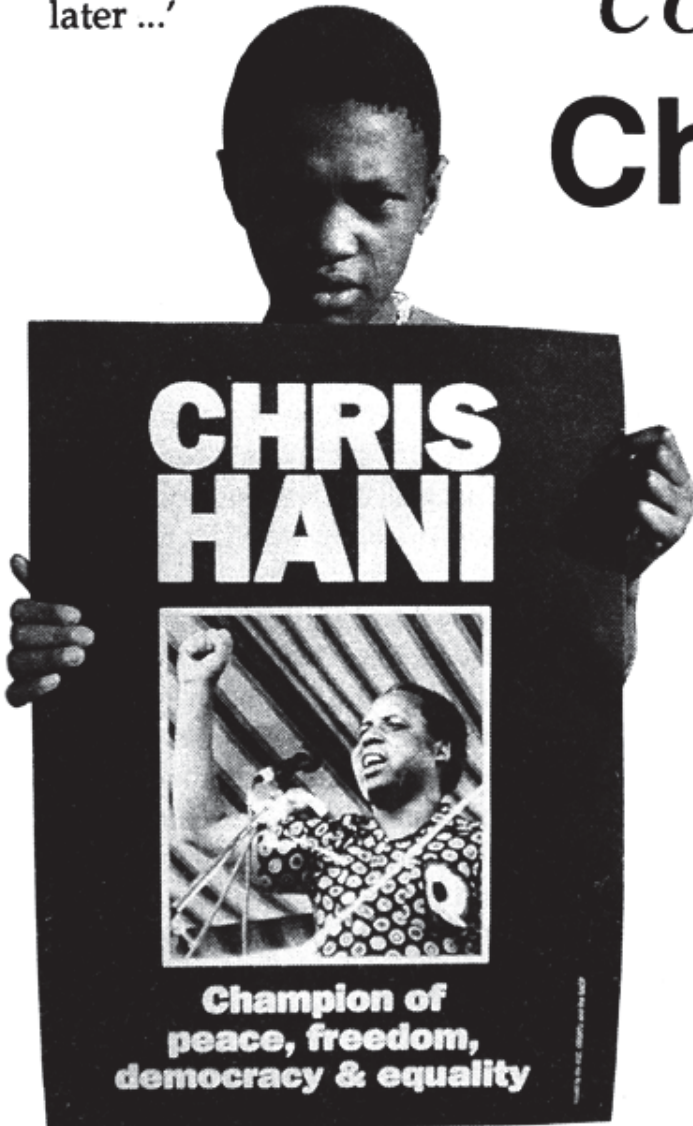


'I don't expect to live long,' CHRIS HANI told LULI CALLINICOS* in one of his last in-depth interviews, just ten days before he was assassinated. 'As we move closer to elections, covert operations will be stepped up. They will get me sooner or later ...'

comrade **Chris Hani** *speaks ...*



Boksburg meant his address was dangerously well-known. Comrade Chris explained:

'After all these years of underground struggle, I owe it to my family to provide them with some stability. My wife and children deserve a normal family life.'

These words were ringing in my ears ten days later, when the shock of Chris Hani's assassination struck the nation.

In the interview, Comrade Chris spoke eloquently about his admiration for Comrade OR, and also answered questions about his own eventful life. He also spoke about many aspects of the liberation movement, including the PAC, the BCM, some of the MK operations, and the SACP. In this article, there is space for only a few extracts from the late Comrade Hani's extensive discussion.

Early ideals and the influence of the Youth League

In his youth, both the church and Marxism contributed to Chris Hani's ideals. Comrade Chris attended a Catholic mission school until Standard Six. In the village, very few people

Chris Hani and I were chatting at the start of a two-part interview on his relationship with Comrade O R Tambo. I had not yet switched on the tape to record his impressions. Horrified at what he had said, I asked why then did he not leave his house. The publicity of his move to the white working-class suburb of Dawn Park in

* This article is drawn from the 40-page transcript of the interview, undertaken by Luli Callinicos of the History Workshop at Wits University, author of *Gold and Workers*, and other popular history books.

were Christians. But Hani was impressed by the commitment of the monks and nuns.

'There is something basically one admired in them. A sense of hard work, selflessness. These people would go on horseback to the most rural parts of the village, taking the gospel to the people, encouraging kids to go to school. Praying for the sick and offering all sorts of advice. They were not only priests, but they were nurses, they were teachers, they were social workers. That had a very very strong impression on me and in the formation of my character.'

