

'It is time to unify people,' said Hani

At the time of his death on April 10, Chris Hani was the secretary general of the South African Communist Party and head of the "Stalinist" wing within the African National Congress (ANC). Before that, as the longtime head of the ANC's armed wing (MK), he oversaw the establishment of detention and torture camps for ANC "dissidents" in Angola and elsewhere. Three days before his assassination (see EIR, May 14, "Did British Intelligence Kill Hani?") he gave the following interview to journalist Gisela Albrecht. It was published in the French Communist Party paper L'Humanité. The following translation is from the German newspaper Unsere Zeit, published on May 14, 1993.

Q: South Africa's blacks, who have struggled so long against apartheid, dreamed of a "magical day of liberation," as some of them put it. Mandela is free. Compromises are being worked out at the negotiating table, and the former enemies are extending a hand to each other. But there has been no "day of liberation." Now they are heading toward the projecting of a "government of national unity," a coalition between the liberation movement, the ANC, and the National Party, which was responsible for apartheid for 40 years. How are the young blacks, the township dwellers, whose lives have hardly changed, reacting?

Hani: That's right. In 1976 and the following period, people had this vision of liberation; they imagined that one day this white rule would come to an end. But there was no precise concept of the ways and means, and of the timing. I think that they reckoned with a long struggle. A great deal has been accomplished with the lifting of the ban on the ANC. It has become obvious that negotiations are also a means of struggle for a democratic South Africa. The government has grasped that it must take them seriously with regard to a new political structure. Of course they have their own concept of this new form. But it is clear that their program is no longer apartheid, whose time has definitely run out. We are moving in the direction of elections, and everyone can participate in them. That is, measured by the South African yardstick, very radical. Millions of people in this country have never voted yet.

Q: And yourself: When you were living in exile as the chief of the illegal ANC army, how did you imagine your return? Had you thought about a negotiated agreement with Pretoria?

Hani: No, no, and no! I never would have been able to imagine that this government would be seriously prepared

for negotiations. I was convinced that it would fight to the end, until the complete destruction of the country. We were prepared for a struggle that would last a long time. We were really surprised when Pretoria in 1991 indicated its readiness to negotiate. We then realized that we had brought the apartheid regime into a serious crisis. When I say "we," I am not just talking about the ANC, but also about the people in South Africa and in the international community who have supported us.

Q: Are you unhappy about having worked out a compromise with the National Party which is in power? Surely you had hoped for a radical transformation of South African society. . . .

Hani: No. I am glad that we have come so far. I am fully aware of how things stand and I am happy about the current situation. We have—this is my feeling—achieved a position of strength. We have justice on our side, which has also become recognized. Just think: We will soon—in less than a year—have achieved a large part of what we have fought for. No, we will not have achieved everything, but enough, in order to go further forward, in order to move into a new phase of the struggle, among other conditions, in a changed climate. The elections do not mark the end of the fight.

Q: How do you figure on being able to realize the transformation of South African society, including in the economic domain, in an eventual ruling coalition with the National Party? How will you be able to carry out your aims against this party in a government of national unity?

Hani: The apartheid policy is in its death throes. The National Party—as the party of apartheid—finds itself in the same situation. It is desperately trying to keep its head above water. Perhaps it will still be able to for a few years. But it will also need to submit to the new reality, in the sense that it cannot any longer prevent a real and full democracy in this country. So we are realists. Revolutionaries have to be realists. We are dealing with a government, which we have not defeated. They control the state, the police, and the security forces. The economy is overwhelmingly in the hands of whites. What we will achieve is political power only. We will enter into the parliament, which gives us power in political decisions and a forum for further advancing our struggle for social justice. We are at the point of making it happen that the party which has the largest number of votes will also be the one which takes over the presidency of the state. And naturally we will be striving, through the mobilization of our fellow combatants, to achieve the needed majority. We will not yet have a complete democracy at this moment, but we will have taken a step forward. The new national unity government cannot leave the state in its current situation. This will have to be systematically rebuilt. Apartheid will no longer be able to be tolerated. Under its rule, blacks were shut out of high offices in the state, which

was ruled by the whites. That will have to change. That of course presupposes the education of people, which concerns millions of blacks, whom we have to move to stand up very tall, high, so that our state will finally begin to be the reflection of a society in which racial differences can no longer play any role at all.

Q: How long will such a government of national unity be able to last?

