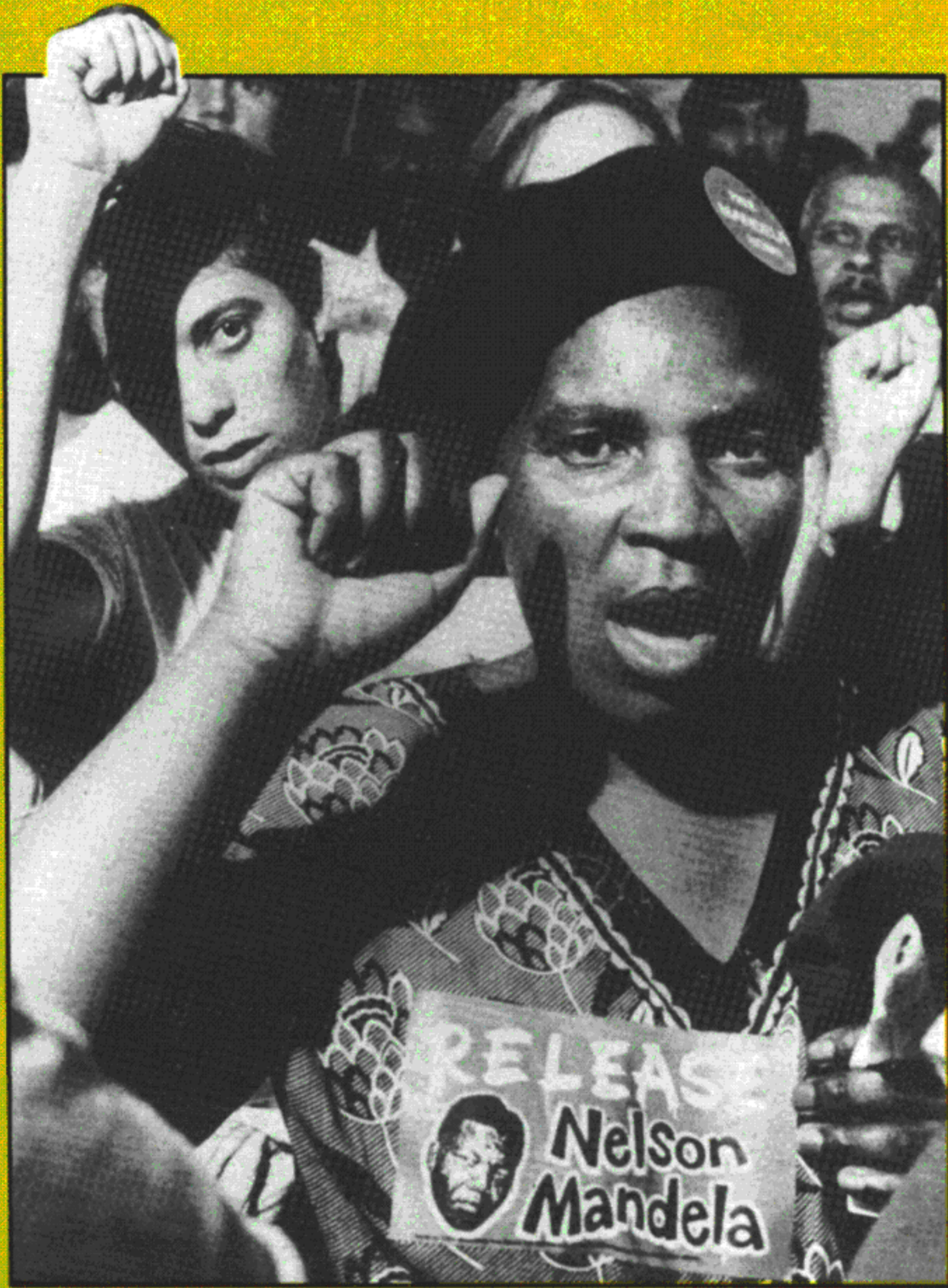


OCTOBER 1986



SECHABA

official organ of the african national congress south africa



SECHABA

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LEST WE FORGET

Speaking in Harare, on September 3rd, on the occasion of the summit meeting of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Angolan President, Jose Edouardo dos Santos, reminded us that racist South Africa's aggression against Angola had already resulted in material damage amounting to more than \$12 billion, an incalculable number of dead, about 50 000 disabled and more than 600 000 displaced people. The statistics are startling. But the spiritual damage — the suffering, pain and hunger — cannot be given in figures.

The recent escalation in fighting, that is, attack on Angola, means racist South Africa is not only waging an undeclared war but is actually interfering in Angola's internal affairs.

What have the people of Angola done to deserve this treatment? They are being punished for their anti-colonial and anti-racist positions. The MPLA leads and builds a society that is the direct opposite of apartheid. International imperialism, through apartheid South Africa, cannot tolerate Angola's pro-socialist path. They say Angola must be crushed. The imperialists want to exploit Angola's rich mineral resources. A strong Angola will be in a position to give more assistance to the ANC and SWAPO. A strong Angola will be an example and an inspiration to the people of South Africa, Namibia and the region. Angola must be weakened so that it can be crushed, so they think.

That is why they support Savimbi and his puppet troops. Racist South Africa trains, feeds and deploys Jonas Savimbi's troops,

which are now a wing of the South African Defence Force. Jonas Savimbi's much-publicised visit to Washington in December 1985 was an aspect of Reagan's discredited policy of "constructive engagement."

Racist South Africa says the presence of the Cuban forces in Angola is a threat to South Africa, and Namibia can therefore not be independent whilst the Cuban forces are in Angola. This is a defiance of the international community, a defiance of the United Nations Resolution 435, which calls for the ending of the illegal occupation of Namibia.

Such is the 'logic' of imperialists, colonialists and racists in Southern Africa. Even America — which has troops all over the world — has joined the chorus.

The truth of the matter is that the Cuban internationalist forces were invited by an independent government of Angola, and the same cannot be said about the racist forces occupying parts of Angola. No country in Southern Africa feels threatened by the presence of the Cuban forces in Angola except racist South Africa. The Cuban forces have never engaged the South African racist forces outside the borders of Angola.

The struggle of the people of Angola shows the important role of internationalism in the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggle. The imperialist countries will not allow the newly liberated countries to choose their future development. The new state has to defend itself militarily. Angola has no relations with racist South Africa except in the field of battle. But it does have a good relationship with the representatives of the South African and Namibian people. It supports

their struggles in various ways.

Angola, as a country which consciously combines African resistance with a socialist ideology — Marxism-Leninism — belongs to that new category of independent African countries whose militant anti-imperialism strikes fear in the hearts of racists, imperialists and colonialists. The leaders of MPLA view the African revolution in the context of the wider anti-imperialist struggles, without neglecting the concrete realities of their country.

We agree with President dos Santos when he says that the aim of this policy of political and military destabilisation of Front Line countries is to favour the fall of the legitimate governments and the coming to power of racist South Africa's puppets, so as to perpetuate apartheid and the illegal occupation of Namibia. That explains why racist South Africa has massed forces totalling an estimated 20 000 men inside Angola, and along the border, deployed in six battalions, a light infantry brigade and a motorised brigade equipped with Kentron artillery. The concentration of large numbers of Mirage aircraft and helicopters at the Ondangwa, Oshakati and Rundu air bases in northern Namibia proves the point that Namibia is being used as a launching pad to attack Angola. Racist South Africa exploits Namibian mineral resources and oppresses the Namibian people, whose cheap labour means super-profits for the multi-nationals.

Angola is paying a high price — an estimated 60% of the Angolan government's budget is forced to be allocated for defence against Pretoria's and Savimbi's attacks. The racists are literally bleeding the country. Peace can only be achieved in Southern Africa if apartheid is destroyed, and the only forces that can achieve this are the ANC and SWAPO. The support of the international community is vital. Let us free South Africa, and remove the source of tension, death and destabilisation in our region.



African National Congress

75th ANNIVERSARY CALENDAR

January 8th, 1987 will mark the 75th Anniversary of the foundation of the African National Congress. This important date occurs when the struggle for freedom in South Africa has reached a watershed. Our people are resisting by all means at their disposal, heroically fighting the armed might of apartheid terrorism. The killing, detention, torture and harassment of our people on a nationwide scale continues unabated behind the wall of silence imposed by the state of emergency.

To help convey to the people of the world our vision of the free, democratic and non-racial South Africa that is enshrined in the Freedom Charter, we have produced a special 75th Anniversary wall calendar using original paintings by South African artist Ruth Carneson.

The calendar is A4 size (210mm x 297mm) opening up to A3 size (297mm x 420mm). It has seven, A4 size, full colour prints as well as an A3 size design listing the main clauses of the Freedom Charter.

The price of the calendar is £3.00 plus 50p for packaging and postage (£3.50) and can be ordered from the:
African National Congress
PO Box 38, 28 Penton Street
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THE LEGACY OF MOSHOESHOE

By Sello Moeti

This year we observe the bicentenary of the birth of one of the most outstanding African statesmen that ever lived: King Moshoeshe I. It is estimated that Moshoeshe was born around the year 1780, to Mokhachane, a member of the royal family of Bakwena, in an area which is now Butha Buthe in Lesotho. Lepoqo, his original name, was slowly given up, following his defeat of a rival, whom he believed he had "shaved off". The name Moshoeshe moshwashwailane therefore, bespeaks the "shaving off" of rivals and enemies. Enemies Moshoeshe was to have by their dozens of all colours. The British empire, the Boers, disgruntled cattle thieves from the Cape and other Blacks from both around the area and from Natal. All were to taste the master's whip and in the case of the British and the Boers, it was to be again and again.

Moshoeshe came on the political stage of first Bakwena, then Bafokeng and other groups residing nearby, at the height of Difaqane. Like now, the whole region from the Cape of Good Hope right up to the Zambezi and beyond was engulfed in wars and social changes of great dimensions. The main protagonist of the change on the coast was uShaka ka Senzangakhona. In the interior was Moshoeshe. In the north, pulling together and moulding the new emerging nations, was Sekwati morwa Thulare and further, beyond the Limpopo, was Mzilikazi ka Mashobane and others. In the southern regions the ama-Xhosa had already been engaged in prolonged battles with the British who were slowly colonising the country.

The importance of the bicentenary of Moshoeshe lies in the lessons which we can and must learn, first and foremost uniting in action, military action to defend ourselves, and secondly how to deal with the siege of the nation by the Boers. Them and their western imperialist allies.

Today as in his time, African homes are being destroyed, people killed and the whole of Southern Africa is burning from the Cape to the Zambezi, set ablaze by the same hands as during the time of Moshoeshe. Thirdly, we must understand how to deal politically with the host of puppets and lackeys — genuine running dogs of the enemy, who were called levies during his time.

The first to taste the whip of the master of war and champion of peace was uShaka himself, who sent an army to attack Moshoeshe. It was the first defeat of the Zulu army since Shaka came to power. Moshoeshe sent them oxen and other gifts on their way back, expressing the view that he was convinced they had crossed the mountains because of hunger. This was the beginning of a long relationship between the Zulus and Basotho, in fact, the first political inter-regional state relationship that went far beyond the trade that went on before then. On his way to the north, Mzilikazi attacked Basotho. He too was to be defeated and when his armies were dragging themselves back to his kraal were treated to a provision of fat oxen. They too were never to return. So successful was Moshoeshe's ability to deal with the enemies of Basotho, that when Batlokwa attacked Basotho, it was the Zulus who attacked them from behind.

These battles which Moshoeshe fought and the relations he established immediately thereafter (he beat more powerful enemies both in the conduct of war and in immediately opening contact for inter-regional group relations) were to prove invaluable in the countless wars which were to come from the British and the Boers.

