NEW SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR

AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS (ANC) NOMINATED STUDENTS

Luthuli Group of Canberra
GPO Box 1822
CANBERRA ACT

CONTENTS

		PAGE
1.	SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL	1
2.	AUSTRALIA'S ROLE AND THE NEED FOR A NEW SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM	2
	i. Australia's International Obligations	2
	ii. Australia and South Africa - Similarities	3
	iii. Australia's Future in the Region	5
	iv. The Need for a New Scholarship Program	7
3.	THE APPLICANTS AND THEIR NEEDS	9
4.	THE PROPOSED NEW PROGRAM	12
5.	PROBLEMS AND QUESTIONS	14

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

As endorsed by Foreign Minister, Hayden at the AIIA, Canberra on 9 September 1985, a scholarship scheme for refugee South African students would enable Australia to help plan for a future non-racial South Africa, and not just to work toward the dismantling of the present Apartheid regime.

It is proposed that the Australian Government provide an on-going scholarship scheme for students from South Africa nominated by the African National Congress to undertake study in Australia. A pilot group of 20 students is envisaged. South African refugee students require continuity and stability in their education which has to date been lacking due to the handicaps they have suffered under the apartheid system. Geographical and economic similarities between Australia and South Africa place Australia in a unique position to help prepare these students for their role in a future South Africa.

Australia is a highly urbanized country. This has led Australia to innovate in the areas of urban planning, architectural design and building construction. We have also developed a capacity to deal with the social problems that arise in high density urban living. Urbanization in South Africa is on the increase but thus far planning and design for black people has been lacking. In the future, South African planners will have to deal realistically with problems of urbanization, problems with which Australia can help.

Australia, like South Africa, is a country of vast distances. Australia's transport and communications networks have been developed to cope with the physical reality of distance. A knowledge of these systems would benefit South African students.

The economies of South Africa and Australia are remarkably similar. Both countries are exporters of unprocessed agricultural commodities and minerals. Australia is a world leader in the design and construction of agricultural implements and mining equipment. South African students in engineering, surveying, draughting, chemical engineering, agricultural science, machine tool design and construction etc. would benefit from experience in a country with a similar resource base.

Both countries also have a need to expand their manufacturing sector. The structure of the Australian economy has recently highlighted the balance of payments difficulties which arise in economies where manufactured goods are a small percentage of exports. This structural problem also exists in the South African economy. The processing of raw material is one obvious way that both countries can expand their manufacturing base. The sharing of technology and economic expertise can be achieved in this area by the training and research in Australia of the future industrial leaders of South Africa.

Despite the similarity of their economies each country has a very different labour market structure. Australia has been able to maintain a viable economy with a highly organized trade union structure and a level of wages compatible with a reasonable quality of life. South Africa, on the other hand, has adopted a system of 'state slavery' to control workers and reduce their wages. Australia can offer the future leaders of South Africa an opportunity to examine the role of an organised, legitimate and socially responsible trade union movement.

South African students will benefit from a period in Australia which will give them access to advanced technical writing in English in a range of disciplines. English will remain the dominant language for international communication for South African professionals, scientists and technicians. In Australia, they will have access to a vast, organized storehouse of information which would be simply unavailable in many developing countries.

2.iii. Australia's future in the region

(1) Economic Cooperation

Australia and South Africa compete in world mineral and agricultural markets. There are linkages between the two economies through trans-national mining corporations, among others which reduce competition. However, the share of the market allocated to each country depends more on the profit requirements of the corporation and not on the national interest of either country. In the future, economic cooperation on a bilateral basis may be possible. This would be to the mutual benefit of both countries and perhaps also, to the rest of Africa. Australia could move toward a position of bilateral economic cooperation through its good relations with the leaders of a new South Africa.

(2) Democracy

The A.N.C. calls for a non-racial, democratic South Africa based on universal adult franchise. The Australian socio-political system based on tolerance of all political beliefs, multi-culturalism and equality of franchise provides an ideal model for the future South Africa. Such likely similarities can provide a basis for development of great understanding between the two countries. The example of scholarships provided by the Australian Government in the early 1970's to Zimbabwean students is an important precedent. Many of these students are now in influential positions in Zimbabwe, one of them a cabinet minister, and most have contributed in some way to the furthering of Australia's good relations with that country. The well-known Kenya scheme adopted by the United States in the late-1950's is also an important precedent. This scheme involved the education of 100 Kenya students in the USA who were nominated by the party of national liberation, KANU. The scheme was very successful in both diplomatic and educational terms.

