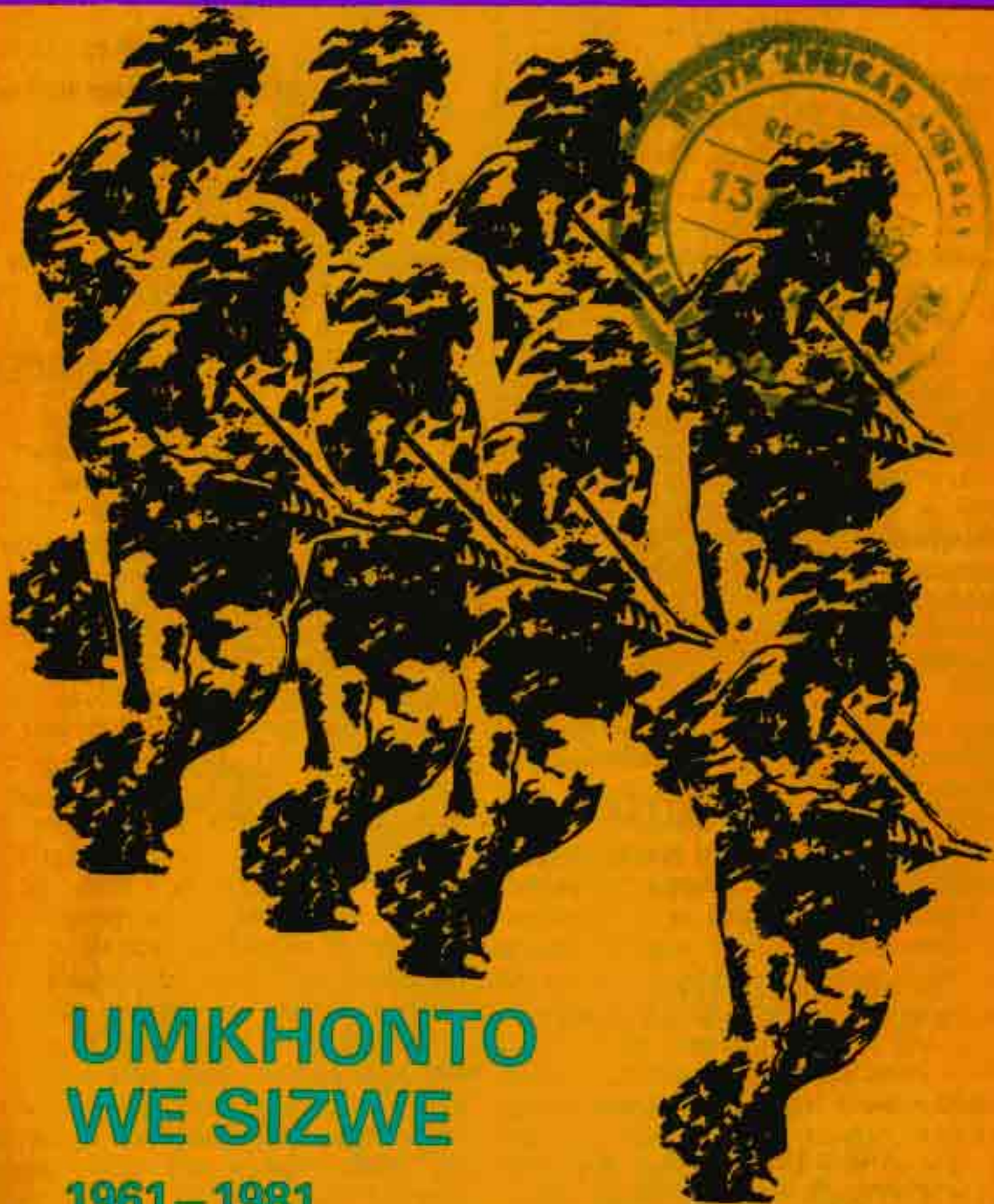


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DECEMBER 198



# SECHABA

official organ of the african  
national congress south africa



UMKHONTO  
WE SIZWE

1961 - 1981

ANC People's Army

# SECHABA

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# Editorial —

## 20 Years of Umkhonto we Sizwe

On December 16, Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military wing of the ANC, the embryo of the people's army, commemorated, indeed celebrated, the 20th anniversary of its formation. December 16 is an important day in the history of our movement! On December 16, 1838 one of the fiercest battles took place in Natal province of South Africa. It is said the casualties were so many on the banks of the river Ncome that the water turned red. The river is known today as the Blood River and the confrontation is referred to in South African history as the Battle of Blood River. The history of anti-colonial resistance in South Africa knows many such incidents. Our people fought valiantly and this tradition is part of our history and heritage.