Boers Wanted Land, Cattle and Slaves

The first Whites who settled in Lesotho of the

days of Moshoeshoe were French missionaries. They were followed by trickles of Boers disgruntled with the lack of cattle to be stolen, land to be grabbed and children to be enslaved under British rule. When the Boers arrived in Lesotho, they properly asked for land on which "to feed the children" as they said.

But soon things were happening in those areas in which Whites were allowed to graze their cattle. Moshoeshoe later wrote to one of the warring factions of the Boers, a certain Boshoff, a self-styled president of a republic based in Bloemfontein, explaining the following: "When we saw that the Whites crossed the Orange River (in 1836) we wondered at it. They crossed by lots. They begged from the Blacks for pasturages everywhere, one by one, in a very good soft manner. We did not imagine that they would appropriate the land to themselves, and when I heard that they were purchasing farms from each other I hastened to issue a proclamation (Oct. 29, 1844) telling the Whites: do not barter the land, for it is not our custom of us Basotu to do so. According to our custom, the land belongs to all the people, it is bequeathed to our posterity, it is not disposed of by bargain and also it not our habit to define limits in it."

The British saw the expansion of the Whites to the interior, in terms of expanding influence of the empire. According to Casalis, a French missionary, the "colonists were already talking of White settlement in Basotuland and taxing the Basuto to swell the revenues of the colony". That is why all the time they made agreements with Moshoeshoe on paper and tried to implement something else on the ground. Sir Peregrine Maitland asked for land between the Orange and the Caledon Rivers, but took more land than was agreed. A Major Warden drew a line on a map, and carved off 10 000 Basotho out of their land, including Moshoeshoe's own brother's land and subjects proclaiming them Her Majesty's land and subjects. They interpreted agreements one-sidedly. Basotho, so far as the colonial regime was concerned, were not important. That is why it could alter agreements with them without bothering to inform them, including placing Lesotho under the Cape administrators against the expressed wishes of Basotho.

The Boers on the other hand had other problems. They not only declared the land allocated to them for use as their own, they shot people at random, taking their cattle and stealing children for use as slave labour. Boers after



Contemporary drawing of Moshoeshoe, the freedom fighter.

accumulating big numbers claimed the land belonged to them by right of occupation. Their leaders continuously tried to stir up one group of Moshoeshoe's subjects against the other, raiding their Basotho neighbours and enslaving women and children and taking their cattle. The president of the Free State, Boshoff, enticed other Boers from the Cape Colony and Natal with promises of land, low quit rent and "indentured kaffirs", that is, slaves. Moshoeshoe rejected the claims of the Boers saying "all people know that my great sin is that I possess a good and fertile country."

First Boer Attack on Missionaries

Beersheba was a mission station established with the permission of Moshoeshoe on the banks of the Caledon River. It was run by the Reverend Mr Rolland. Most of the people who stayed around the mission station and those who stayed far from it found no contradiction in praying to God and being ruled from Thaba Bosigo, the capital of Moshoeshoe. But on the morning of 22 of March 1858 a certain Sauer an Afrikaner landdrost surrounded the place and according to his account 50 African Christians were killed and 3 000 cattle captured. 30 in and around the mission and 20 others were ambushed when they tried to cross the river to find out why the mission was burning. The Boers pillaged and destroyed the mission, driving away the missionary himself and Mooi and Mareka, Basotho Christian leaders loyal to Moshoeshoe, were arrested by the Boers.

Another gang of Boers led by J W Pretorius attacked Basotho settlements in the area now known as Ficksburg. There too, according to their own account, 30 to 40 families were wiped out. Another expedition under a Commandant-General attacked people living under Moshoeshoe's son, Nehemia at Vechtkop and Moshoeshoe's brother Poshudi in his mountain place. In two days the Boers had killed more than 50 people, capturing women, children and cattle, devastating the whole area where they passed. Word had gone out to Moshoeshoe to stop the Boers. He, not knowing what was happening in the faraway areas, did not send in the necessary reinforcements quickly.

Letsie, Moshoeshoe's first son, being nearby, organised men, (knowing the so-called Kommando to be cattle thieving expeditions) set a trap for

them in a place called Hell. The Boers were intensely excited by the sight of the cattle and with their servants (gangs of well-known cattle rustlers from among the Korannas and Coloureds), tried to drive them away. Letsie, who acted only with his father's instruction, was forced to rout the cattle thieving party who lost heavily, leaving more than 16 Boers in the spot as they beat a hasty retreat leaving all their assistants and casualties behind. The raiders retreated to their areas to hold what was called a council of war, at which they resolved to mobilise support from the Cape, Natal and the Transvaal in order to attack Thaba Bosigo itself.

That support did come, and the Boers united for the time being, with 300 men crossed the Caledon River on the 12th of April to destroy Basotho. They split into two groups, one to capture cattle and destroy the surrounding area before the the main attack on Thaba Bosigo. Just as Basotho warriors had anticipated, the Boers got taken in by a handful of horsemen with cattle used as decoys near the mountain of Berea. Trying to win another victory, they made a sweeping movement only to discover too late that thousands of Basotho warriors, who finding them in the pocket prepared for them, launched their attack again and again until the Boers' ranks were broken and their positions taken over. The home-made gunpowder of the Basotho proved a drawback, especially when pursuing the retreating Boers as its propelling power could not reach the Boers, who were making good their escape, leaving their dead and injured behind.

Commandos Prefer Innocent Civilians

The other column of the Boers remaining at the Caledon, heard of the disaster that had befallen their troops. After consultations it was that they go in for smaller outlying areas such as Matsieng, where Moshoeshoe's son, Letsie, lived. He lived just next to Morija where the French missionaries had established extensive schools and churches. Letsie in the meantime had been reprimanded by his father for deploying national troops without permission. While the Boers were struggling to reach Morija, he was instructed to move all troops to Thaba Bosigo as Moshoeshoe had learned that the main aim of the Boers was to attack Thaba Bosigo after devastating the surrounding areas. Indeed thousands of Boers tried to storm the mountain

A soldier of Moshoeshoe's time.



and were beaten. "After a council of war that evening," a White historian who says his sympathies are "flowing towards the settlers of 1858" says, "after a debate full of disappointment and bitterness, it was resolved by the majority present to abandon all attempts and suspend operations, whereupon the army, composed mostly of conscripts called up under the Commando Law, broke up hastily and scattered in trepidation of the fate that might have befallen their homesteads".

Following the collapse of the campaign by the Boers to destroy Basotho, Moshoeshoe did two things. First he authorised reprisal raids by Basotho horsemen to retrieve some of the cattle which had found their way into the hands of the Boers, and to burn down their farms. Secondly he wrote letters to the governors of the Cape calling on him to mediate between him and the Boers. Then he wrote to the leaders of the self-styled Free State Republic based in Bloemfontein calling for negotiations for peace. The Boers quickly grabbed the chance to save face, because they could not now stop the Basotho horsemen who were recovering the stolen cattle and wreaking revenge for the losses suffered by their nation.

Britain: Betraying Blacks As Usual

The British for their part, were supposedly neutral, while in fact they were arming the Boers with the latest guns while denying the Basotho even gunpowder. The British were only too glad to be of use. Quickly Lesotho through a trick of agreements which they proclaimed from rooftops when it suited them, or quietly forgot when it did not, became a British protectorate of sorts. In the name of solving the land problems of the area, they divided it among the Whites, and Basotho ended up as landless peasants on the very land they had occupied and lived on for so long. The land occupied by Poshudi, Moorosi, Barolong and other groups, were declared White areas or part of the British empire. According to some estimates, 10 000 subjects of Moshoeshoe were removed from his rule in this way by Warden and Hogge. This naturally encouraged the Boers, who were being put above the owners of the land they had been kindly allowed to use.

Moshoeshoe himself in the letter to Boshoff enumerated the grave injustices which they had suffered at the hands of the British and the Boers as follows: "Then (1854) came Maitland (Sir Peregrine), a worthy chief, truly so. As to him,

he said to me, 'Moshoeshoe, my children (i.e. emigrant farmers) have gone away from me and I don't know where to locate them; grant me room between the Orange and Caledon rivers, toward their junction'

"To him I granted, because he had asked very properly of me, without stealing by taking anything away.

"Afterwards came the Major (Warden). He robbed me of the land from Maitland's over towards Jammerberg. I said, 'that man acts hastily, he robs me of a great piece of land, he robs me of it in a harsh way. In it there are but few Boers, though Poshudi lives within it, and there are villages in it beyond one hundred in number.' And the Major said: 'I will govern those villages, they are mine.' He said besides: 'On the Mantatis (Batlokoa) border people trouble you (though it was people let loose by himself) and I will not arrange anything there till you satisfy me about this new limit by subscribing your name to it'

"I therefore did put my name to it (October 1849) without the consent of my people. I said 'That thing will be evident to all men that is is the deed of a fool and perhaps it shall preserve peace between me and the English.' I said besides: should it one day be fought for (that limit), when the imbecility of it becomes evident the fault will not be attributable to me .

"It happened that Major Hogge came; he told me, I have been sent by the Queen to hear you.... He asked me at a national meeting (Pitso) held a Sunday.... 'Moshesh, do you wish that I should restore unto you your brother Poshudi and people taken in by Major (Warden)? I answered him saying, 'You have spoken.' 'Now' he asked, 'what did you complain of besides?' And I said, 'I complain of the major'. and he hastened to say and me too, I am in trouble about him. I have already put him out of office' And besides, that Capt. Bailie has also annoyed me very much by killing people by depredations made everywhere..."

British Themselves Attack Basotho

Such was the role of the British and Boers as seen by Moshoeshoe, in the long fight to defend Basotho. It was Major Warden in fact who was to come to Lesotho, ostensibly to sort out Boer-Basotho grievances only to end up exacerbating them. After drawing the so-called Warden Line,

he mobilised Boers to enforce it on Basotho who he accused of not respecting it. Moshoeshoe later wrote that he was waiting for people to see that it was stupid and unfair, and was signed only on the understanding that Major Warden would control the Boers whom he claimed to represent.

Moshoeshoe wrote a letter to a Kommandant Wessels of the the Boers of the Free State (whom Major Warden was mobilising with the governor of the Cape), warning them of reprisals if they joined in the attacks on Basotho. Major Warden however managed to knock together 3 000 Boers mixed with British soldiers and launched his attack.

The British war against Basotho was even more vicious than that against the Boers, as the British had professional soldiers and artillery. A missionary who was there at the time describes how things happened there: "On the 30th of June at daybreak a considerable force composed of English soldiers, Cape Mounted Rifles, Boers, Baralongs, Korannas, various other native allies with artillery made a simultaneous attack on the Bataung under Chief Molitsane and on the Baramokheli subjects of Moshesh near Mekuatl-ing. The Baramokheli were at first worsted and all their cattle fell into the hands of the Baralongs and Korannas. But very soon a large body of warriors, headed by the eldest son of Moshesh (Lettie), made their appearance, retook the cattle and cut in pieces a body of Barolong and Korannas who offered resistance. This part of the battle was fought on an extensive flat-topped mountain which is edged with perpendicular rocks. The Basotu, after having thus killed a great number of their opponents on the flat above, drove the rest to near the brink of the precipice. There a desperate struggle took place, the assegai, the battle-axe and the gun making incessant execution...those who did not fall by those weapons were hurled down on the awful crags below. At the same moment British artillery supported by the Cape Mounted Rifles and large body of natives was repulsed by Molitsane and driven back towards the camp of Major Warden in great confusion. The following morning the British Resident began to retreat to Thaba Nchu."

