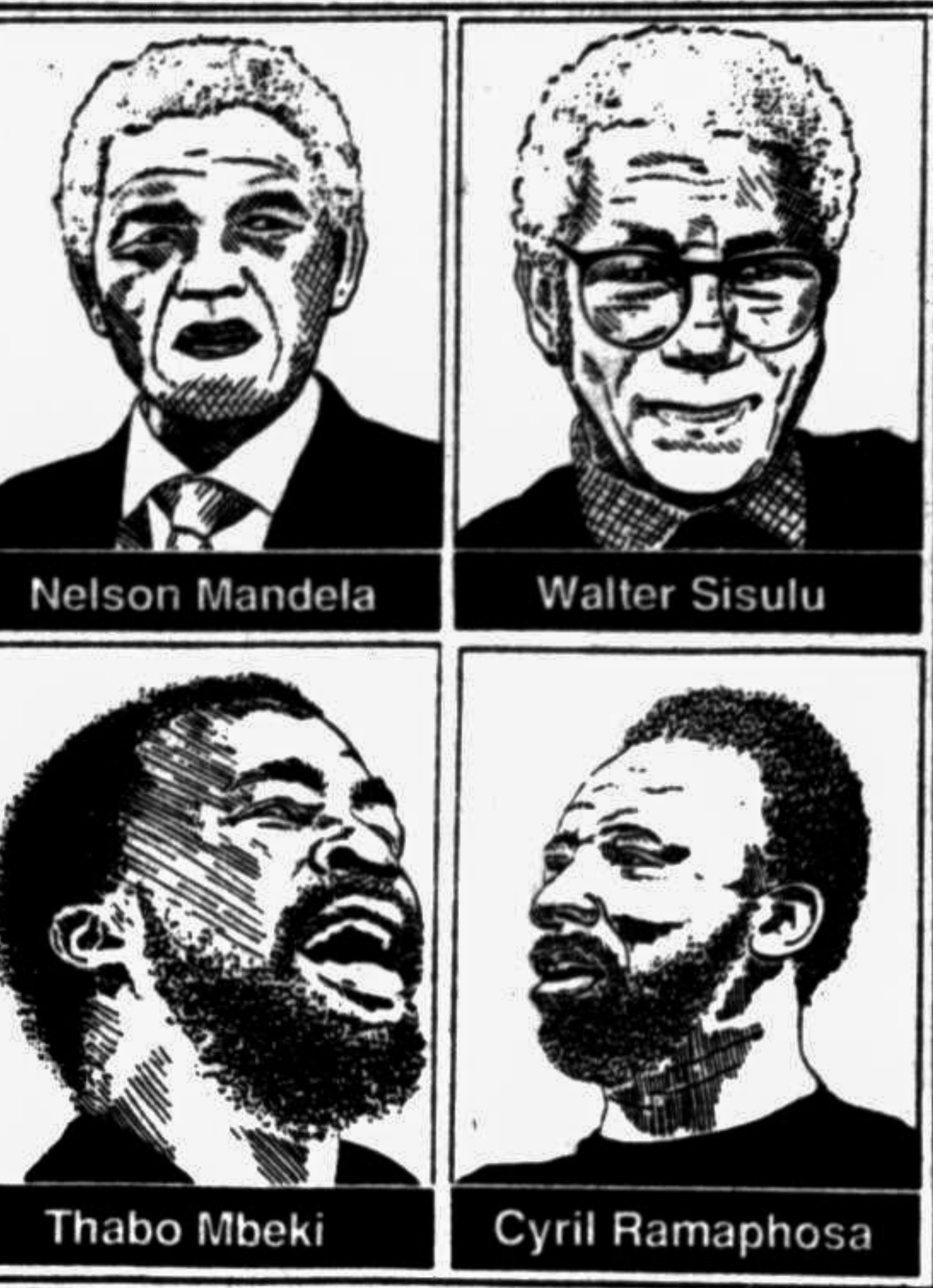
Other NEC members elected included Pello Jordan (who has been critical of the CP recently), former UDF Secretary General Popo Molefe, press spokesperson Gill Marcus and her colleague from the press department Sakkai Macozoma, Winnie Mandela (who came 26th out of the 50), Albertina Sisulu, Ronnie Kasrils (Umkhonto chief of intelligence) and the veteran Maoist from Natal, Harry Gwala. All in all, a mixture of moderates and radicals, exiles and former UDF leaders, communists and non-communists and leading women (though only 9 out of 50).