It is no wonder that on December 16, after 31 years of its existence and non-violent struggle, the African National Congress of South Africa formed its military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation) with Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela as its first Commander-in-Chief. The formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe was of historic significance: it was a result of a realisation by the people and their leaders that the times have changed and that armed struggle in South Africa has become the main form of struggle since the racists closed all channels of peaceful settlement and negotiation especially after the Sharpeville incident where they murdered our people and in the same month they banned the African National Congress in March 1960.

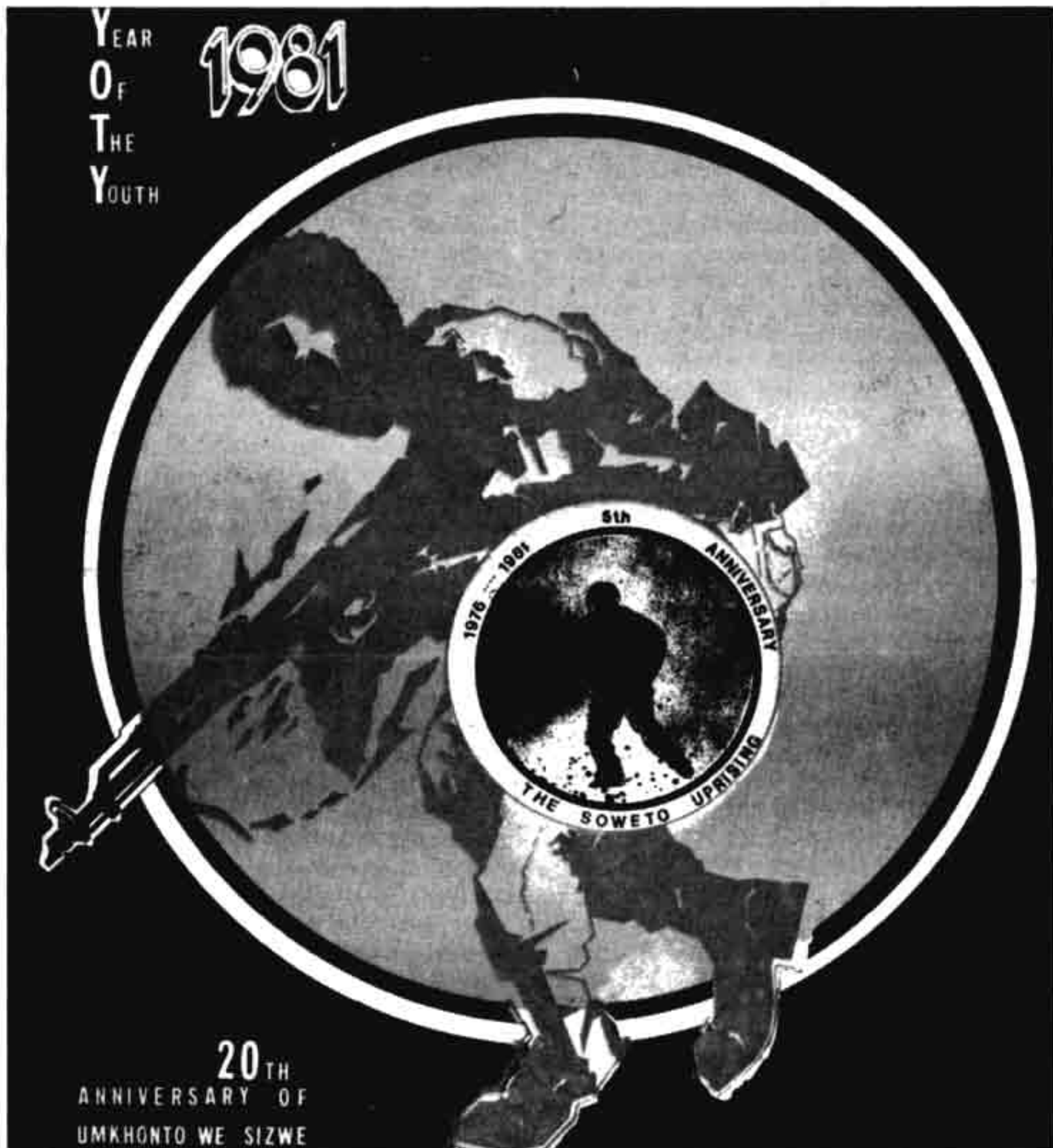
The ANC learnt many lessons during its period of legality, that is, up to 1960. One of these was that unarmed and untrained people are powerless against the South African racists who are armed to the teeth. The ANC trained its cadres, the cadres studied military and political subjects and were always keen to apply military theory to our concrete conditions. They were - and are still - keen to strike a balance between "revolutionary impatience" and the correct assessment of the situation. Of course, they are "itching to confront the Boers" but they always think politically first and military aspects are part of their political considerations.