In 1957, at Lovedale High School, Hani began to get politicised:

'Given my background, I was attracted by ideas and the philosophy which had a bias towards the working class; which had as its stated objective the upliftment of the people on the ground. For about six or nine months I was in the Unity Movement. It was strong amongst intellectuals in the whole of the Eastern Cape ... But later on I began to examine the Unity Movement, and didn't see them being involved in the mass struggles of our people. The struggle was waged in their minds, in their heads, a theoretical struggle.

'The activism of the ANC began to make me shift my political allegiance. I met comrades who were already in the YL like Comrade Siphon Makana, Anderson Ganyile who was banished from Pondoland during the Pondo struggle. I began to be exposed to the writings of Govan Mbeki who was writing a lot on the problems of the rural areas and the struggles in the Eastern Cape, [and to] the contribution to the ANC by the YL in terms of the militancy.

'As youngsters, people like Tambo, Mandela, Mji, Anton Lembede, Sisulu etc were our idols. These were our heroes. These young people who actually transformed the ANC and made it to become an organisation which was militant, which was actually engaging the white government. We admired them because we saw in them a different type of intelligentsia. An intelligentsia which is selfless, which is not just concerned about making money, creating a comfortable situation for themselves, but an intelligentsia which had lots of time for the struggle of the

oppressed people of SA. How they used their legal knowledge to alleviate the judicial persecution of the blacks through the pass laws, through Bantu Authorities, or the Group Areas. I must say my life was shaped by the outlook of people like comrades Tambo, Mandela, Duma Nokwe and others.'

Why Chris Hani joined SACP

'Why did I join the SACP? Why was I not just satisfied with the ANC? I belonged to a world, in terms of my background, which suffered I think the worst extremes of apartheid. A poor rural area where the majority of working people spent their time in the compounds, in the hostels, away from their families. A rural area where there were no clinics and probably the nearest hospital was 50kms away - generally a life of poverty with the basic things unavailable. Where our mothers and our sisters would walk 3kms and even 6kms whenever there was a drought to fetch water. Where the only fuel available was going 5, 6kms away to cut wood and bring it back. This was the sort of life.

'I had seen the lot of black workers, extreme forms of exploitation. Slave wages, no trade union rights, and for me the appeal of socialism was extremely great. Where it was said that workers create wealth, but in the final analysis they get nothing - they get peanuts in order to survive and continue working for the capitalists. I didn't get involved with the workers' struggle out of theory alone. It was a combination of theory and my own class background. I never faltered in my belief in socialism despite all the problems currently. For me that belief is strong because that is still the life of the majority of the people with whom I share a common background.'

The relationship between the Party and the ANC

'The Party in those early years actually was very much involved in preparing us theoretically for the understanding of Marxism. Why it is important to become both a member of the ANC and the Party. Why is there no contradiction between the two? The need to yoke together the national and the class

struggle, the priority being national liberation, the liberation of mostly the black, leading to a democratic situation. And why it was important that the struggle should continue beyond a national democratic state to socialism. We were being equipped theoretically to understand these issues ... The Party shaped our non-sectarian approach to the struggle in SA. The Party convinced us that the main area of struggle was in the ANC. It was important to have an ANC which accepted the Freedom Charter, which committed itself to the implementation of the Charter.

'The CP has always explained the need for the alliance. Not just explaining it, but it has participated in building and strengthening the alliance. And the broad non-sectarian approach of the Party actually inspired young people to see the ANC as a legitimate vehicle for national liberation and democracy. As a left-inclined nationalist movement, different from the nationalist movements which we have seen in a number of third world countries.'

The role and influence of the ANC

'When you compare the ANC with other liberation movements, it is a movement which taught that for liberation to be meaningful, socio-economic restructuring of society is important. But above everything else, the ANC looked at the need to broaden and strengthen the alliance. The ANC never saw itself as the sole participant in the struggle. It realised that there were other forces, other organisations, and all the time the ANC wanted to draw these organisations into a broadly based united front.

'We bring on board everything. The ANC has got that tradition. The ANC will reach out even to those people who are within government institutions. Take the homelands administrations - the Bantustans. People who collaborated with apartheid against us. We are not vindictive. Once somebody says, look people, I am ready to work with you. We don't say no, we are going to set up a trial or a commission. We say, come brother, join the struggle. Come sister, join the struggle. We understand why you did certain things. And I think this has earned a lot of respect for the

ANC. That is what makes the ANC different from the PAC and AZAPO.

'The ANC is like a big omnibus. A train that stops at every station to enquire whether there are passengers or not. It doesn't just throw quick glimpses, then we are passing. It actually stops and says, are there any passengers around. And if they come, please, there is still space in the train.

'I think [this approach] shows maturity. It shows the application or the implementation of a strategy of isolating the main enemy. The homelands guys were never the main enemy. These were just small cogs in a machinery of oppression. It shows a deep understanding of strategy. Who is your main enemy. How do you isolate that main enemy? How do you actually bring in some peoples who are serving that enemy to your side?