Moshoeshoe after this humiliating defeat for the British sent them a letter as he often did with his beaten enemies "begging" them to negotiate peace. The British were sulking bitterly. They argued strongly that honour should be restored

to British arms. In the jargon of the empire, they needed to "teach the savages" a lesson. And in due course an excuse was organised and a General Cathcart mobilised his troops, not only to attack Baramokheli and Molitsane but Thaba Bosigo itself and restore the "honour" of British arms.

Britain Attacks Moshoeshoe Again

The White historian whose sympathies "flow towards the settlers" (Lagden in his *The Basothos* using British military sources), relates the outcome of the fighting between General Cathcart and Moshoeshoe in the following way: "The troops marched in a direct line towards the fortress at Thaba Bosigo, formed in three columns for a concerted movement, one under personal observation of the General himself, the other two commanded respectively by Col. George Napier and Col. William Eyre of the 73rd Regiment. The divisional orders set forth that the object was to chastise the chief Moshesh and capture cattle.

"Directly across the line of march there lay the Berea, a long narrow flat-topped mountain of irregular shape with precipitous sides broken through in one or two places by tortuous passes closed up at the crest almost in the form of gateways. The plan of campaign was for the army to take this mountain in its stride, the column under Col. Napier, mostly cavalry, to work round the left or north-eastern corner to connect with that under the General who took the right or western side, whilst the centre column under Col. Eyre should ascend the heights, traverse the mountain and effect a junction at midday with the other columns on the far side, driving in front of him a large herd of cattle exposed to view on the top.

"General Cathcart proceeded almost unmolested to the proposed point of junction within sight of the Mission Station nestling under the brows of Thaba Bosigo upon the banks of the Little Caledon river... Col. Napier observed going up a steep cattle path winding through one of the passes a large drove which he promptly followed with his whole force, secured, and was leisurely driving down when a body of Basuto, watching their opportunity when soldiers and cattle were well mixed up in the pass, charged down upon them so fiercely that a troop of the 12th Lancers was nearly wiped out, another small party of Lancers getting into a cul-de-sac by mistake be-

ing entirely destroyed. Col. Napier with great difficulty released his column from the perilous position (ordering them to retreat). He was compelled, however, to abandon the route indicated in his orders and, instead of linking up with the other columns, fell back in some confusion to the main camp on the Caledon he had started from in the early morning, pursued of several miles and attacked in flank by the Basuto who made frantic efforts to recover a head of two or three thousand cattle driven along by the troops. Eventually the column recrossed the Caledon with the assistance of a company of the 74th Highlanders pushed forward to cover the retreat....

"Col. Eyre, following his instructions to cross the mountain, stormed it bravely in the face of opposition. Gaining the crest with little loss, he found the enemy dispersing in all directions, apparently disheartened, leaving in their flight a large mob of cattle which he proceeded to round up and drive off, when a strong force of Basuto under Molapo, some of them wearing white caps and bearing lances just seized from those of the 12th Lancers who had been killed on the other side, suddenly appeared in front, and dashing in plunged the column into confusion. Captain Faunce of the 73rd and three soldiers mistaking the enemy in white caps for Lancers, were taken prisoners and at once killed and mutilated in revenge for the death of some native women accidentally shot, supposedly, by the soldiers. Col. Eyre extricated his men only with great difficulty, descending after running fight to the plain below...

"General Cathcart was during that night far from comfortable. He was attacked at intervals while in bivouac in some old kraals, was cut adrift from Napier's cavalry column his communications were dangerously threatened and supplies limited..."

Such was the plight of the troops which were to restore honour to British arms. General Cathcart, could not even go back to pick up the dead and wounded of his columns, let alone teach anyone anything. He received a letter just before retreating written by Moshoeshoe, "begging" for peace, ironically ending with the words, "your humble servant".

While the Basotho were locked in combat with the British Empire, the Boers were mobilising

*Moshoeshoe —
Founder of the Sotho Kingdom.*



from as far as Transvaal and the Cape in preparation for attacks on Lesotho. By 1867 Boer commandos were destroying fields throughout the whole country stealing cattle. Moshoeshoe then organised a line of defence whose centre was Thaba Bosigo where he stayed. His son Masupha and his grandson Lerothodi would defend the Kheme plateau; his brother Poshudi would hold Mathebe, while Makwaai would hold the mountain known as Mabokola. Moshoeshoe would be in Thaba Bosigo.

The Boers who had by this time organised close to 5 000 men destroyed all fields belonging to Basotho. Mabokola was overcome and later Mathebe where Poshudi was killed. Kheme was besieged. Again and again the desperate Boers tried to storm Thaba Bosigo; again and again they were repulsed. As the siege went on for a long time some of the cattle, estimated at 70 000 crowded on Thaba Bosigo started dying of hunger, as all grass was eaten. The conditions became impossible. Knowing the jealousy existing between the British and the Boers who were besieging his fortress, Moshoeshoe, displayed again his wisdom, by volunteering the declara-

tion of Lesotho as a British protectorate.

The story of Moshoeshoe is the story of Basotho. It is an African story that was repeated again and again in Zululand, Zimbabwe, Sekhukhuneland, Namibia and other areas throughout sub-Saharan Africa. That he ruled over Ngunis from the Cape and Natal, Barolong and other Tswana speaking groups from the west, is an achievement of unity that puts to shame the tribalists of today. He waged a principled struggle on the diplomatic and military levels to defend our independence, even when the choice was between the devil and the deep sea.

The January statement of the NEC of the African National Congress, calling for the appropriate marking of the bicentenary of Moshoeshoe calls on those who profess to be leaders of the people, to "strive to unite the African people and not divide them, work to satisfy the aspirations of the people and not betray them, fight arms in hand in defence of the interests of the masses and when necessary negotiate as genuine representatives of the people and not as beggars at the master's table."

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS IN SOUTH AFRICA

By Sammy Adelman

In 1985, South Africa became, in effect, the first country to default on its international debt. In the face of mounting resistance, with the economy sliding deeper and deeper into crisis, the racist regime, having no coherent strategy, responded in characteristic fashion by imposing a state of emergency and increasing still further its repression of the Black majority.

The first concrete sign of the economic crisis was probably the wave of strikes which began in Durban in 1973 and spread around the country, eventually involving more than 100 000 workers. These workers were responding to the increasing economic misery in which they found themselves, despite the economic boom in the 1960s, which had seen growth rates exceeded only by those of Japan. In 1974, the rise in oil prices sent shock waves through the world economy, and South Africa slipped into a deep and prolonged recession. In 1975, for example, the economy grew by just 2%. At the same time, after the liberation of Mozambique and Angola, the Pretoria regime invaded Angola, and has never ceased since then to attack the Front Line States, so that the cost of maintaining apartheid was substantially increased. The intensification of the struggle for the liberation of Namibia by SWAPO meant that the war in that country was costing Pretoria R1 million per day by the mid-1980s.

The Price of Repression

In 1976, the youth rose up, establishing patterns of resistance which have continued ever since, and raising the cost of defending apartheid within the country. As the country has slipped deeper into crisis, the state has responded with increased repression behind the facade of 'reform.' State expenditure now takes up approximately 30% of the Gross Domestic Product, having doubled between 1980 and 1984. And, not surprisingly, the official defence budget (much defence spending is hidden in other accounts) constitutes more than 15% of the budget. There is virtually no return on these staggering amounts, for they go to completely unproductive sectors of the economy.

From 1974 to 1978 the economy remained

deep in recession. Between 1979 and 1981 there was a brief boom, largely due to the price of gold, which peaked at around 800 dollars. Ever since, growth has been less than the 5% considered necessary to keep pace with population growth, never mind reducing the massive and increasing levels of unemployment (estimated at approximately 30% amongst the Black population).

Although the high price of gold made possible a doubling of imports between 1975 and 1980 it could not hide the problem of balance of payments. This problem is historically structured into the economy by the weakness of manufacturing industry, which is the usual barometer of a country's economic strength. This means that periods of growth are stunted because the rise in imports which is necessary to stimulate growth at the same time drives the balance of payments into deficit. By the end of 1981, the price of gold had fallen by almost half, revealing the underlying structural problem that has existed as long as capitalism in South Africa.

Deeper in Debt

In the first quarter of 1984, for example, the balance of payments deficit had reached nearly R3 billion, a level dangerously high for an economy of this size. The economy did not grow at all in 1982, and the government was forced into seeking a R1.25 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Both the state and the private sector were forced to borrow heavily overseas, at a time when international interest rates were climbing. The foreign debt is estimated to be around R32 billion, of which R14 billion is short-term, and it was the refusal of foreign banks to roll over or renew these short-term loans in the middle of 1985 that caused rich White South Africa to become the first country to default on its foreign debts.

In the past few years, inflation has veered — officially — between 13% and 20%, but, for the Black population, it is at least 8% higher than that, because the prices of staple foods have risen most rapidly. There was a mini-boom in early

1984, but the writing was on the wall. In July the gold price fell again and the rand slipped to 68 cents against the US dollar; between September 1983 and December 1984 the rand lost 36% of its value against the dollar, and has since fallen even lower. General Sales Tax was increased (again affecting Blacks most of all), the interest on overdrafts reached 25%, and the government imposed deep austerity measures, under which Blacks, as usual, suffered the most. Since 1980, the unit price of South Africa's exports has fallen at twice the rate of its imports, while its terms of trade have fallen by approximately 20%. Manufacturing industry has been hardest hit by the slump, leading to increased unemployment and poverty, and fuelling the resistance of the oppressed majority. In the middle of the 1980s, it is evident that South Africa is caught in a vicious cycle of crisis to which the state and capital have no meaningful response.

Interest rates have climbed to nearly 25% in a vain attempt to combat inflation, but have succeeded only in choking growth, with the consequent reduction in imports having the same effect. Pretoria adopted tight monetarist policies which owed much to the examples set by Reagan and Thatcher and which were designed in no small way to combat the growing power of the unions by driving unemployment up and wages down.

Sanctions Ball Starts to Roll

By the middle of 1984, the UDF had been formed to fight the new fraudulent constitutional dispensation and, under the dead weight of increased economic exploitation and political repression, the masses had decided that they would take no more. Resistance escalated dramatically, with stayaways, rent and consumer and education boycotts. The police and army occupied the townships, and by the middle of 1985 the state acknowledged its loss of control by imposing a state of emergency.

With South Africa in the headlines every day, the world began to realise, finally, the reality of apartheid, and the sanctions ball started to roll: banks and multinationals began to realise that not only were the days of super-profits over, but that South Africa had become a risky investment. The rand fell sharply, and the R5.5 billion which was withdrawn in 1984 alone soon began to look miniscule.

This led to panic in both government and business circles, and South Africa's foreign exchange reserves plummeted nearly R400 million in a year. The full extent of the crisis in both its immediate and long-term structural senses became clear, and the political, ideological and economic dimensions, the internal and international dimensions, of the crisis began to interact and react upon each other to drive the country deeper into crisis. In June 1986, the state of emergency, which had been lifted in March, was reimposed.

Long-Term Crisis

The economic crisis is not simply a recession, part of the boom-and-bust cycle of capitalism, which will ease in a relatively short time and over which the state might have some degree of control. It is a fundamental structural crisis, and there is only one solution to it — the restructuring of the social order, based upon the will of the majority. This is so because the roots of the crisis are so deeply embedded in the structures of the society that overcoming it may take decades, time which the racist regime simply does not have.

The many facts and figures which reveal the extent of the crisis do not, however, explain it. Apartheid is a form of colonialism — colonialism of a special type — and at the heart of it is the control, exploitation and repression of Black workers, and Black people in general. This suggests that the crisis of apartheid is not simply economic, for it is obvious that there are important political and ideological dimensions as well. Rather, it is to state that 'reform' and 'total strategy,' the bleatings of Thatcher, Reagan and White capitalists in South Africa, the war in the sub-continent and the oppression of the majority cannot be understood outside of the economic context.