They are aware of the fact that no group of revolutionaries acting on their own, however gallant, disciplined and self-sacrificing they can be, can succeed to overthrow the fascist regime. Our aim is a war fought by the entire people, not only in strikes and demonstrations, but precisely in the field of armed struggle, strikes and demonstrations are equally important. But what we want to emphasise is that the role of the masses as the military combat forces is growing. We know that the political education of our masses is a principal task which will help us lead the masses into struggle, and this in turn will facilitate unity in action of the black masses and the democratic forces as a whole and that there can be no unity of the democratic forces or black unity as such without unifying the Africans under the banner of the ANC.

This policy has had fruitful results. In the first 6 months of 1981 alone there were more than 20 acts of armed struggle reported in the South African press - and in May alone about 8 of them. These armed operations within the country have a psychological impact. They instil self-confidence in the people and transform the latent hostility of the people to the government into open mass confrontation: they intensify the sense of unease and insecurity among enemy forces, they increase the

conviction among the struggling people that victory is certain and popularise armed struggle.

On December 16 we always remember our fallen heroes - Solomon Mahlangu being one of them and the living heroes especially Manana, Mashigo, Lubisi, Tsotsobe, Shabangu and Moise who have been sentenced to death for their activities in Umkhonto we Sizwe. Let us fight for their release.



YEAR  
OF  
THE  
YOUTH

1981

5th ANNIVERSARY  
1976-1981  
THE SOWETO UPRISING

20th  
ANNIVERSARY OF  
UMKHONTO WE SIZWE

# No to Ciskei 'Independence'

There is a personal and social tragedy connected with the Bantustans. At times this social tragedy expresses itself in a personal tragedy. Our people have many stories about these tragedies. It is said that when the Bantustan leaders went to London they were met by many political leaders, trade unionists and social workers. As usual the journalists were there, perhaps representing the B.B.C. They got hold of Mphahlele of Venda. He was asked what party impressed him most in Britain. He replied: "A cocktail party". The same thing happened to chief Chirau of Zimbabwe. He was asked, on the eve of Zimbabwe's independence, on what grounds he would accept Zimbabwe's independence. "Harare Stadium" was his answer. This is happening with Sebe. But the tragedy which faces the people of the Ciskei is more serious than "cocktail parties" and "Harare stadiums". It is a declaration of war.

December 1981 will be a month of celebration for the architects of Apartheid. Another 3.3 million South Africans will lose their birthright. On December 4, the Ciskei Bantustan joins Transkei, Bophuthatswana and Venda in attaining so-called "independence" — a status recognised only by the white minority regime. In an effort to inspire enthusiasm for the event amongst the people of the Ciskei, Brigadier Charles Sebe, brother to the Ciskei Chief Minister and head of the Bantustan's intelligence service, recently declared:

"Let us get together and shout democracy and denounce communism in toto. Let us get up and think what we can do to promote stability in this area".