Hani: Its most pressing task will be to launch the process of rebuilding the new state and the security forces. There are already numerous blacks in the Army. But there are also members of Umkhonto, our own army, the fighting forces of Transkei, Venda, Ciskei, and Bophuthatswana. Our aim, in three or four years, is to achieve a non-racial army. Therefore, we have proposed a time-span of five years, no more, for the transitional government. We need this period for the education of people, for perceptible improvement in the life of the ghettos, the building of housing, the provision of drinking water, electrification, and land redistribution.

Q: On this last topic, you have stated that it is a question of distribution and not of confiscation. What do you understand by this?

Hani: First of all there are millions of hectares of land which were seized by the state. They must be redistributed. We need to set up a new court, where land claims can be presented. You know that in the framework of the apartheid laws, millions of blacks had their property confiscated and were driven off it, and it was divided up among whites. We will therefore begin to set up courts everywhere, so that the communities can present their rights and get them recognized. The Army also possesses huge territories, where it carries out exercises and trains its troops. These lands must be reintegrated into the property of the state and undergo an eventual redistribution. We must discuss the future order of magnitude of individual land holdings. I, for my part, think that a piece of land which does not serve production must be subjected to taxation. Numerous farmers possess millions of hectares which they let lie fallow. The tax will perhaps lead to the sale of these lands, and then they could be used by new owners.

Q: I see no difference there between the policy of your party and the ANC's. What do you say on that?

Hani: What we say as the Communist Party can just as well be said by the ANC. We work together in the framework of an alliance. We have fought together for a long time and we have worked out a political program which is the result of mutual discussions among communists, the ANC, and the Cosatu trade union confederation. In the ANC's policy there are many elements which one can evaluate as socialist, because the ANC is influenced by the participation of socialists and trade unionists in the struggle. As communists we support this program, because as members of the ANC we have

taken part in its drafting. For us it is a question of implementing a national democracy as the first phase of the revolution. We find it important that people learn to make their democratic power conscious in the course of this phase. It is a question of building up independent and democratic structures of society. We are convinced that a democracy which functions exclusively on the parliamentary and governmental level, is not yet a democracy.

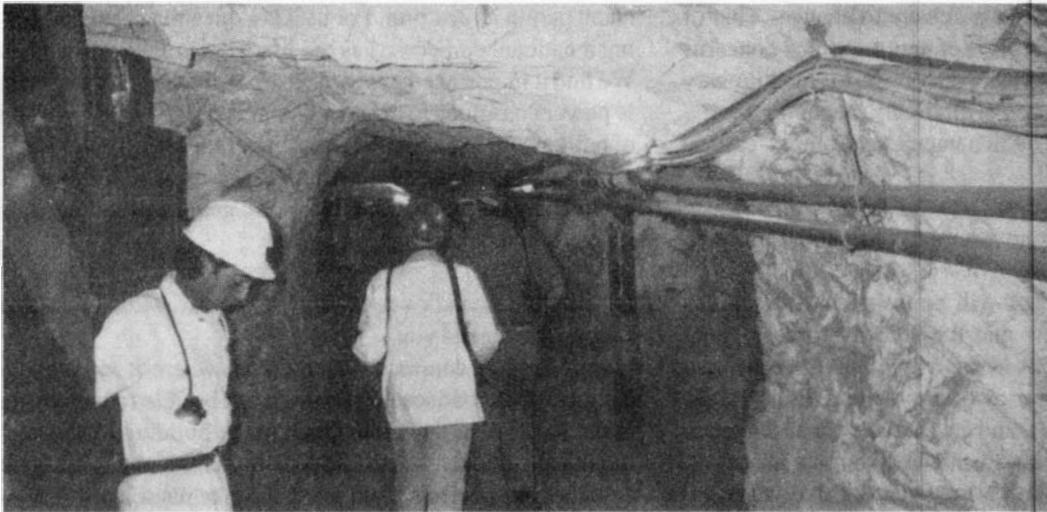
Q: Has the breakdown of the communist states in eastern Europe influenced you?

Hani: Yes, of course. We have seen where it leads when democracy is confiscated. People must be able to participate in the solution of their problems, in the building of schools, in nursery schools, in educational centers, and in economic development projects. And this must take place in the framework of organizations which the people themselves control.

Q: You mentioned the first phase of the revolution, democratization. What is the end-phase? Does the Communist Party maintain its drive toward a monopoly of power?

