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Paper of the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC

CHRIS HANI 1942 – 1993

The cowardly murder of comrade Chris Hani on Easter Saturday came as a great shock. It has generated enormous anger among the working people throughout South Africa.

It was as leader of the South African Communist Party, the first to be formed in Africa, that comrade Hani was the target of the fascists' bullets. His death is one of the greatest losses our movement has suffered in the recent period.

A lifetime of struggle

Amongst the masses comrade Hani was second only to Nelson Mandela in popularity. He was regarded in townships and villages across South Africa as a man of the people, born in poverty and a fighter since the age of 15.

The son of illiterate working-class parents, who lived in terrible hardship in Transkei, Hani joined the ANC Youth League in 1957 while still at school. Later he was expelled from Fort Hare university for his political activity. "It was here," he wrote, "that I got exposed to Marxist ideas and the scope and nature of the racist capitalist system."

In 1961 he joined the SA Communist Party and the next year the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe. He was arrested under the Suppression of Communism Act and sentenced to 18 months in prison. While on bail pending an appeal he escaped from the country.

For the next 28 years he organised the ANC's forces in exile, as well as fighting in Zimbabwe in 1967 against Ian Smith's white-minority regime. He survived three assassination attempts. He was a member of the ANC National Executive from 1974 and was appointed head of Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1987.

Revolutionary

On his return from exile in 1990 he maintained his reputation. He was known as a militant revolutionary. He gained huge popularity among workers and youth as leader of MK, and for his stand against the NP regime and its surrogates.

At the time of the Boipatong massacre he made it clear that the NP government should be held responsible for the killing. He said: "By choosing to appear publicly at Ulundi on June 16, on the day that the ANC-led alliance launched a peaceful campaign of mass action, De Klerk sent a message to every warlord, to every death squad, to every assassin and impi in our country." Now he himself has fallen victim to these assassins.

Comrade Hani was a brave fighter who had given his life to the struggle. His figure was always prominent in the huge rallies and demonstrations, like at Bisho. Four days before his death he led a march of 10 000 from Daveyton to Modderbee Prison demanding the release of political prisoners.

In an interview on the march with a British marxist reporter he said that there could be no settlement in South Africa while the regime continued to hold ANC political prisoners as hostages in its prisons. He said he also included as political prisoners "those comrades who had

taken up arms to defend their communities from the violence of the last two years. As we go ahead with the negotiations De Klerk will want to try and forget about the political prisoners. The comrades on the ground must put pressure on De Klerk to release our comrades in prison."

Feared by the bosses

It is precisely because of this unflinching dedication to struggle that Chris Hani was so hated by the regime and its spokespeople. Over a long period, all the bourgeois media were levelling a barrage of propaganda and lies against comrade Hani. He was portrayed as a 'bloodthirsty Communist', 'a man of violence', and even as an accessory to armed bank robberies.

All this served to create the idea that comrade Chris Hani was an "undesirable element" in society. The media played the role of setting him up as a target for assassination, particularly by the right-wing thugs.

Now, with his death, the very same newspapers pretend to be sympathetic. This should be rejected. They contributed towards his death.

Despite their praise of him after his death the bosses were terribly afraid of the popularity commanded by Chris Hani when he was alive. They were fearful that after the elections he would still have the power to mobilise millions of oppressed people in struggle for real improvements in social conditions. They were worried he would lead people in battles for better wages, decent housing, and education.

De Klerk regime is to blame

We do not accept De Klerk's and the bosses hypocritical condemnation of comrade Hani's killing. It is De Klerk's regime that is responsible for his death.

De Klerk and his government issue firearm licences to members of fascist groups like the AWB – to which the assassin belongs. This government tolerates the far right-wing's military training camps. Insane murderers like Barend Strydom have been let loose, and threaten black people.

Yet the SAP and SADF do everything to smash genuine structures for armed self-defence in the townships. Hundreds of genuine fighters for liberation remain in prison.

In the SADF and SAP known far right wingers remain in the high command. Van der Westhuizen, the brains behind the murder of Matthew Goniwe and his comrades, has been promoted.

This regime did everything in its power to prevent comrade Chris Hani from obtaining armed protection for himself. His and Nelson Mandela's bodyguards were arrested for illegal possession of firearms.

Demand elections now!

The ANC leadership should demand the immediate resignation of De Klerk and elections for a Constituent Assembly without restrictions.

But, as comrade Hani said in London early this year, the struggle would not end with the election of a new government. The workers, unemployed and retrenched people would have to be championed, and even a democratically elected government would be critically examined according to this

Letter of condolence to the SACP Central Committee

Dear comrades,
The Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC expresses its deepest sympathy with the SACP over the assassination of comrade Chris Hani. We share with his family and the people deep outrage at his murder.

This was not the senseless deed of an individual acting on his own. Responsibility for this rests squarely on the shoulders of the regime. Despite the overwhelming evidence of the role of De Klerk's state machine in the death of other martyrs of our struggle, the generals are still in their posts. The apparatus for the murder of our people remains in place.

Comrade Hani was singled out because he carried the hopes of millions of the poor, the oppressed and the exploited. He understood that on the basis of capitalism the hopes of the people for genuine liberation – for jobs, houses, decent education and health – could not be fulfilled. He recognised that our struggle for genuine liberation would not be complete until we have achieved socialism.