(3) Aid

Australia's future in Africa has been given a low priority by the Jackson Report. The Report is careful to point out that this does not mean that all Australian aid should be withdrawn but rather that a rationalization of Australia's aid to Africa will be undertaken. The Report also notes that many of the worlds poorest countries are in Sub-Saharan Africa. The quantitatively small size of Australia's aid to Africa should not be taken as a reason to reduce it further but should rather reinforce the recognition that aid, however small, can make crucial differences at the margins of local development efforts. As the Report itself recognises, educational assistance is one area where aid can make an important contribution. The Jackson Report recommends a major expansion of tertiary educational places for overseas students. This should apply to South African students also even though

Africa is given a low priority in the Report. Educational assistance to South African students will go beyond marginal assistance because, whatever its size, at the moment these students get no assistance from South Africa. It will also relieve the front-line African states from bearing the full burden of assistance to South African refugees.

2.iv The need for a new program

Currently, the Australian Government, through the Australian Development Assistance Bureau runs four programs under which South African students receive study assistance. These include a program run for students within South Africa, a program through which students are brought to Australia via co-operation between the South African and Australian Councils of Churches, a program specifically for refugee students whose accreditations are checked by the Commonwealth Secretariat in London and a new fourth program set up particularly for training trade unionists.

While it cannot be doubted that three of these programs, in so far as they apply to South African students, could serve a worthwhile purpose, they are of limited value given the narrow framework in which they operate. The other program, to assist students in South Africa, can only be seen as a program which financially and morally bolsters the apartheid education system. It condones the South African government's refusal to provide free and equal education for all, creates an elite which is responsible to itself not society, helps the regimes propaganda of reform through multi-racial schools, while not abolishing apartheid in government schools.

The programs run through the churches and for trade unionists are of value but do nothing to resolve the growing problem of refugee students.

The present refugee program is unsatisfactory in its operation for South African refugee students for several reasons. Currently there is only one South African student studying in Australia under this scheme. Also, the Australian Government has set a quota of South African and Namibian students on this program. Given the large number of South African refugees in need of educational assistance, it is obvious that this quota is inadequate. The A.N.C. would undertake the responsibility of accreditation for the nominated students and would be in a unique position to do so. A.N.C. nomination would ensure that those nominated were truly deserving of "refugee student status". The A.N.C. would also undertake to ensure that any student nominated by it would leave Australia upon the completion of his or her study. It is in the interest of the students themselves to have a close relationship with their nominating authority as this will help them focus on the purpose of their being in another country. This would avoid the problem raised by assisted overseas students seeking to settle in Australia.

3. THE APPLICANTS AND THEIR NEEDS

The A.N.C. representative in Australia, Mr Eddie Funde, has provided eleven applications from black South Africans who would like to study in Australia. These eleven applications provide sample details of the background and needs of students who would be helped by an Australian government scholarship scheme. The information supplied shows that South African refugees are the major group who have been educationally disadvantaged by the apartheid system. Their access to higher education has been denied or circumscribed because

(a) system of separate education deliberately keeps down the standard of education for blacks;

(b) the political situation has forced the closure of much of the black education system;

(c) those who oppose apartheid are denied access to higher education and forced to flee the country.

These facts result in applicants whose desperate need is for the continuity and stability necessary to complete tertiary education and qualify. All the applicants show the cost of disruption and discontinuity in their education. This is principally evident in the applicants age structure, their short, interrupted tertiary careers involving shifts not only from institution to institution but from country to country. It is also evident in their dependence on work experience rather than formal qualifications as preparation for further study.

The ages of the eleven applicants vary from eighteen to thirty-five. One twenty-four year old has a family and children and the scholarship scheme must allow for the fact that some applicants will be accompanied by families. This means that a family support system - housing, childrens' schooling, spouse

allowance etc - must be part of the scheme. All eleven applicants are male. It is anticipated that equal opportunity will be given to women applicants as is A.N.C. policy.

The eleven students express a desire to qualify at tertiary level in a range of disciplines including quantity surveying, electrical engineering, civil engineering, journalism, radio production and accountancy (2). Five have had interrupted university careers. One applicant spent a year at the University of The Witwatersrand and another had a year at the University of The Western Cape. All five are currently pursuing their studies outside South Africa. All five have experienced some disruption to their studies in other African institutions due to personal, political or financial problems. Four further applicants have obtained secondary school 'O' level some years ago and have worked professionally in the area where they would now like to gain formal tertiary qualifications. Two have many years experience in radio broadcasting and would like formal qualifications in journalism and radio production. One, who wants to be a quantity surveyor, has experience in a professional office and the fourth is working but the details are not clear. The two remaining applicants have recently completed 'O' levels and have not had experience at a tertiary institution. It is clear that some applicants have a need for preparatory training at senior secondary level before entering an Australian tertiary institution while others can begin tertiary education on arrival.