Perhaps most importantly, in the leadership post, the respected and efficient miners' leader Cyril Ramaphosa was elected secretary general. The 38-year-old lawyer built up the National Union of Mine-workers after black unions were legalised. It became a strong union and a major instrument for political action. In contrast with the poorly organised ANC, the NUM was efficient, effective and financially secure.

Many hope that Ramaphosa will not only be the main UDF/trades union voice on the NEC but also the man who makes the ANC machine work. His deputy (and another part of the balancing act) is the ANC intelligence chief Jacob Zuma. A man whose past record entitles him to high office, he is also the main Zulu representative at the ANC's top table.

KEITH SOMERVILLE is a writer and broadcaster on African affairs and a regular contributor to the New African and Africa Contemporary Record.

The ANC's new leadership



South Korea

Enter the Little Dragons

THE opening of an 'Asian Week' trade festival in Seoul recently belied the increasing alarm in South Korea over the explosive growth of the economies of South-east Asia.

After a decade of double-digit economic growth, South Korea — one of Asia's so-called 'little dragons' — is losing its roar and analysts say its economy is at a dangerous crossroads.

Stealing much of its fire are the littler dragons of South-east Asia — Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia — which have been growing at or near double-digit rates the past three to five years.

Much of that growth has been due to a dramatic increase in light manufacturing and the production of the sort of export-oriented electronic and household goods that South Korea itself excelled at until it fell victim to its own success.

South Korea's tremendous export-led growth throughout the 1980's led to trade friction with its largest trading partner, the United States, which reacted to mushrooming trade deficits with Seoul by forcing the latter open its domestic market to freer trade — and imports.

The biggest beneficiary of that opening hasn't been US industry but the littler dragons

of South-east Asia, imports from which are flooding into South Korea, wreaking havoc not only on the country's balance of payments but, more worrisome, threatening the profitability of key segments of South Korean industry.

The six nations that make up the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN) — Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Brunei, and the Philippines — together constitute South Korea's third largest export market. But imports from those countries now exceed South Korea's exports to the region.

Moreover, these imports are rising rapidly in value and are increasingly manufactured goods of the sort which compete directly with Korean-made goods — but are often cheaper.

In 1990, South Korea's exports to ASEAN totalled US\$5.06 billion, up 27.4 per cent from the year before, while imports from the region increased 22.6 per cent to US\$5.08 billion, according to South Korean trade and industry ministry statistics.

South Korea's 'dragon' economy is at a dangerous crossroads, seriously threatened by the aggressively industrialising countries of South-east Asia. Robin Elsham of IPS reports from Tokyo.

The first quarter trade deficit of US\$114 million was almost five times that registered in the whole of last year and represented an even more alarming trend when examined more closely.

A sharp rise in the portion of industrial goods amongst the ASEAN imports constituted a dangerous threat to the Korean manufacturing sector, according to economic analysts, commenting on the latest quarterly trade figures.

Industrial goods, which made up only 15 per cent of the value of imports from ASEAN nations in the mid-1980's, soared to 45.4 per cent last year, far surpassing the average 8.9 per cent gain in the proportion of manufactured goods to all imports.

This threat to South Korea's manufacturing sector will only

increase with time, according to Im Dong Sung, director of the Samsung Economic Institute in Seoul.

"Their (ASEAN nations) indigenous competitiveness has been beefed up by aggressive export drives and the attraction of foreign capital and expertise," said Sung.