People's Resistance

The escalation of resistance to apartheid by the oppressed Black majority, and the international campaign for the complete isolation of the regime, are the single biggest factors behind the crisis. The past two years have witnessed an unprecedented escalation in resistance, to the point at which the people have responded to the call of the ANC, and made large parts of the country ungovernable. **The struggle for national liberation has intensified, while the economic crisis has intensified the class war.** Organisations such as

the UDF and COSATU have arisen in response to the demands of the oppressed majority and have made it clear that 'reform' is inadequate. At the same time, cadres inside the country, and the work of Umkhonto we Sizwe have caused substantial economic and psychological damage. The cost of policing apartheid has increased substantially as the masses refuse to accept the system any longer.

Essentially, apartheid is disintegrating because the oppressed Black majority are ensuring that it can never again be profitable. This resistance has, however, been taking place on an economic minefield, with several bombs going off at the same time.

Sanctions Threaten the Regime

The international campaign for the isolation of the regime is having an effect, with the imperialist countries being dragged screaming into the grudging imposition of sanctions, and the banks and multinational companies deciding that apartheid is no longer a good investment. The need for foreign investment and the impact of sanctions should not be underestimated, for South Africa is crucially dependent upon the import of capital goods and technology — although disinvestment is taking place slowly as South Africa becomes a risky investment, it is a total trade embargo which is likely to be devastating to the apartheid economy.

A second major factor is South Africa's position in the world economy. The country has been slotted into imperialism primarily as a producer of mineral and agricultural products, so that the country's manufacturing industry remains relatively underdeveloped and uncompetitive. The developed capitalist countries can produce goods more cheaply because of their monopoly on research and technology on the one hand, and their access to larger internal and international markets on the other. As a result, South Africa is crucially dependent upon the import of capital goods and technology for growth, but this inevitably leads to problems with the balance of payments. In addition, South Africa suffers because its inflation rate is generally higher than that of its competitors and — more recently — because while the falling value of the rand makes exports cheaper, it makes imports prohibitively expensive.

The third major factor is apartheid itself, which

has contributed significantly to the structural crisis. There is no doubt that apartheid, colonialism and capitalism have long been compatible, and have served each other very well. As the crisis has developed, however, it has become apparent that the constraints placed upon capitalism by apartheid have significantly diminished the scope of action of the regime and the capitalists. The history of apartheid is proving to be a massive trap.

Shortage of Skills, Shortage of Markets

To cite but two examples, we may look at skills and markets. Gutter education has meant that Blacks have historically been 'educated' to do only manual labour, and this has inevitably led to an acute shortage of skills in the economy, which the state has tried to overcome through White immigration, but without success. This problem is made more acute by the fact that White males are withdrawn from the economy to defend the system in the SADF. The recommendations of Wiehahn and Riekert were, in part, designed to overcome this structural bottleneck — again without much success.

Similarly, the fact that Black wages have been kept at starvation levels has meant that there is no significant internal market for manufacturing industry, and the abhorrence for apartheid in the rest of Africa has meant that such markets have not been readily open to an economy which cannot compete with the Japanese, Europeans and North Americans in the rest of the world.

Whites Confused and Demoralised

As the spirit of the Black masses becomes stronger, the Whites become more demoralised and ideologically confused, and this is one of the factors in the crisis. By the early 1970s, a group of Afrikaner bourgeoisie had emerged, with interests identical to those of the English-speaking bourgeoisie and their foreign allies. These Afrikaners began to find that, for the reasons mentioned above, apartheid was no longer serving their interests in the way that it had before. What they required was a free labour market and less state control of the economy. In part, this led to 'reforms' such as Wiehahn and Riekert, and to the tri-racial constitution in an attempt to create a Black buffer middle class with a vested interest in stability and capitalism on the one hand, and a larger internal market on the other.

The resistance of the oppressed majority has

made virtually every move by White capitalists redundant. In fact, every attempt at reform has been used by the Black majority to push the regime's back up against the wall. At the same time, the White farmers and those Whites with less economic power felt threatened by 'reform,' and this provoked a split in the National Party in 1982 and the rise of the ultra-right AWB. Today, Afrikanerdom is split, riven with dissension, ideologically confused as apartheid crumbles around it, and unable to formulate a response beyond increased repression. And increased repression means even less international confidence in the economy, more sanctions and greater resistance by the oppressed majority.

Apartheid Is No Longer Profitable

In essence, apartheid is disintegrating because of our people's struggle against it. It is no longer profitable, and profit — huge profits — are the reason it was imposed and maintained. Because

the crisis is structural, there is no way in which the state or capital can overcome it without a fundamental redistribution of power and resources, which must logically mean the end of apartheid and which is the precise thing they will not do.

The crisis will not go away, but we should be wary of false enthusiasm. The South African economy will probably never again see the rates of growth and profit that characterised most of apartheid, but it is still the strongest economy in Africa, enjoying massive external imperialist support. Only the continued resistance of the masses, the organisation of the workers, the people's army and the struggle for the complete isolation of the regime will bring about the destruction of White colonial power, which has always been at the heart of apartheid and which must be destroyed if apartheid, in its economic as well as political manifestations, is finally to be buried.

FORCED REMOVALS & GROUP AREAS

By Esther Levitan

The process by which millions of people who occupied the land were dispossessed of it has been a continuous one from the day the first Whites set foot on South African soil, more than 300 years ago. The African people were driven off their land by force of arms and were systematically deprived of it by a vast and intricate web of laws which proscribed areas for their residence, eliminated their access to land outside those areas, reduced them to the status of tenants and workers for White farmers or migrant labourers, and legitimised forced removal and relocation. Influx control and the 'homelands' system are two means for implementing the grand design of apartheid.

Forced removals and relocation are a third prong of the fork. They are the mechanisms used to rid "White areas" of as many Africans as the policy of separate development deems necessary. Although some of these Africans acquired their land before the 1913 Land Act was promulgated, although they many have rights to

live and work in White areas, they can be removed by simply re-drawing the boundaries of a township. Or, if a bantustan is sufficiently close to a White area (75km), the township residents can be removed and relocated in "commuter" townships in the bantustan.

Millions Moved

Between 1960 and 1983, more than 3.5 million people were uprooted and relocated — a peacetime record unparalleled anywhere in the world — and according to the National Committee Against Removals, another 2.4 million are threatened with removal. The largest single group of 1.13 million are African farm workers, tenants and squatters on White farms. They constitute the most oppressed group, and their eviction is an ongoing feature of life in rural South Africa. Then, there are another 1.5 million people of several categories. They are people removed from "Black spots" — freehold land owned

by Africans in the middle of areas zoned exclusively for White ownership and occupancy.

They are people living in areas due for consolidation into the bantustans; people from urban townships removed to townships in bantustans. They are people living in "informal settlements" — that is squatter camps and shantytowns, on the edge of White towns — who have escaped from the bantustans in search of work, or who have been forced out of White areas by influx control. Another 100 000 people have been moved for infrastructural and strategic reasons — construction of dams and highways, conservation, security. Another 1 million people have been moved under the Group Areas Act, with which I shall deal later.

Some relocation areas are intended to be urban townships within a bantustan, to supply labour for industrial complexes in nearby white areas. Others, called "closer settlements", are officially for squatters from farms and people from "black spots". Others are temporary transit "emergency camps" for people who may be moved again. Masses of people have been moved twice and even three times. Some of these camps have been 'temporary' and 'emergency' for thirty years. In the facilities which it provides, the government tends to favour Coloureds and Indians over Africans; urban people over rural ones; industrial workers over agricultural workers; and the employed over the unemployed. Thus facilities in Group Areas townships are superior to those found in African relocation areas, and those in resettlement camps in the bantustans are the very worst and affect the greatest number of people.

A settlement camp is a vast sea of tin or wooden one-room huts or tents on small plots of land, too small even for minimal subsistence farming, tucked away in some remote and impoverished corner of a bantustan. These areas are distinguished by their desperate poverty, their dense over-population (mainly women, children and old people) and their tin toilets. The tin toilet has become the symbol of forced removal. There are several hundreds of these settlement camps scattered across South Africa. Yet the present ghastly conditions are an "improvement" on those of the 60's, when people were compelled to live in tents, without toilets or running water. The exposure of these conditions in Cosmos Desmond's book, *The Discarded People*, caused

such an international outcry that the government replaced the tents with one-room huts, and provided communal taps and latrines. However, the more isolated the area, the less likely it is to be visited by journalists and outsiders, and the more likely the government is to skimp on the basic essentials which it claims to supply.

Dying of Starvation

When I visited Kammaskraal in the Ciskei, the people were still housed in tents, and their water was supplied by a few water trucks. On their removal, they had been issued with rations for three weeks. And after that? Some of them were trying to grow mielies in the rocky soil between the tents. At the mobile clinic, we were told that all the children were suffering from some degree of malnutrition. At Mbazwana, in KwaZulu, there were tents and nothing else. People had to walk long distances to collect domestic water from bilharzia infected streams. As relocation areas are far from work opportunities and provide no land for agriculture, it is not unusual to find whole families eking out an existence on the pitiful pensions of elderly grandparents — R50 a month — and they consider themselves fortunate to have even this source of income.

South Africans are dying of starvation in one of the richest countries in the world. Apartheid has been condemned by the international community as a crime against humanity, and it is.

In order to achieve the goal of apartheid, Black communities peaceably settled for decades on land bought and paid for in the 19th century by the toil and sweat of their ancestors, are uprooted and dumped in distant arid wastelands. Communities who had managed to live by subsistence farming and by working in nearby towns, who laboriously built a church, a school, a clinic, are steamrollered into the barren wastes graciously bestowed on them as their homeland. One day, GG trucks drive into their village, their homes are marked with a number, and an official announces that on a certain date they must be ready to be relocated.

Having proclaimed the death knell on the village, the truck and officials depart. They may return a month or two later, to repeat the announcement. They may return in a year, or not at all. There are some communities who were told of their impending fate more than five years ago, and have not heard a word since. The pro-



Mogopa villagers forced to sell to White farmers the possessions they cannot take with them.

tracted delay and uncertainty exacerbate the pain and hardship of being wrenched from one's home and familiar environment.

Social Structures Break Down

The social structure of the village breaks down. For, if you are going to be moved, you don't mend a leaking roof, or repair a broken window. Because you are going to be moved, you don't plant or sow, as you won't be there to reap the harvest. Because you don't know how much land you will have and whether there will be any grazing, you sell your cattle and goats. And you sit and wait, with your possessions littered around you, for removal to the promised land. You wait and you wait, until you actually yearn to be moved, as an end to the waiting, and your removal becomes voluntary, perhaps even desirable.

At first, in their ignorance and confusion, communities complied docilely. However, as more and more stories of resistance spread by bush telegraph, more and more removals had to be carried out by force. As resistance increased, and to appease international and national anger, the Minister of Cooperation and Development stated in parliament that there would be no more forc-

ed removals and that Black communities would be moved only with the agreement of their leaders.

So, instead of police, dogs and bulldozers, they resorted to more subtle means. They promised the chief or headman land, a fine house, money, a car, and when he was sufficiently softened up the villagers had to go with him. Or they made promises to the land owners, divided them from their tenants, and broke the unity of the community. Or they withdrew transport, making it impossible for workers to get to their jobs. There are even stories of water being cut off. Still, many communities held out.