'The ANC [also] had a radical non-racialism which accepted the need to build a South African nation out of all groups in our country. We never saw whites as settlers. We saw ourselves as fighting a system and not fighting a race. If today the language in this country is non-racialism, it owes it to the consistency of the ANC, to the commitment of the ANC to non-racialism, even under difficult conditions. That is why I think the ANC has influenced so many organisations. Today they won't admit, De Klerk, Zac de Beer and others won't admit that the alliance stuck under very difficult conditions to non-racialism. And I think that legacy is important, and is something that we must fight for in this country all the time.'

The historical importance of MK

'In 1961, with the growing repression, with the growing violation of basic human rights, with the imprisonment without trial, detention without trial, the question was being asked, were we going to continue in the old way with non-violence, with non-violent protest? ... [On the other hand] our people knew nothing about military struggle. The last wars that we fought were fought towards the end of the 19th century. People had been deskilled in terms of understanding war. The task of moving to an

armed struggle was found daunting by many leaders of the ANC. There was not even a single country which was an independent country, next door to SA. There was no rear base. People felt that, some people were saying, was this not an exercise in adventurism or something of the sort. How realisable was the strategy of armed struggle? Those who opted for armed struggle used the expertise of comrades who had been involved in the last war, in the Second World War. What was important for many of us was the armed propaganda.

'We wanted to encourage our people to fight back and not to be demoralised. We wanted the other side to understand that we are sick and tired and if they don't want to sit down and negotiate, we are going to fight.

'[But] what people don't understand is the fact that every MK comrade was trained not just to shoot or to place a bomb. Part of the integrated training of MK was part of being

political organisers. They were taught that, look, you won't survive if you don't create organisations around yourselves. You have got to build up the underground, you have got to build the mass movement, you have got to build civics, you have got to help in the building of trade unions. So wherever MK comrades came into this country they would actually set up political discussion groups. To discuss strategies, to discuss the need to form organisation, mass organisation. That was our approach, that you won't survive, you must be like the fish and for the fish to survive, you must have water in which it will swim and survive. So that was our approach, and a lot of MK comrades participated in setting up student structures, civic structures, trade union structures. We said to them it is important for every MK cadre to deepen the political consciousness of our people. To produce leaders. That it was not enough for you to just

"The enemy has struck and it has struck where it hurts most"

"WHEN I HEARD THAT SAM TAMBANI was shot dead on 12 April 1992 at the Protea police station, I could not believe my ears. I initially thought that maybe it was a case of mistaken identity. Even now, I cannot accept that I will never see that smiling and honest face again," says Simphiwe Nanasi, a close friend and comrade of Sam Tambani's.

SAMUEL MBULAHENI TAMBANI, who was chairperson of the National Education sub-committee of NUM and an ex-officio member of the NEC, died in a hail of bullets from the police while leading a march to protest Chris Hani's assassination.

NUM's education officer, Mannie Depitso, describes Sam Tambani as a worker and community leader. Sam was born on 23 August 1953 at Tshiozwi village in Venda. He left school at an early age and, like so many

others, was forced to look for work in Johannesburg. He worked at Gundelfingers for seven years. During this time he joined the underground structures of the ANC. In 1979 he was employed by the Anglo American Corporation as a purchasing clerk. He became a member of the General Allied Workers Union (GAWU) in 1980 and within four years was elected as an NEC member. He joined the underground structures of the SACP in 1982. In 1983, he participated fully in the structures of the UDF and helped set up branches in SOWETO. He was instrumental in the formation of COSATU in 1985. He became the Secretary General of the ANC SOWETO branch in 1992.

As an education officer and as one who was himself deprived of education, Sam was interested in upgrading the educational level of

be a leader in that area, you must reproduce yourself ten times and even twenty times.'