There can be no greater tribute we can pay to comrade Hani's memory than to continue the fight for his ideals.

Yours in the struggle,
Weizmann Hamilton
for the Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC

objective.

He said he that although he supported the ANC he would not accept a post in the coalition government: "I want the freedom to criticise from the outside, to lead marches, to organise strikes, to pressurise the new government into doing the right things."

He went further to state that after the election it would be "important for the forces of the left to work together for the realisation of the socialist objectives".

The struggle continues

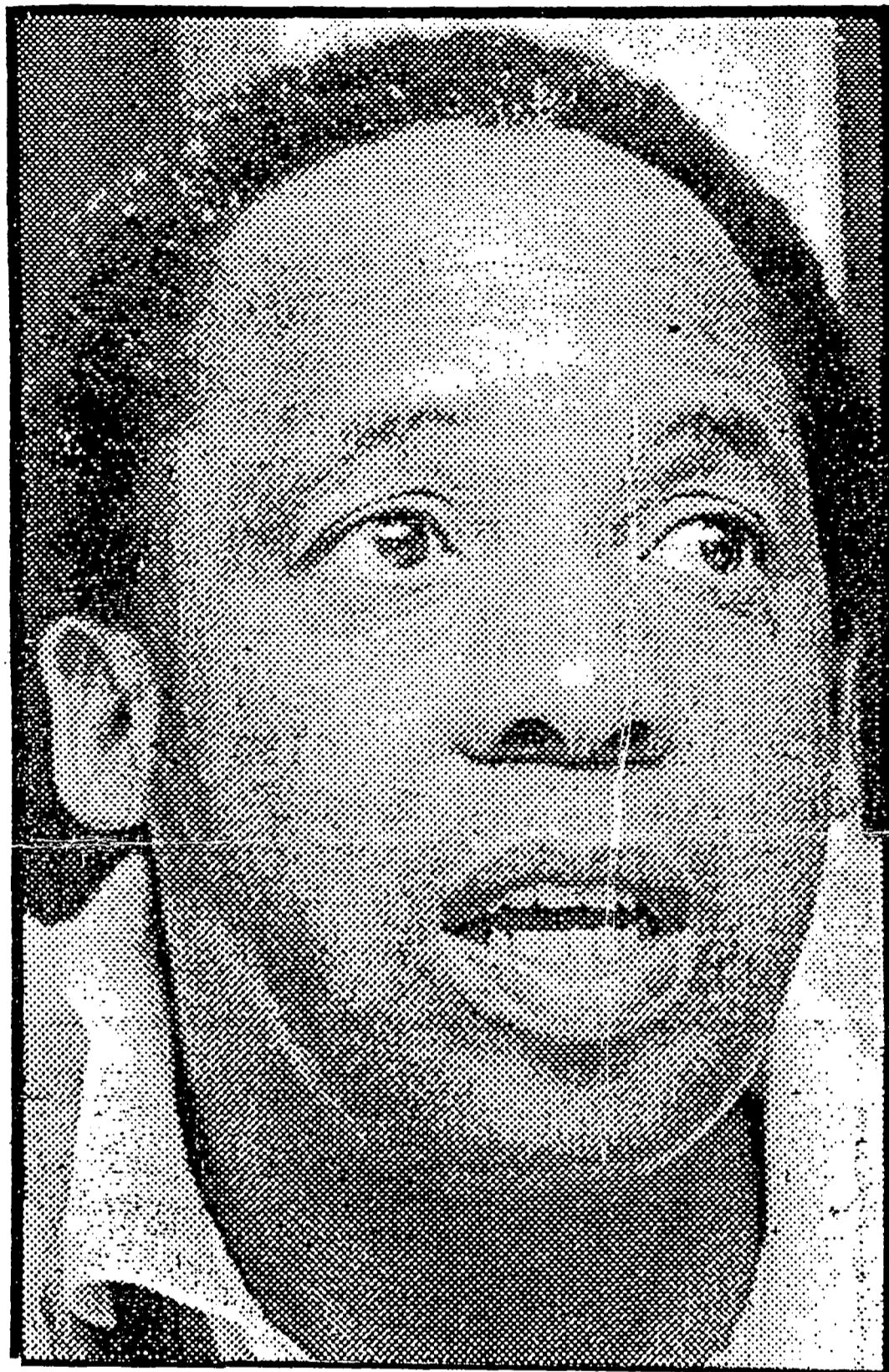
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He understood that on the basis of capitalism the hopes of people for genuine liberation – for jobs, houses, decent education and health -- could not be fulfilled. He recognised that our struggle for genuine liberation would not be complete until we have achieved socialism.

It was precisely for this that comrade Hani gave his life. His statements corresponded to the views and aspirations of the black majority. In him the workers and youth will ever remember their comrade-in-arms, their martyr and unwavering fighter. The Marxist Workers' Tendency of the ANC pledges to play a part, in memory of his death, to carry forward the struggle for the socialist ideals that comrade Hani believed in.

Socialism means freedom!

HAMBA KAHLE



QABANE

***Asisoze sikulibale futhi
siyoqhubeka njalo
nomzabalazo owawufela***

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