Tearing People from Their Land

Driefontein, whose leader Saul Mkhize was shot in cold blood by a policeman at a village-meeting, has not been moved. Mathopestad has not been moved. Thwarted by the intransigence of the people and their leaders whom the government called "stubborn old men", the authorities negotiated with the "residents" — tenants, temporary residents and, it is alleged, workers brought in from nearby towns. But Mathopestad has still not

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OCTOBER 11 — International Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners



The Delmas Treason Trialists —

(back row, left to right) Moses Chikane, Naphtili Nkopane, Thomas Manthata, Tsietsi Mphuthi, Tebogo Geoffrey Moselane, Patrick Baleka, Petrus Mokoena, Lazarus More, (middle row, left to right) Sam Matlole, Bavumile Vilakazi, Patrick 'Terror' Lekota, Gcinumuzi Malindi, Serame Hlanyane, Thabiso Ratsomo, Sekwati Mokoena, (front row, left to right) Jerry Tlhophane, Simon Vilakazi, Oupa Hlomoka, Popo Molefe, Amos Malindi, Ephraim Ramakgula, Simon Nkoli. These people's leaders were arrested by the racists in an attempt to suppress the present upsurge which began in September 1984.

Right: **William 'Gilly' Nyathela** — 12 years old — was subjected to electric torture in detention. He has been detained four times this year. There have been at least 15 000 people detained under the present state of emergency and at least 3 000 are under the age of 16.



UDF meeting, Cape Town, February 1986.

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been moved. The Magopa community suffered initial defeat and was moved. Forcibly placed on trucks by board officials and armed police, they were transported to their allotted bantustan. But the people took the matter to court, to appeal in the high court, and they won — their removal from their "Black spot" was declared illegal.

But most communities have been torn from their land and dumped miles from anywhere, in an endless expanse of desolate scrub, covered with a rash of tents and tin toilets. How do they survive? Mrs A of KwaZulu says: "Before, we had homes and fields for the future of our children. Now our children live in tents and have no fields and no future". Mrs S of Mahodi, Lebowa, says: "We have no money. We never had any money. But here we feel it more, because we don't plant anything, we don't grow anything, and we have to buy things we never used to buy". Mrs T of Kammaskraal, Ciskei, says: "We try to make ends meet, to survive, We live in bad conditions and see ourselves broken bit by bit!" (Mrs T's only regular income is her old age pension, and occasionally a migrant worker son sends her a little extra money).

One million more farm workers are threatened with imminent removal. These are the people at the very bottom of the relocation pile. They have no rights to compensation, although they may have been on the farms for generations. On eviction, they frequently have to move themselves and find their own shelter in the bantustan, because the government does not recognise its role in their relocation. Influx control prevents them from settling in the towns. They live with anxiety, tension and indecision — to carry on ploughing, to re-thatch a roof, all become political decisions. But a phoenix has arisen from the ashes of South African genocide. The turbulence into which the government has thrust so many communities unleashes new responses and new social forces, so that in the course of the struggle against removal, conditions change irrevocably.

The threat of removal has transformed traditionally conservative unsophisticated people into implacable opponents of the government policy. The struggle against removal is a fundamentally politicising process which mobilises

communities, confronts them with the harsh realities of apartheid, and evokes the emergence of new leaders. It also leads the community to look at other issues and take up other problems and other forms of community action and development.

Whites Take Land And Destroy African Houses

The houses in which South Africans live range from luxurious ranches, through farms, more modest houses and apartments to city slums and rural hovels. Black housing is a weapon of apartheid, wielded in urban townships by appointed and hated corrupt Black Local Authorities officials and White bureaucrats. Until 1948, some Africans enjoyed some freehold and leasehold rights in some urban areas. When the National Party came to power, they were deprived of these rights and were forcibly evicted and moved to prescribed townships in the borders of White towns.

Being 'legal', that is possessing the necessary qualifications in terms of Section 10 of the Black Urban Areas Act of 1945, does not automatically entitle an African to housing in an urban township. If you are an African, you cannot simply build, or buy or rent a house. You have to wait for a house to be allocated to you. You need a lodger's permit, tenants' permits for your family, and the goodwill of the hierarchy that rules the townships, and even then you are always vulnerable to eviction. Thousands of Africans have been waiting for houses for more than ten years, living in the meantime in the twilight of illegality, creating, and squatting in, shantytowns on the periphery of townships, in the veld, anywhere, simply to have a place to live. They are subjected to constant harassment, arrest and expulsion to the bantustans.

The Crime of Apartheid: A Witness' Account

On a cold, rainy, winter day, I watched the demolition of a small shanty town in the Western Cape — a camp of about one hundred pondokkies (shanty shacks), with sheets of black plastic for roofs and the sides open to the elements. The people had been there for some time, but could not be tolerated in even such primitive shelters because they were 'illegal' in terms of influx control. Men, women, children, and their possessions were unceremoniously and callously bundled on to trucks and deported to the Transkei,



Sitting in the remains of what used to be their bedroom, Western Townships, December 1985.

their assigned homeland. It is a reflection of the obscenity that is apartheid that Africans have to wage a continuous struggle to live in the most abysmal conditions in the land of their birth.

The story of Crossroads, described by a Deputy Minister of Cooperation and Development as a "symbol of defiance and anarchy", made world news. In the years that they waited for housing, the Crossroads people created a settled and vibrant community — with a creche, primary school, clinic and market place. (I even went to a concert there). They resisted the banishments and promises they got instead of houses, and refused to be moved, despite massive police onslaught and brutality. Today, Crossroads is being decimated; residents with Section 10 rights are being moved to Khayelitsha, a new African township about 35 miles from Cape Town, and those without Section 10 rights, about two thirds of the Crossroads community, are being sent to the Transkei or Ciskei.

A Bigger Crime in Rural Areas

A look at African housing in rural areas reveals an equally horrific tale of calamity and hardship,

which I can best describe by a few random case histories.

Mr J lived and worked in the town of his birth for many years. One day, the authorities claimed that he was born outside the town and required a permit to work in the municipal area. He got a permit and housing in single quarters in the Black township. He married a Coloured woman and his problems multiplied. As he was prohibited from living in the Coloured township, his wife moved in with him. But she was not allowed to be in an African township and was certainly not allowed to share his single quarters. After repeated warning, Mr J's permit to work and his accommodation were cancelled. Where are they to go now?

Mr and Mrs O were living on a farm since 1962. Because there are no schools for Black children in the area, Mrs O took her children to a boarding school in the Transkei, and when she returned home, she found that they had been moved out of their house and her husband was in single quarters. As she had no other home, she moved in with him. They have twice been arrested — she for being where she is not permit-



Racist police and soldiers erect barriers to prevent Crossroads residents from returning to rebuild their homes.

ted to be, and he for harbouring her. There is no room in the township and no other farmer can accommodate them unless they are registered as working for him. Where are they to go now?

Mrs M lived and worked on a plum farm for 20 years. The farmer decided to farm cattle instead of plums, and she and her family were evicted. Her husband worked for the Provincial Roads Department all his adult life and is supposed to live in a camp provided by the department. But where is his family to go, to live? Board officials and police regularly raid the camps with batons and tear gas. If the women do have permission to be in the area, they are charged with trespassing in the camp.

According to the official Yearbook of 1983, the shortage of houses for Africans outside the bantustans was estimated at 420 000, and the cost of eliminating this backlog was a staggering R3 360 million. It is estimated that by 1990, 2.5 million more homes would be needed which at 1982 prices would cost R4 000 million.

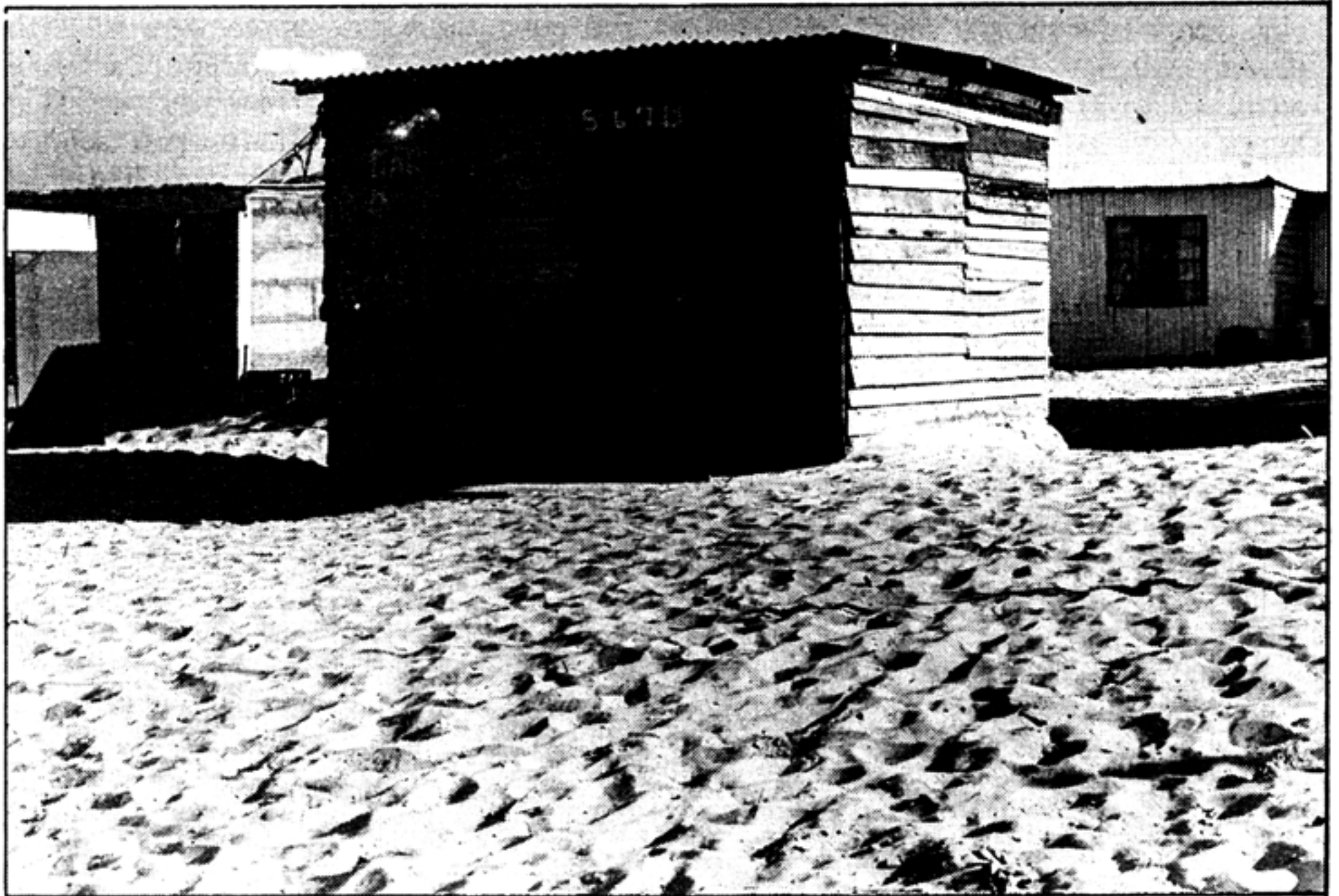
Group Areas is Group Oppression

The Coloured and Indian people who now enjoy

what Botha claims is a voice in their destiny, are also not free to live where they wish. They are controlled by the Group Areas Act, which explicitly demarcates specific areas for specific ethnic groups, because every aspect of people's lives is regulated according to the population group to which they are officially assigned, on the basis of general appearance, acceptance and descent — what you look like, or how other people regard you, and the 'race' of your parents. Introducing the Act in 1950, the then Minister of the Interior said "legislation was needed to reduce points of contact to a minimum. The paramountcy of the White man and of western civilisation in South Africa must be ensured in the interests of the material, cultural and spiritual development of all races."

With the promulgation of the Act, Coloureds and Indians who were living and trading in enclaves among Whites, were compelled to relinquish their old-established businesses, leave their homes and move into townships far from the city and workplaces.

The Group Areas Act has changed the demography of South Africa. In towns on the



Part of Khayelitsha.