"It will be further strengthened by US, European and Japanese companies that have production plants in the region," he added.

The threat from ASEAN couldn't have come at a worse time for South Korea which, over the first four months this year, suffered a trade deficit of US\$6.04 billion dollars, exceeding the government's targeted deficit of six billion dollars for the entire year.

Business analysts expect the trade crisis to intensify in coming months due to two po-

litical factors. Seoul's chief trade negotiator, Park Soo Gil, recently remarked that it was his "personal view" that allowing rice imports amounting to three to five per cent of South Korean consumption will be unavoidable once Tokyo agrees to do the same.

Confronted with the alarming increase in its trade deficit, Seoul has been aggressively cultivating new markets

in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, China and Vietnam — socialist or formerly socialist countries all fired with a new zeal for international trade.

Seoul had been particularly aggressive in courting Moscow, promising to provide a one billion dollar bank loan this year as part of a three-year, three-billion dollar assistance package.

Political commentators in South Korea have remarked that such generous aid from Seoul to such an ailing and unstable trade partner as the Soviet Union is evidence of how seriously threatened South Korea sees its current economic situation.

OPINION

Automatic Rice Mills: Problems and Prospects

Automatic rice milling system is not the traditional age-old process of husking paddy. This industry can prospectively put far reaching contribution towards fulfilment of national requirement of self-sufficiency in food and through proper utilisation of its wastes it can save huge amount of valuable foreign exchange. In consideration of these aspects of automatic rice milling system, a special stress was laid on this industry in the Second Five-Year Plan and subsequently in Interim Two-Year Development Plan and an amount of Tk. 22 crore was earmarked for investment towards enhancement of further five lac tons production capacity in this industrial sector. Having been encouraged by the said industrial policy of the government the enthusiasts came forward for establishment of automatic rice milling industry.

In Bangladesh which is mainly an agricultural country with an undeveloped industrial sector and which remains always perplexed with food deficiency, establishment as well as expansion of automatic rice milling industry is undoubtedly the crying need towards meeting the national requirement. Because, through this process the best utilisation of our staple food stuff is not only ensured but it also lays the foundation for establishment of other kinds of relevant industries. By ensuring constant supply of adequate pure rice bran, it can help establishment of bran-oil industry. It is also feasible to establish sodium silicate industry by utilising of bran.

In view of the above realities, automatic rice milling industry deserves constant government help, co-operation and patronisation. But, ill luck would have it, due to defective government food policy — not related with actual conditions — and also because of lack of real co-operation and patronisation from the government/concerned ministry this very important industrial sector has now become 'stuck'.

In Bangladesh, about 50 automatic rice mills have so far

been established. The total amount of capital investment would be near about Taka 50 crore, of which 60/70% was made available from Investment Development Organisation and nationalised commercial & industrial banks, and the rest 30/40% was invested by the entrepreneurs themselves. In most cases, the small capitalists have invested their whole life's savings in this industry.

At present, this industrial sector faces complete "uncertainty". As a result, on one hand the future of crores of Taka of government investment has become uncertain; on the other, the investors having just small capital are going to be bankrupt and beggars, and also thousands of labourers engaged in this industry have already been thrown out of employment.

In our country, generally, where investment of capital is a very discouraging matter, such unfavorable circumstance will not only cause colossal financial loss to the concerned industrialists, investors and capital lending banks/organizations, but will also discourage establishment of new industries to the great detriment of the national development at large.

Hence, in order to safeguard the interest of state-owned capital investment organisations, ensure security of small private capitals, encourage private investment in industries, create fields for more employment, and ensure attainment of self-sufficiency in food, it is now considered to be the responsibility of the Industries Ministry to make suitable provisions for protection and security of the automatic rice milling industry. It is earnestly hoped by the affected agencies that in the greater national interest the Industries Ministry, capital investment organisations/banks, Food Ministry/Directorate will come forward, without any further delay, to take concerted and constructive decisions in the matter.