On the labour movement

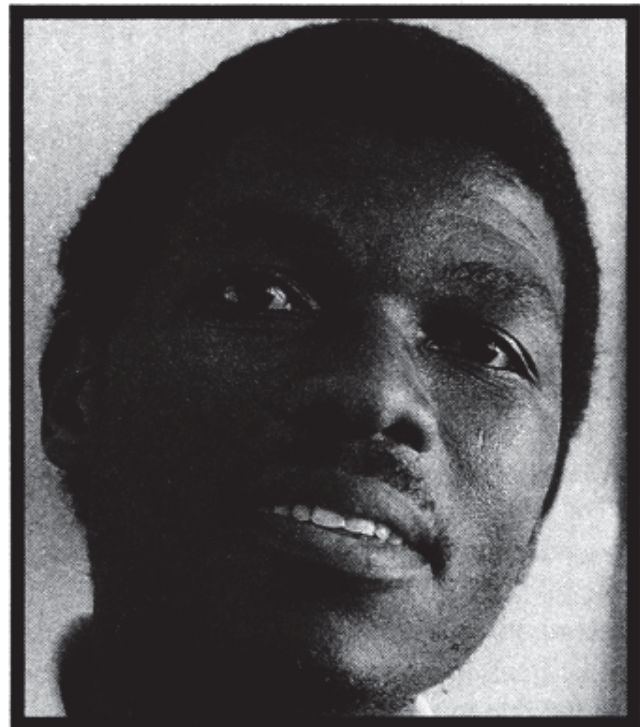
'If there was any organisation which helped to initiate the unity of the unions in this country, it is the ANC and the alliance. In the 1970s, we actually, through SACTU, and through the SACP, established contacts with trade unionists in this country. Quiet contacts. I was in Lesotho from '75. I was nearby and I was having meetings with SAAWU, with GAWU, with individuals from FOSATU. As individuals, not FOSATU as an organisation because FOSATU was not monolithic. In FOSATU we had elements which were pro-SACTU, pro-ANC, pro-SACP. There was a struggle about the tendencies within FOSATU. But our approach was that we must form one federation in SA. We should bring together, weld together, all these tendencies. We should go to what was called the populist

or charterist unions, which were very close to the ANC Congress tradition like SAAWU, like GAWU, like the Food and Canning Workers Union. And then weld them together with those which had been promoted and founded by intellectuals, and as a result of the old Wages Commissions Board and everything. Our approach has always been to say the trade union struggle is part of the broad national liberation struggle. That the victory of the national liberation struggle would actually create better conditions for the workers in this country, and that the workers had to participate in the struggle. They would not have to remain on the sidelines as spectators. If in the final analysis we got a COSATU it was because of the influence we had built up. The influence we had initiated into the unions, especially SACTU, the SACP and the ANC. I am happy to say that if today we have a militant revolutionary trade union movement, it was because of the slow grinding, pushing strategy

the miners. He introduced the Education Blitz campaign with the aim of imparting maximum knowledge to senior shaft stewards within a month. Says Depitso, "Together we would select the most influential shaft stewards and give them intensive training on trade union work. We would then impart that knowledge to the miners, not only at the shaft level, but also in their hostels. In this manner we managed to train many workers within a short space of time. General political knowledge was also imparted to the workers. Sam always emphasised that we should build a sustainable leadership and believed in training others so they could take over.

"Sam was always available when he was needed and would never complain when asked to help at odd hours," adds Depitso. He will be remembered by his colleagues and comrades as an unselfish person, a person who was prepared to share knowledge and information with all.

To NUM, the loss of Sam Tambani is great. Everybody remembers him as an honest, sincere, hard working and ever-smiling



comrade, even when things were tough. It is rare to find people of his calibre. Workers and people who never knew him always felt at ease when they were involved with him in organisational work. ❖



Chris Hani marches with COSATU's Jay Naidoo and the Chemical Workers' Industrial Union during a dispute with Sasol

Photo: William Matlala

of influencing all these trade unions in FOSATU. We didn't say because some elements rejected us in FOSATU, we didn't say, no, no, no, to hell with them. We felt that it was our duty to engage ourselves in the struggle to influence FOSATU. And I think ultimately we have succeeded in building a federation which ultimately became close to the national liberation struggle.'

A new enemy

'The ANC has emerged as the central organisation leading our people to democracy because of its own history, its own track record, its own non-sectarianism, its readiness to be flexible in tactics. To stick to strategy but be flexible in tactics. Its avoidance even of romanticising the armed struggle, and placing it above other forms of struggle. An ANC ready to negotiate when conditions change. You must remember that we have been criticised for negotiating with the regime before it announces a mutual cease-fire. I think we have grown from strength to strength

because of the ability to explain coherently our strategies.

'I think, finally, the ANC will have to fight a new enemy. That enemy would be another struggle to make freedom and democracy worthwhile to ordinary South Africans. Our biggest enemy would be what we do in the field of socio-economic restructuring. Creation of jobs. Building of houses, schools, medical facilities, overhauling our education, eliminating illiteracy, building a society which cares, and fighting corruption and moving into the gravy train of using power, government position to enrich individuals. We must build a different culture in this country, different from Africa, different from the Nationalist Party. And that culture should be one of service to people. Some of us, especially we in the Party, have been discussing how we should cut down the salaries of Ministers, of parliamentarians and all the subsidies, so that if you are in parliament in Cape Town or Pretoria, you actually rent a flat like everybody. We are thinking in terms of a number of guidelines so