Reef and in Natal, large numbers of retail stores were owned by Indians who lived either behind or above their shops. These towns are now White. As at February 1985, 2% Whites, 6.7% Coloureds and 91.3% Indians had been moved from their business premises. Vrededorp/Fordsburg, suburbs of Johannesburg, in which Indians had lived and traded for years, were zoned for Whites and the Indians were ordered to move to Lenasia, an Indian township about 11 miles away. They were offered shops and offices in a newly constructed complex at the edge of Vrededorp. They organised themselves and refused to move. And although they succeeded in delaying their removal, they were moved. Some of their homes were razed to the ground, others were tarted up for future White occupancy. Once bustling and teeming with life, Vrededorp/Fordsburg is now still and silent, and even its name has been changed, to Triomf — meaning "triumph" of apartheid.

The classification of District Six in Cape Town as a White area, caused an uproar. District Six and the Malay Quarter were occupied by Coloureds and Malays for more than a hundred years. They were vibrant, exciting places, a kaleidoscope of sight and sound and smells, pulsating with humanity, and were as much a feature of Cape Town as Table Mountain itself. Despite prolonged protest and opposition, in which a large number of Whites joined, the Coloureds and Malays were moved to the windy, desolate Cape Flats, and today District Six and the Malay quarter are occupied by Whites, in neat little houses in quiet neat little streets.

Doornfontein in Johannesburg was a Jewish 'District Six'. As the Jews made their way up the ladder to financial success and moved out, the Coloureds and Indians moved in. Group Areas decreed one side to be White residential and the other industrial, and the Coloureds and Indians had to go. Today, Doornfontein may be dull and dreary and polluted but it is White.

Botha's Coloured and Indian Faces

Even the Coloureds and Indians who accepted the much vaunted "constitution" are calling for an end to Group Areas. Separate parliamentary

"villages" have been built for these new members of the Coloured and Indian "parliaments", as they are not permitted to live in the already existing "White parliamentary villages". The Minister for Communications and Public Works said, last year, that about \$20 million had been spent on housing, office and debate accommodation. When one remembers the terrible housing shortage, the shanty towns and squatter camps, one can be only shocked and disgusted at such flagrant extravagance and waste.

And what of the Coloured townships which the government so graciously sets up — places with such charming names as Riverlea, Ocean View, Eldorado Park, Mitchells Plein? They are, by and large, all the same. They are all situated in the bare veld. They are all far from places of employment. They all have a kind of bleakness, of joylessness, despite the structural and physical improvement over the slums from which their residents came.

I visited Strandfontein on the magnificent False Bay coast a few months after it was established. The houses were very nice, equipped with electricity, running water, inside toilets. But there was no infrastructure; there were no social amenities. There was no transport; the nearest railway station is at least three miles away. There were no shops, no recreation or sport facilities, no clinic, nothing. Just sand, rising like clouds in the perpetual wind. The rents were exorbitant in relation to the residents' earnings, most of whom were compelled to take in lodgers.

When one ventures beyond the semantics and dogma of South Africa's iniquitous legislation, one comes face to face with the crass cynicism of its perpetrators at the social misery and human suffering which emanate from the practice of statutory and institutionalised racial discrimination.

The seeds for the exploitation and oppression of 26 million South Africans were sown many many years ago, but it is the Nationalists who tended them, nurtured them and multiplied them in response to their obsessive paranoia that "there will be no Black South Africans" — and that is the diabolical essence of apartheid.

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USSR:

ANC STUDENTS SHOW SOLIDARITY

In a display of bilateral solidarity, and as a token of friendship between the peoples of South Africa and of the Soviet Union, a group of ANC activists studying in the USSR donated 100 roubles to the Soviet Peace Fund, for the special account set aside to deal with the after-effects of the Chernobyl nuclear accident.

ANC EXTERNAL MISSIONS:

JUNE 16th-26th

Information is still coming in from ANC missions throughout the world about support shown for the ANC over the period June 16th-26th. Though these events took place several months ago now, we are giving some brief information about them, for they are evidence of the high level of interest in our struggle shown by people in many different lands.

Australia

A national week of action was held by all anti-apartheid groups in Australia to mark the anniversary of the Soweto uprising. On June 16th, a national day of prayer was organised by the churches, and a national boycott of Shell products was launched, with pickets at Shell offices and depots in all eight states. In Sydney, supporters ran from the South African Airways office in the city out to the international airport departures desk to coincide with the departure of a SAA flight; and demonstrators at the airport were addressed by Comrade Eddie Funde, ANC Chief Representative, and by Comrade Prince Cassock

of the ANC Youth Section.

Vigils were held all over the country; in some territories, pickets were held outside Coles Stores, a supermarket chain that stocks South African goods; there were concerts and films.

Canada

On June 16th, a freedom train from Toronto, Guelph, Kingston and Montreal brought demonstrators to Ottawa to join a huge crowd that heard Comrade Mac Maharaj, member of the NEC of the ANC, and speakers from labour, church, women's and youth organisations.

The speakers called on the Canadian Government to recognise the ANC, and demanded sanctions against South Africa.

Madagascar

In the Madagascar capital of Antananarivo, two important commemoration meetings were held, showing solidarity with the struggle of the people of South Africa on the tenth anniversary of the June 16th Soweto uprisings. Both meetings were attended by the ANC mission in Madagascar.

From the beginning of June, Malagasy Radio beamed daily announcements reminding the people to attend prayer meetings which were held in honour of the victims of apartheid in all churches throughout the island. The service in Antananarivo was addressed by the chairman of the Malagasy Christian Peace Conference, the Rev. Dr Richard Andriamanjato, who is also president of the Party of the Congress of the Independence of Madagascar (AKFM), a member of the Supreme Council of the Revolution (CSR), the highest political organ in Madagascar, and a Vice-President of the World Peace Council.

DISCUSSION ARTICLE

THE ANC DEVELOPS ITS STRATEGY

By Mahofisi

Under apartheid, the South African White population in general has become what one can call the "privileged protectorate" of the state. The Black population on the other hand has become the victim of apartheid and has been portrayed by the ruling circles as a danger to White minority rule and a threat to White privileges. In this way, the racist rulers divide the working class into Black workers and White workers and by according privileges, especially economic ones, to White workers the racists woo these workers away from their Black class brothers (Africans, Coloureds and Indians) into collaboration with their class enemy against their own class interests. These manoeuvrings by the ruling clique are an attempt to turn the White population as a whole into apartheid's social base. From among these Whites, the apartheid state recruits and gets personnel to man its institutions such as the army, police and so on. Of course the apartheid machinery is able to function all round, thanks to foreign monopolies which form its economic base.

Who is Fighting Whom in South Africa?
Racist South Africa is today bedevilled by two

contradictions in the main: the primary contradiction between labour and capital and the secondary contradiction between Blacks plus progressive Whites and the racists. At present the primary contradiction, the one between workers and capitalists, plays a secondary role while the secondary contradiction — that between Blacks together with progressive Whites and the racists — plays a primary role. In other words racial contradiction which is secondary in nature and embodied in apartheid must be resolved first, then all the workers in our country will be united and together face the monopolies in their struggle to resolve the primary contradiction. Any move by the apartheid authorities to recruit Blacks for the system is an attempt at extending the social base of apartheid which social base is constituted by Whites. That is why any Black person working for apartheid does so on an auxiliary basis. At the same time such a move is calculated by the authorities to deprive the liberation movement of potential reinforcements.

The Enemy Has Many Colours

Our experienced and time-tested organisation, the ANC, is heading the liberation movement as



a whole, and is championing our national democratic revolution, the victory of which will resolve the secondary contradiction referred to earlier. Non-racialism, perhaps put in another way, broad nationalism, is one of the main pillars of our movement's policies. In terms of this broad nationalism the enemy is not defined by skin colour but by, firstly, the ideas one holds, secondly, the actions one takes in defence and dissemination of such ideas. Thirdly, actions one takes in pursuance of set goals, emanating from ideas one holds. All these and others are then compared with the people's interests (The Freedom Charter) and then an enemy is identified. Our struggling masses, at the head of whom is the ANC, have two types of enemies, that is the direct enemy — the racists in Pretoria — and the indirect enemy — imperialism. Furthermore the direct enemy of the South African people has three layers:

- a) Primary enemy — racist rulers.
- b) Secondary enemy — bantustan puppets
- c) Tertiary enemy — informers, spies, saboteurs and other social outcasts.

It is therefore politically necessary and historically imperative that all ANC revolutionary energies be directed against the upper layer of our direct enemy — the racist rulers. This is in no way to suggest that the secondary and tertiary layers of our direct enemy be left alone; they too must be acted against.

Revolutions Need Many Tactics

The oppressed people of our country are struggling against the enemy, who is deeply rooted in the land and supported by leading powers of the West. In view of this, our struggle has to be, and is being waged on all fronts. The armed struggle embarked on by our people since 1961 at the head of which is their advanced detachment, namely Umkhonto we Sizwe, under the political leadership of ANC, is directed against enemy military personnel and their military installations.

In the light of the political struggle the ANC conducted talks with South African businessmen, who form the economic base of our enemy. The talks were at the request of the businessmen and were prompted by their fear of the overthrow of the racist regime. This fear is based in the

possibility that, in the event of the apartheid state being toppled, they may lose their huge investments. To these businessmen, talks with the ANC are aimed at finding an "accommodation" after the downfall of apartheid. To the ANC on the other hand the talks were on the basis of these businessmen's disagreement with apartheid in some respects. And as such thus far, the businessmen have some limited common ground with the forces of liberation. This common ground in turn creates real possibilities for these businessmen to co-operate with the South African revolutionaries in the struggle against apartheid. These businessmen can go along with our struggle as long as their interests are not threatened.

Co-Operation Is Tactical

By talking to the businessmen, the ANC did not abandon its principles but only employed other tactics in the struggle. When our common ground with them exhausts itself, the ANC will not only continue but will also intensify and accelerate the struggle. By assisting the revolution partially, for their shortsighted interests, the businessmen reduce their weight behind the regime and this in turn generates a sense of isolation on the part of the racists and thus increases their panic and insecurity. Politically it has been proved correct and historically confirmed, that an alliance, especially a political one, is a matter of principle, while co-operation has to do with tactics. Tactics are not immutable, they change in accordance with conditions and circumstances obtainable in a given theatre of struggle. In politics, revolutionaries can enter into co-operation with any force in a revolution as long as that force has some common ground with the revolution; no matter how limited that common ground can be, no matter how vacillating, how temporary and how conditional that force can be.

The South African regime's propaganda is laden with half-truths and deliberate misinformation about political developments at home and abroad, as well as about the ANC and its allies. The White students who ignored and braved their government's bannings on meeting with the ANC by seeking, finding and meeting with our organisation got to know what the liberation movement is and what it stands for. Way back home these students would be better placed to inform their colleagues about the ANC, its aims and objectives. Their being opposed to apartheid

and their expressed readiness to work for the resolution of the South African problems make these students part and parcel of the anti-apartheid mainstream in our country. Here again the enemy's social base is shrunk and his potential reinforcements seriously reduced. In short the enemy is further isolated and becomes more vulnerable. A stage is thus set for disagreements and possibly contradictions between "young and old" in the enemy social base.

The Crisis Compounded

Given this setting, uncertainty about the future haunts the racists and their allies. As the struggle continues and intensifies, the future for the racists and their supporters looks more and more bleak, and consequently some individuals out of despair, commit suicide, some leave the country, some take neutral positions and others join the liberation forces. Such developments compound the crisis already gripping the enemy, who thereby, becomes confused and politically directionless; as a result, he relies more and more on repression. Mounting enemy repression draws world-wide condemnation which then forces the allies to dissociate themselves from their condemned friend. The voice of liberation then gains more prestige.