Safi Islam
Thana Para, Pabna.

To the Editor...

Letters for publication in these columns should be addressed to the Editor and legibly written or typed with double space. For reasons of space, short letters are preferred, and all are subject to editing and cuts. Pseudonyms are accepted. However, all communications must bear the writer's real name, signature and address.

Moral development and UN

Sir, It is a fact that at present immorality is the root of all sorts of disorder, dishonesty, injustice and corruption at individual, social and global level. Moral degradation has become a serious threat to our social and global peace and discipline. Moral pollution is more dangerous than environmental pollution.

Meanwhile, it is heartening to know from news items in various dailies that Dr. Abu Obaidul Huque, Professor and Coordinator of the Institute for Advancement of Science and Technology Teaching has sent a detailed proposal, viz. a "Moral Development Approach (MDA)", to the UN Secretary General. It is really a very timely step. No social and world peace can be established without moral development of the people.

Dr. Huque has sent a copy of this proposal to the Bangladesh Foreign Ministry to forward it to the United Nations with appropriate recommendation. For kind information and valued consideration he has also sent copies of the proposal to the Honourable

President, the Prime Minister and several members of the Parliament. We hope that the Bangladesh Government and Foreign Ministry will forward this very important proposal to the UN, and will follow and pursue it for its implementation.

Further, we believe that all nations of the world will come forward to cooperate with the United Nations to serve this noble cause.

S. M. A. Faiz
Dean, Faculty of Biological Sciences, University of Dhaka.

VAT at what cost?

Sir, The metal marketing weeklies indicate that the current export price of steel materials from European coal and steel community of EEC, is comparatively much less compared to local producers' price. At the moment reinforcing MS rods or wire rods or merchant bars are available at US dollar 285.00 FOB per ton including exporter's commission. Thus the landed cost excluding duties, taxes etc. is around Tk 13,000.00 per MT. On the other hand, price of the locally produced billet, the

raw material for MS rods or wire rods, exceeds Tk 16,000.00 per MT. And the foreign exchange component is more than the dollar cost in case of finished products if one calculates the cost of all materials, services, incidentals etc. In the context of the above should we continue to calculate VAT at various stages involving poor productivity and poor performances? Since dollar is just available in SEM locally we should consider what items we should produce because there is no fun in producing items at a higher than world market price!

Sadik Ale
Moghbazar, Dhaka.

A patient's questions

Sir, As a patient (or as escort to patients), I am more or less a regular visitor to medical clinics (medical practitioners, GPs, specialists, dentists), chambers, and pharmaceutical shops where the doctors attend. Some are large medical centres operated by a number of professionals. I have a few questions to ask, in public interest.

a) How the income tax authorities find out how many patients visit a doctor, and how much fees a doctor earns, as no numbered receipt is generally given to the patients for amounts paid? I feel embarrassed to ask for a receipt.

b) Can doctors sell medicines? One doctor tried to sell me banned imported medicines, recommending

those were more effective. It is a lucrative business.

c) Although the GPs and specialists display their nameplates with the professional qualifications after their names, I have found more than one 'dentist' not displaying their qualification in writing on the nameplate, signboard or prescription. However some doctors display their registration numbers. It would be reassuring for the patient to know the qualifications of the doctor attending him/her.

d) In multi-clinics, it is difficult to identify who is 'assistant' and who is doctor. In some large dental clinics, unqualified attendants might be working on the patient, under the supervision of the doctor who is busy somewhere around, or attending another patient. A nameplate on the body, and/or a dress code would ally the misgivings of the patients. It is rude to ask 'Are you the doctor or the assistant?'

I should not be asking these questions on routine practices. There should be no scope for malpractices. Some sort of body or organisation should be looking after the patients' interests. I have heard many stories of various degrees of malpractices; some from doctor friends, who accuse some of their professional colleagues. Perhaps some investigative reporting would improve the private medical service. The majority of the patients can hardly afford the 'modern' medical bills.

A. Masuz
Dhaka.