Hani: No, we have no ambition for this monopoly. We are against the claim to exclusive power for the Communist Party. We want to run as a party in democratic elections and would like to win sympathy and influence through the elections. And we go even further: So that the wealth of the country is used in the right way, a process must be set into motion, in which the state is no longer controlled by individual politicians, but by the majority of the population. That requires time and a lot of work. We also have rejected the idea that nationalization is the ideological priority for economic policy. Nationalization is no formula, thanks to which economic problems can be quickly and automatically solved. That was also established in the U.S.S.R. and eastern Europe. We think that there are areas in which nationalization is decisive, such as, for example, electricity, water, and transportation. That does not mean that all the means of transportation have to be nationalized. But that the structures used by everybody, such as schools and health care facilities, should not be in private but in public hands, in such a way that efficiency and competence are guaranteed. We are thinking also about new forms of ownership such as cooperative ventures or partnerships between the public and private sector. I see no grounds for thinking that such partnerships could not work, especially in the exploitation of natural resources. A state whose government is democratically elected would have to have its say in this area. In that case the employees would have to have their say as well. In no case would we want a situation such as in the former U.S.S.R., where bureaucrats exercised control in the name of the workers and where the workers themselves had nothing to say.

Q: I would like to come back to the youth in the townships, who have risked their lives in the anti-apartheid struggle. Did



An old gold mine outside Johannesburg. Anglo-American Corp., which dominates South Africa's gold and diamond output, is the chief financier of the ANC. An Anglo executive said recently: "Let the blacks rule. We'll make a lot more money out of a black government than out of a white one because they would be a lot easier to manipulate."

they, as they were doing this, having nothing in their heads except that the ANC would join in a government of national unity with the National Party?

Hani: You know, we all had a lot of dreams in our heads when we were fighting. We were very romantic. We believed that the U.S.S.R. had solved all its economic problems once and for all. We imagined that we could put things in order with nationalization in the twinkling of an eye. And we were fighting in a bipolar world. The world is now unipolar and has shriveled down to the scale of a village. A strong feeling of enmity toward everything that looks like socialism is coming out of its power centers. It is clear to us that a revolution, if it wants to be further supported by the people, must bring them something in many areas. Certainly we could let ourselves fall into revolutionary rhetoric, in the style of: "We are going to deal the whites a blow, we are going to nationalize, we are going to do this and that." But must not we rather be much more concerned about acting in such a way that the people finally retain the image of what they are striving for? Must we not dedicate ourselves to the creation of jobs in the face of the terrible unemployment and numerous layoffs? Must we not strive to improve our health care system, which is constantly getting worse? And must not something be done, so that the people in the rural areas and poor neighborhoods get electricity? Today, on the crest of the breakthrough to a democratic society, we must answer all these questions very honestly. We cannot deceive the people, by disguising things to them. Our policy must be transparent. We must go back to our young militants, in the remotest corners of our country, and say to them, "This is our vision!"

Q: And will they understand you?

Hani: Yes. And they are discussing this. They are afraid that we could let ourselves be bought. They are afraid of a deformed democracy. We tell them: We have won nothing. Compromises are inevitable, if you discuss with an adversary

whom you have not defeated. We will not achieve our victory at one stroke; we must carry out many strokes, thousands. But at each moment we have to ask ourselves: Are we bringing the people with us? Are we giving them something, even if it is not everything, but perhaps 10, 20 or 50%? For us it is a question of shaping situations in which we have the power to do something for them, to give them other kinds of employment, financial support. That is what we must try to make comprehensible.

Q: And the amnesty question?

Hani: I am of the opinion that everything which has happened, will have to be brought into the light of day. The ANC has acted in this sense, when it set up an investigation commission, which was concerned with what we did in Angola in our struggle to protect ourselves against South African agents, and with the circumstance that we—this is our feeling today—often lost the sense of the right proportion. Likewise on the part of the regime people who participated in death squads, who murdered our comrades, they must confess their crimes. We have to know who did that. I know that it is not very pretty. On the other hand, I believe that we should not conduct any Nuremberg Trials. That could reopen so many wounds, arouse so many tensions, and polarize our society. There are already so many rifts in this society, and it is time to finally unify people.

Q: How do you want to unite them? The whites have lived in isolation for so long with their power and privileges. . . .