The talks the ANC has held with bantustan leaders can perhaps be said to be in the form of a prodigal son coming back home. Even here such talks contribute towards replenishing enemy auxiliary forces. Usually religious groups in a country faced with a revolution behave in a way that can easily be mistaken for "benevolent neutrality". But as the situation becomes more volatile, these groups take a side on a "non-committal" basis.

All in all, the talks the ANC held so far with various groups in South Africa were aimed at isolating the enemy as much as possible, so as to make it easier to finally crush him (though the task can never be simple). One comrade once remarked that politics is more difficult than any other science, in that it deals with the most general laws and leaves the specifics to the creativity of history makers (the masses). In the case of other sciences, one gets formulas, but there are no easy formulas in politics. Whether this assertion is true or not, is itself an issue open to debate.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Nowadays, from the South African government, we are hearing calls that our organisation, the ANC, must "come home" to negotiate. We are hearing that as a precondition for such negotiations, the ANC must get rid of the members of the SACP from its ranks. We are also told that those who are members of our heroic People's Army, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) shall not be part of these talks. Furthermore, we are hearing that the ANC must cut its ties with the socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union.

There can be no clearer example that the Botha regime in Pretoria is not serious in solving the problems facing our country. They hoped by making such calls they would divide our organisation, defuse international pressure against apartheid and eventually win for themselves credibility as a new brand of racists who are prepared to solve the South African problems peacefully but hindered in doing so by members of the SACP and by MK and the ANC's "close ties" to the socialist countries.

The truth of the matter, however, is that the South African regime is not prepared to talk to the ANC — at least not now. They want to talk to an ANC which is not the ANC. They want to talk to a cap-in-hand organisation. They want to talk to an ANC which is disarmed and weak. They want to talk to a spineless and amorphous creature which has no independent decisions of its own, an ANC of their own model, which can be dictated to as to with whom it must make friends.

The ANC will remain what it is. It will not submit to the dictates of racists or any outsider. If the ANC is not what it is, it is not the ANC.

Yours

Magunya Benbella

CULTURE AND POLITICS: CREATIVE WRITING AS A WEAPON OF STRUGGLE

By Klaus Maphepha

We have already seen several issues of *Rixaka*, the cultural journal of the ANC. We are all hopeful that the contribution of many of our creative writers is now going to be enhanced. However, the real effort for the establishment of a journal begins when the question is asked, what is supposed to be projected and how to project it. I don't want to sound like that folklore character who said it is better to travel hopefully than to arrive. *Rixaka* has already arrived.

One German philosopher advised, "If you want to enjoy art you must be an artistically cultivated person." Perhaps that is where we should start — cultivate ourselves artistically. It must be said, however, that this article is not a critical look at *Rixaka*; but all that *Rixaka* has done to provide cultural food for thought.

Never has so much been written about man and culture as in recent years. So many definitions of culture have been given. This being not the aim of this article, the article prefers to leave the definition to those who have already done it so ably.

Largely, culture is seen as the accumulation of material and cultural values. Such a definition is incomplete without looking at a human being as the 'maker' of culture. Culture bears the fingerprints of humanity. Anything that is against humanity is anti-culture, is reactionary culture.

Culture implies a particular concern and compassion for the destiny of society. It implies the altruistic service of truth, virtue and beauty. This is what we mean when we say a person is cultured. A human being learns to be cultured; he is not born cultured. The concept of culture and anti-culture is expressed in an oppressive society in the sense that the culture of the oppressor exists separately from the culture of the oppressed, that of the exploiter from that of the exploited, that of the coloniser from that of the colonised.

Once we talk of *Rixaka*, of course, we are talking of a narrow definition of culture. We talk of creative, intellectual and artistic productions, and mainly in the written word.

Art and the Material World

The mode of production of material life has great influence on the social, political and intellectual life

processes in general. The sum total of relations of production gives the real basis on which a legal and political superstructure is built. To the superstructure correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The superstructure is the forms of law (written and unwritten) and politics, whose essential task is to maintain the social and economic status quo.

At the same time, it should be stated that the relationship between the two is not direct and mechanical. It is far from saying that works of art are simply a reflection of economic processes. Economic factors are, however, fundamental. Factors like religion, philosophy, customs, ideology, and so on, play a big role in influencing works of art. So elements of the superstructure, in turn, exert some influence on the economic processes and on one another. Works of art, because they fall under the superstructure, are also influenced by the politics and ideology of the oppressor in such a way that the dominant position of the oppressor in society should be seen to be natural, divine, or not to be seen at all.

Art of the Oppressed and the Oppressor

Art is jealously guarded and manipulated by the oppressor, because the oppressor is aware of the fact that art is one other form by which man confronts and assimilates reality. So when Bantu Education bludgeons us to recite *The Daffodils* and *Muskiete Jag*, when Mandela is in gaol and political funerals have become a daily ritual, it is precisely to conceal the facts of our struggle, or to divert attention from them.

This approach to the understanding of art has been widely criticised by bourgeois literary critics, who accuse it of seeing creative mental activity as nothing more than a product of inexorable economic forces. It is accused of seeing only economic robots with no appreciation of what the individual is worth.

Nothing is further from the truth. In fact, this scientific approach places man in the centre of its philosophy. We have said that the material basis changes man. We should continue and say that it is man who changes the material forces and in the process changes himself. The desires of a human being are conditioned primarily by the economic

A drawing by Thami Mnyele, murdered by the fascists in Gaborone, 14 June 1985.



circumstances, both his and those of society in general. Every man has a dual history — his social and personal history. The duality of this history should never be blurred, even in the field of art. In a character we see the society. Society constantly reveals a particular individual. Alex La Guma produced Michael Adonis, with whom we love, hate, curse, breathe. Michael also takes us up and down the filthy and broken streets of District Six. Shakespeare produced Falstaff. Besides seeing the society of Henry IV, we also see Falstaff as a fat, merry, ribald and boastful character.

It would also be wrong to see the culture of Michael Adonis as something entirely distinct from the culture of the oppressor. Historical and social

conflicts are essential for the fullest understanding of any work of literature. The culture of the oppressor and that of the oppressed are two social contents in one and the same container, two parts which are as inseparable as Siamese twins, and mutually influential as two sides of the same coin. The art of the oppressed is what it is, not entirely in spite of the art of the oppressor, but also because the art of the oppressor is there, and vice versa.

So some other aspects of the culture of the oppressed do not express the revolutionary nature nor the richness of that culture, but also its poverty under the claws of the culture of the oppressor. The antagonism between the two cultures at the same time represent a link between two sides, an aspect of their unity. At the same time it is true that the two sides torn away from each other are truly irreconcilable, because it is the conflict that unites them. So the future solution to the conflict should not be sought on only one side. It becomes important to examine the way the two sides interact on each other and how the conflict progresses. It is, however, the culture of the oppressed that will exert the decisive influence on our future cultures.

'Creator' or 'Producer'

A creative writer is essentially a 'producer.' He works with already existing material, producing something artistically new with what exists in society. A creative writer reflects what exists, what he or she perceives in society, but does not, however, reflect this reality like a mirror. But, as Berthold Brecht said, art "does so with special mirrors." Art reflects life at an artistic angle with reality. If a creative writer decides to reflect the future, he does so on the basis of what exists at present. So a creative writer (lest the name begin to mislead us) is not a 'creator,' but 'produces.' He uses certain means of production — the specialised techniques of his art.

This is the advantage of the writer in the vanguard of our struggle. He is in the best position to 'reproduce' the reality of our struggle. In the process of enriching his understanding through practical involvement and activity in the struggle, the author comes to a deeper understanding of reality. His deeper understanding causes new aspects of reality to unfold before him. Fuller truth can only be reached, not only through practical activity, but also through intense investigation, and in practical involvement.

Another added advantage to our creative writers is in the fact that an author is 'more free,' if he is writing for a readership with a wide choice, to turn his writing into reality. His freedom lies not with the publisher in this case but in the capacity of the

readership to struggle using his prose and characters.

Writer and Reader Interact

The real value of creative writing is in the impact which it leaves on the readership. The readership, on the other hand, is not simply a gullible receptacle. It also places specific demands on the author. Changes in the consciousness, experience and social composition of the readership affect the direction and level of creative writing. The higher the political and ideological consciousness of the readership, the greater the demand on the political and ideological input of creative writing. This does not necessarily mean that the higher political and ideological consciousness of the readership places a higher demand on the quality of creative writing as an art. What is politically and ideologically correct is not necessarily artistically 'superior' or artistically correct.

What made Marx admire a writer like Balzac? Balzac's sympathies were consciously with the nobles — a class that was doomed to extinction. Why did Lenin talk of Tolstoy as the 'mirror' of the Russian revolution of 1905? Tolstoy's Christian moralism was negatively conservative. The answer to this question is not easy.

The Writer's Partisanship

In short, we can say that such writers were great because they could see decadence, the baseness of the societies which they reflected in their writings. They were able to reflect the real and potential forces objectively in their societies. In that sense, 'objective partisanship' is already there in such objective writing.

A good writer should be concerned with cause and effect, not merely with descriptions and subjective analysis. The politics and ideology must not be preached, but should come naturally from circumstances and characters themselves. Our creative writing should not merely be political, but should also rise to the theme of man changing nature, creating new economic forces and, in the process, changing himself.

Form is the mode of existence of content. The primacy lies with the content, but form in turn influences content. Whether the content is going to be easily communicated to the reader depends also in the form in which it comes. Form and content have their unity in the reader. The harmony between the two is important.

Art and Morality

Engels, writing to Minna Kautsky, who had sent him her novel in 1855, said it is not wise for a

creative or fictional writer to be 'openly' partisan. The political point, he says, should emerge unobtrusively from the dramatised situations and characters themselves. Engels repeated the same advice in 1888 in his critical letter to Margaret Harkness, on her *A City Girl*. He says a:

"... novel fully achieves its purpose ... if by conscientiously describing the real mutual relations, breaking down conventional illusions about them, it shatters the optimism of the bourgeois world, instils doubt as to the eternal character of the bourgeois world ..."

That is where the greatness of Ngugi's *Petals of Blood* lies. Throughout the novel seeps a hateful statement of the obscene morality of neo-colonialism. Ngugi's characters don't shout slogans about socialism, but through them one hears their strong belief that neo-colonialism is evil and it must be fought. It is only the cruelty of neo-colonialism that could have wrung out of him such a watertight indictment against imperialism.

Ngugi reminded me of my English school-teacher with whom we did Emily Brontë's novel, *Wuthering Heights*. I have no doubt that even our schoolteacher missed the profundity of that novel. I have begun to understand that its essence is not only in characterisation and plot. I can now see the character, Heathcliff, in what Marx calls "no other nexus between man and man than callous cash payment." It is only when Heathcliff has acquired the property of Hareton Earnshaw and Cathy as a substitute for love, and thereby both are set free to have no money relations with each other, that a genuine human passion is consummated by a stable and intimate relationship. Here one sees property rending apart, not only social classes, but human relations too.

Creative Writers and Commitment

There are societies and times in history when conscious political commitment and the capacity to produce significant art go together. Chinua Achebe once said, "all literature is propaganda, but not all propaganda is literature." An example of such society and time is apartheid colonial South Africa.

There is a modicum of truth in saying that difficult times inspire people to greater artistic creativity. But difficult situations are not the 'mothers' of great art; rather they examine artistic productions more sternly.

A creative writer in our apartheid colonial society has got only one choice — to write against the oppressor. Failure to do that is to write in its defence. It will either be to camouflage oppression or to divert

from it the attention of society. No work of art, of course, can ever bring about a revolution. To do that it needs an intermediary force. That force is the oppressed masses and the working class at their head. The role of art is to open their eyes — it is to arouse them to action. Art should demoralise the oppressor, it must disarm him. The future of art is decisively in the hands of the progressive forces. It is only with this perspective that our art can maintain its freshness and vitality.