Problems of certification and discontinuity in education should not discourage a commitment being made to these students. The A.N.C. has been increasingly careful of the students it has selected to study overseas. The ANC has established a college in Tanzania for selection of candidates for overseas study. The college is the Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (SOMAFCO), its Director is Mohammed Tickly. The status of the college is underwritten by the education authorities of Tanzania. The college has a scholarship committee to assess candidates. This

assessment is based upon interviews, short courses, tests and the awarding of a certificate of suitability for overseas study. The college has successfully placed students in a numbers of overseas countries, including Sweden, Yugoslavia, Britain and the USSR.

All eleven students have certain abnormalities in their travel documentation and educational records due to the fact that they have been denied the possibility of a normal life. Some allowance will have to be made for this.

4. THE PROPOSED NEW PROGRAM

It is envisaged that 20 students, men and women, form the initial group of A.N.C. refugee students to be assisted to undertake a course of assisted study in Australia commencing in 1987. The objective of the scheme can be outlined as follows:

> 'to contribute to the future social and economic development of South Africa by assisting men and women nominated by the A.N.C. to gain tertiary education and qualifications at Australian institutions.'

It is proposed that this scheme is one set up for the attainment of tertiary qualifications. Any scheme relating to secondary education should remain separate. However, should applicant students require educational preparation in order to gain admission into Australian tertiary institutions, assistance must be provided under this scheme. It is possible that some students may need a preparatory year in a secondary school college or College of Technical and Further Education.

Responsibility for the educational, financial and social well-being of students would be shared under the scheme by the Australian Government through ADAB, the A.N.C. through its representative in Australia, NGO's, ACFOA and AAA groups approved by the ANC including, Campaign Against Racial Exploitation (C.A.R.E.) and Australian community groups affiliated with C.A.R.E.

The major features of the scheme would be financial and educational support and guidance and the maintenance of a group identity of the students and their commitment to a non-racial democratic South Africa based on universal adult suffrage. The maintenance of the student's identity and commitment would be attained by the establishment of a procedure whereby they could

meet at regular intervals. A community base is essential to assist students to cope with the Australian lifestyle and tertiary institutions, a capacity vital to their ultimate graduation.

The location of the students will necessarily depend upon the course of study sought and the willingness of tertiary institutions to commit themselves to added assistance. The mere acceptance of the students without an ability to provide extra tutorial assistance and advice where necessary would not be enough. In this respect, the A.N.C., Australian Anti-Apartheid groups approved by the A.N.C. and C.A.R.E. are well placed to ensure that institutions accept students understanding well these added responsibilities.

It is proposed that financial assistance be provided by the Australian Government through ADAB at the same allowance rates and according to the usual practice for sponsored students. Financial assistance would include a living allowance, an establishment allowance, book, equipment and clothing allowances return airfares to the host country and fees including fees for extra tuition. Where required it would also include a spouse and family allowance.

It is envisaged ADAB would monitor the progress of the students and liaise with the institutions and the A.N.C. ADAB would also provide the necessary administrative assistance in areas such as immigration to Australia and admission into tertiary institutions. The ANC would also undertake to provide travel documents for students nominated by it under the Scheme. Of course given that these students are South African refugees the host country may vary from case to case.

5. PROBLEMS AND QUESTIONS

1. Q. Will it be necessary for applications to be routed through the Commonwealth Secretariat?

   A. Our position. No. We would like the ANC Education Department to process documentation and to be considered the nominating authority.

2. Q. Will the ANC be accepted as the nominating authority?

   A. Our position. Yes. Bearing in mind the abnormalities to be expected in documentation because of discontinuity in students educational background, the ANC is better placed than the Commonwealth secretariat to judge the potential of students.

3. Q. Will students want to return to Africa?

   A. Our position. ANC sponsorship ensures that students chosen will return to the ANC to fulfill their obligations to the ANC and to ensure their future in Africa.

4. Q. Will these students be included in overseas student country quotas?

   A. Our position. This would be an unreasonable demand. These people are refugees in urgent need of education assistance. They do not have the luxury of waiting for a quota position to become available.

5. Q. Why can't these students be sent to another country where the cost of education is cheaper?

A. Our position. There are different programs to fulfill different needs. This program is designed for students who require quality tertiary education and who need stability and financial support to complete this education. The adoption of this program does not exclude the adoption of other programs designed to satisfy different needs.

6. Q. What can we do about the travel documents of the students and their status (e.g. for immigration purposes)?

A. Our position. They can be granted temporary residence with the right to undertake employment during their period of study.

7. Q. How do we see a community base operating for the students?

A. Our position. Until the first 20 nominated students are accepted and placed it is not feasible to predetermine this. The nature of a "community base" will depend on where the students are studying - ie. in what centres.