Hani: It is possible. I have an unlimited trust in people. I know that they can be corrupted, if the circumstances are thus. They can be corrupted by indoctrination, by training, by requirements, to defend their privileges. But if we finally achieve an opening in this society, the walls will have to be torn down—there are already schools where white and black children learn together—if all the schools are opened and our

children, black or white, get together, from the nurseries to the universities, in sports and cultural associations, then we can make it so that the next generation—if not already our own—begin to truly be South Africans, and stop organizing themselves on the basis of their racial or ethnic groups.

Q: You have said of yourself and your party, that you are realists. Would you agree with me when I say that the South African Communist Party still has an unrealistic and idealistic image of man?

Hani: I am, we are idealists. And I believe that we all have to be idealists. I believe that we must all strive toward a perfect society even if the perfect society, no doubt, can never be realized.

Why should we not be inspired and animated by that which the Christians dream about, arriving in Paradise, in Heaven, where there is no place for suffering? I remember that as a child I used to observe the Catholic priests. They went through the villages to convince the people to go to church and to school. They cared about the poor. In our area there was nothing, no hospital, no doctors, none of the structures which make up a modern society. And we were poor. My father, for example, was a miner, we only saw him once a year. And every day I had to go on foot to school, which was 10 kilometers away. In the winter it was frightful, because in Transkei it can get terribly cold, and we had no shoes. That was a hard life, but we made it anyway. The church was our tie to the city. The parish priests even brought the mail to the villagers. They worked hard and made an effort to lighten the burdens of the people. I told myself that these are people who unselfishly stand up in their own person for others and fight for justice. That made a big impression on me. I believe that influenced my whole life. I even wanted to be a priest myself, but my father did not want me to.

I know that it is hard to act like those priests in this world. But why should we not have for humanity a vision of a society in which there is no exploitation? The progress of technological development and scientific discoveries is such that we have the potential to achieve a society of surplus, in which no one any longer needs to go hungry. I believe that as communists we must not allow this idealism to be taken away from us. So we should make a crusade for it. It should not be any arrogant or presumptuous crusade as a group or party, which thinks it should stand above the others. Rather I think, on the contrary, that the whole society should wrack its brains—and also fight—to find out how we can spread the wealth around in a reasonable way, such that we have a society in which people no longer have to suffer from curable diseases and malnutrition. A society in which there are no more illiterates and every house has electricity, in which no one has to fight hopelessly for his simple survival. I have this idealism anchored in myself, and I believe that we should all hold to it with determination.

Interview: Tienie Groenewald

A new colonialism is being fostered

Major General Tienie Groenewald is the former head of the Department of Military Intelligence of the South African Defense Forces, and is a founder of the "Committee of Generals" currently playing a key role in the negotiations toward a new constitution for South Africa. He was interviewed in Johannesburg on April 28.

EIR: There are currently multi-party negotiations which restarted again on Friday, April 23, toward what the new South Africa will look like. Could you tell us, as opposed to the news reports, what actually is going on inside those negotiations?

Groenewald: In the forum, you have basically three main political groups that participate. The Nationalist Party is the ruling party at the moment, significant because it is in control of the structures of the state. Secondly, the African National Congress, the South African Communist Party, and the Congress of South African Trade Unions—this alliance between the three. These two groupings, the African National Congress alliance and the Nationalist Party, basically control 14 of the 27 votes in the multi-party congress. The third grouping is the COSAG grouping, which stands for Concerned South Africans Group. It consists of two independent states, the governments of Bophuthatswana and Ciskei, and the semi-independent state of KwaZulu, headed by Chief Minister [Mangosuthu] Buthelezi, forms the third important leg of the black groupings within the COSAG movement. And then most of the major conservative right-wing parties, such as the Conservative Party, the Afrikaner Volksunie, the Volkswacht of Prof. Karl Boschoff, and the Afrikaner Unity Committee. This grouping is more representative of the people in South Africa than either the ANC or the Nationalist Party. To give you an idea: The ANC professes to be a multi-racial or non-racial party, but 99% of the members are black, and then there are a few whites, Indians, and colored members. The Nationalist Party professes to be multi-racial, but 95% of the Nationalist Party are white, and the rest basically are coloreds. But within the COSAG grouping, approximately 50% of the blacks are controlled by these governments, of COSAG, and more than 50% of the whites in actual fact support the concept of nation-states. So it's a much more representative group.