But at all times we should not forget that we want to develop our creative writing as an art. So our writing is not good simply because it mentions the working class, a strike, or resistance against removals at Crossroads. If we end there we shall have done the task only of first-class journalism. We need to write about people as an historical dynamo. We must also see the individual, the man, with all the effect of collision, contrast and colour. Creative writing should add to our understanding of man, his human spirit, consciousness, sensibility. We must see man himself in his full development against the social background.

If a creative writer depicts a revolutionary, that revolutionary must be a character, an individual, be a convincing man or woman, round and complete. He or she should be the result, the product of a particular antagonism — of a particular society.

Isolation of the 'Liberal' Writer

There is a tendency to depict ordinary men and women as unresisting and inarticulate persons. This is not a true picture. Ordinary reports about strikes in factories and White farms dispute such a conception. It is the ordinary working people who are locked up in a relentless struggle against the oppressor and the exploiter. This wrong conception is sometimes the result of 'isolation' of liberal writers from the real conflict of our struggle. Dostoevsky put it even more crudely when he said that if a writer wants to write about pimps and prostitutes, he must live with them, sleep with them.

Alan Paton is said to have worked close to Africans for a whole decade at the Diepkloof Reformatory. After that, he wrote *Cry the Beloved Country*. Rev. Khumalo, one of the characters in his novel, is depicted as a meek and obsequious sambo. His problems are easily solved by prayer and meekness before the White oppressor. Paton's novel collapses completely. He could not even learn from the social and family backgrounds of those truants at the reformatory that an African's life in South Africa is too rugged to be smoothed by a prayer and sheepishness.

Alan Paton has got his Black flip-side in authors

like Nat Nakasa. Wally Serote has written this of Nat Nakasa:

"Nat the man had not escaped from that one brutal lie — that White is write and might. Nat stood on a platform carpentered by Whites for Blacks, and to keep the platform Nat paid a price — a hollow was bored into one part of his heart ... His achievements were largely applauded by the liberals, and that was the flame, Nat being the moth ..."

(*Contrast*, Cape Town, No 31, 1973)

The richness of dialogue is to be found in the language of ordinary people, in their folk language. One of the greatest prose writers in South Africa is Mazisi Kunene.

Writers Draw Strength From Humanity

His secret, partly, is that he has the rare ability to use our folk proverbial language. Partly that is what makes the writing of Milton and Shakespeare interesting today. These were the languages of ordinary people centuries ago. Reading it today takes us in a nostalgic lapse back into the past.

Maxim Gorky drew his force of writing from the ordinary people among whom he lived. There are many revolutionaries all around the world who were introduced for the first time into politics by Gorky's *Mother*.

One of the great African novels is *God's Bits of Wood*, by Sembene Ousmane. Sembene depicts the ordinary people in a strike. His characters are alive, witty, intelligent, forceful. Sembene shows how a strike, as a weapon of the working people, the ordinary people, affects the oppressor and how it sustains the masses in the process.

In *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck depicts a situation not far from our removals and our Crossroads. The character, Ma Joad, is an indomitable woman whose determination and courage triumphed over all obstacles and kept the Joad family together. The ultimate impression of the novel is the dignity of human nature even under the most trying times. One of the characters says, "We ain't gonna die out. People is going on — changing a little maybe, but goin' right on."

Perhaps the story of Mandela is the greatest epic of our time. It has got richness of love for society. That is what Luthuli called "bigness at heart." It is also full of hatred, of heroes and villains. It has romance and honour also. There is no aspect of literature or theatre you cannot find in it. Most probably it has got its own *deus ex machina*, even. Mandela's drama is full, it is enough fuel for a creative writer's pen. The spirit of Mandela is contained in Polonius' words in *Hamlet*:

"... to thine own self be true
And it shall follow as the night the day
Thou canst not then be false to any man."

The story of Mandela can enlarge our knowledge of man. Our creative writer should also strive to depict the oppressor, the millionaire, the despot and the villain. We should strive to depict Verwoerd, Botha, Oppenheimer and Rupert. The life of ordinary people is also bound up with the life of the oppressor and the magnate. Shakespeare dealt faithfully with a villain. Balzac showed us many dimensions of a banker. A study of him will enhance our understanding of the complex human phenomenon.

In a liberation movement our creative writing should strive to serve the interest of agitation and propaganda. This form of mobilisation is urgent and it should blend well with the artistic form. ANC Khumalo in his poem, *Red Our Colour*, says:

"Let's have poems
blood-red in colour
ringing like damn bells ...
Talk of freedom
and touch people's eyes
with the knowledge of the power
of multitudes
that twist prison bars like grass
and flatten granite walls like putty."

It has become almost unavoidable today to look at Black South African poetry without looking at the influence of Black Consciousness on it. The reason, perhaps, is in the fact that Black Consciousness played a significant role in the revival of Black creative writing in the 1970s. Much of Black creative writing in the past talked to the White man or the Black elite. Someone even observed that Black creative writing of the past was influenced by the desire to prove to the White man that a Black writer is equally capable of writing. A significant role of Black Consciousness creative writing is in that most of the time it made a point of addressing itself to the oppressed.

Afro-American writing had its own influence in our own Black creative writing. This influence was not imported like a commodity. Black Consciousness in its broad sense was bound to arise in a country and a time in history when oppression and exploitation was seen by many through the colour prism. Black Consciousness had its important role when it lasted.

The influence of Afro-American writing on our own Black literature dates back a long time. John Dube, a founder member of the ANC and himself a novelist, was to a degree influenced by the writings of Booker T Washington. Peter Abrahams, after reading *The Souls of Black Folk*, by W E B Du Bois, wrote:

"But why had I not thought it myself. Now, having read the words, I know that I had known this all along. But until now I had had no words to voice the knowledge ... Du Bois' words had the impact of a revelation ... Du Bois had given me a key to the understanding of my world."

(From *Tell Freedom*, Faber and Faber, London, 1954)

Similar views have been expressed by many contemporary Black creative writers. It is important to note what Abrahams admits here (knowingly or unknowingly). He says Du Bois has given him a key to the understanding of his (Abrahams') own world. This is important in our understanding of how one culture or art influences another through the medium of words. The influence is more than just copying a word. The influence of one culture on another is not necessarily a negative development. In the course of comprehensive historical development, life evolves increasingly flexible mechanisms for this interaction, which helps to raise the whole culture to a higher level.

Thought and Writing

There is a close connection between the way of thinking and the way of expressing thought. Creative methods of many great writers have revealed that the serious form in which the thought is conveyed is also a result of serious perfecting and sharpening the thought itself. The basic demand on almost any good writer is to rewrite, revise, cross out, insert and rework the manuscript. Dostoevsky said the greatest ability of a writer is his ability to cross out.

So words also express thought. They are both communicative and thought-creating.

In developing our creative writing we are called upon to be sensitive, even to words. Our revolutionary struggle itself and its political needs, not only its ideals but its political tasks, demand a lot from our art. Our writing should not only consist in radical alterations of subject matter and political content, but it should also address practical problems.

Creative writing can be an important weapon of struggle. As the Russian folk proverb says: "What is written by the pen cannot be erased by the axe."

BOOK REVIEW

Helen Joseph: *Side By Side*, Zed Books, London, 1986, £18.95 hardback, £6.95 paperback.

The title of Helen Joseph's book, *Side By Side*, is significant and pertinent. The author has consciously chosen this line from the text of the Freedom Charter. She has also used it to explain to her brother why, at an advanced age, after trials, imprisonment, house arrest and vicious harassment, she would not return to England where she was born; she had to remain in South Africa "side by side" with those who are involved in the struggle.

The book is a personal story of a public life. Helen Joseph was Secretary of the Federation of South African Women in the late fifties, and chief organiser of the historic women's march to the Union Buildings in Pretoria on August 9th 1956; she was Vice-President of the Congress of Democrats till the banning of that organisation in 1961; she is now one of the Patrons of the United Democratic Front.

As she frequently says herself, she is, however, no ideologue. She did not come into the struggle on the basis of political analyses or theories. As a middle-class White woman she had no personal experience of oppression. Yet she was, and is, a consistent, passionate and active fighter against it.

Helen has spoken against the evils of capitalism and in university debates she has defended socialism. For the past 20 years she has been a committed Christian who, in her words:

"... hoped to give some Christian witness in the political world and some political witness in the Christian world."

But what is remarkable about this book — and its author — are not ideas. It is the long life of utter, unswerving devotion and loyalty to the liberation struggle and its leader, the African National Congress.

This loyalty has imbued her with great physical and mental courage. It has resulted in her participation in all significant political events of the last 30 years. It has brought her into very close contact with the outstanding leaders of the move-



Helen Joseph

ment. She writes of them very movingly, and with great affection and admiration, particularly of the women with whom she worked very closely and whom she knew well. This book is, in part, a tribute to them.

Many books have been, are being, and will be, written on the South African struggle. *Side By Side* is not an outstanding historical study or a contribution to theoretical polemics. It is the story of one life in the struggle. As Helen said about young people who wanted to hear her speak:

"They wanted to hear what I had to say, because I have lived through years of protest and challenge ... Some who were with me are no longer here ... there are few who can say, as I can: "I was there, I was part of it.'"

She was there, she was part of it. Herein lies the value of the book. GG

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medium wave: 27.6 m. band
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Radio Lusaka

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**Published by the
African National Congress of South Africa
P.O. Box 31791, LUSAKA, ZAMBIA
Printed by the Druckerei 'Erich Weinert',
2000 Neubrandenburg, G.D.R.**



Sipho Xulu

THESE MURDERS MUST STOP!

The African National Congress condemns the judicial murder and executions of Sipho Xulu, 25, Clarence Lucky Payi, 20, and Sibuyiso Zondo, 19.

Two of these young freedom fighters, Payi and Xulu, were arrested in 1984, and Zondo in 1985. They were on Pretoria's death row from the time they were tried. These executions took place at a time when Pretoria had placed the whole of South Africa under the iron heel of military occupation and a state of emergency; and only one week after the people of Soweto had witnessed fascism in its naked form, when they were not even allowed to bury their dead. Instead, the racist police and army killed even more people.

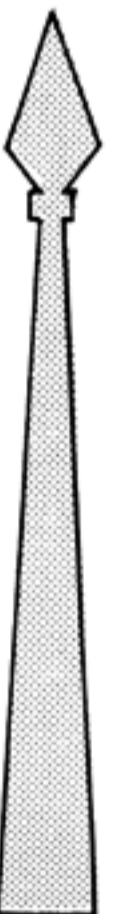


Clarence Lucky Payi

These events proved beyond doubt that apartheid cannot be reformed. It must be destroyed. The racist regime of Botha is an enemy of mankind.

The killing of our people in the streets of South Africa and on the gallows is an integral element of the nature of apartheid. These are not 'excesses' of the system, or the result of 'police brutality'. They are inherent in the system of apartheid which can only be maintained through torture and repression.

The African National Congress calls upon the international community to force their governments to impose comprehensive sanctions now. However, where governments fail, people can act. We call upon you, individually and in your organisation or trade union, to impose people's sanctions. We further call upon you to demand that all captured freedom fighters be accorded Prisoner of War status.



Sibuyiso Zondo

The United Nations has declared apartheid a crime against humanity, and these judicial murders were carried out in defiance of the demands of the international community. We, on our part, pledge that we shall continue the struggle, and that those who are executing our people today will one day face the wrath of our people. South Africa's own 'Nuremberg trials' will judge these modern-day Nazis. Their crimes and atrocities will be avenged.

9 September 1986