## Portrait of Ciskei

Despite strenuous efforts by the Pretoria racists and their puppets, the attempt to lend credibility to the notion of the Ciskei as a viable 'national state' has been a total failure. Mention of the Ciskei brings to mind poverty, unemployment, endemic malnutrition and the teeming slum-like resettlement camps in which more than 40,000 Blacks have been dumped over the past ten years.

The Ciskei has virtually no industry and little agriculture. Two-thirds of the money earned by its citizens is paid outside the Bantustan to migrant or commuter workers. And most of this sum is spent outside Ciskei. Migrant and commuter labour and unemployment are the most striking features of the economy. About 2 out of every 5 Ciskeians of working age are unemployed.

Those people involved in agriculture, struggle to eke out a subsistence. Acutely overcrowded land, infertile soil and continuous droughts make farming an extremely hazardous occupation. In fact, only about one quarter of all those living in Ciskei have any rights to land at all. And the prospects for employment in the Bantustans are even more bleak.

Ciskei boasts about 30 factories which employ a total of c.3,000 people. There are no minimum wage regulations — earnings are as low as R9 a week. Trade union rights are not tolerated by Sebe and his National Independence Party. The only industrial growth has taken place beyond Ciskei's borders in the King Williamstown-Berlin-East London triangle. This means that a

substantial section of the Ciskei population have to become daily migrants to so-called white South Africa. In 1976 it was estimated that 43,000 workers in the Ciskei were employed on this basis.

### Puppet on a String

In his conduct of the run-up to Ciskei "independence", Lennox Sebe has behaved in a way that not only invites contempt but also ridicule. Declaring that anyone who accepted Pretoria's original "independence package" would be a "clown", Sebe after numerous machinations, did precisely that. The Ciskei government-appointed Quail Commission had laid down five pre-conditions without which, it stated, no meaningful independence could be attained. These included a "carefully supervised" referendum, guarantees against the loss of South African citizenship for the 1½ million people deemed Ciskeian citizens who live outside the Bantustan, and safeguards for the rights of Ciskeians to seek work and remain employed in "white South Africa".

In the event, "independence" is taking place without the fulfillment of any of these conditions including the most fundamental — the right to remain a citizen of South Africa. It is enlightening to look at, at least one of Sebe's "attempts" to fulfil the recommendations of the Commission — the need for a carefully supervised referendum.

According to Sebe, the results of the referendum held last year gave him a "strong mandate to press ahead with independence". Explaining the voting procedure to the people, in which ballot forms were colour-coded red for no and blue for yes, Ciskei's Minister of Education, Rev. Xaba advised: "Blue stands for the Ciskei flag and you must vote for it. The red colour is hell". Adding to the pressure to vote the "right" way, was the fact that the compulsory registration of all voters was recorded in their reference books. Voters were also required to fill in their reference book numbers on the ballot forms. Those who were illiterate had to tell

the polling officer and his two assistants (members of the ruling party) which way they were going to vote.

Overall, of the c.100,000,000 eligible to vote, only c.299,000 people voted for independence. In the urban areas, polls ranged from nil to 30%. In Johannesburg, with an estimated Ciskeian population of 30,000 only 120 voted. As for the monitoring of this farcical procedure, Sebe managed to muster up four "international observers". Their credentials were typified by one of their members, Robert Sears, a former campaign manager for U.S. President, Ronald Reagan.

### The People Resist!

Spokesmen for the apartheid regime have repeatedly stressed that Ciskei independence "will be a bastion against the ANC..but the plans for December 4 have only served to further mobilise the people behind the liberation struggle. The workers of East London and inhabitants of Mdantsane and Duncan Village have boldly stated their position.

An important force to emerge in East London last year, was the South African Allied Workers Union whose non-registered membership grew from 5,000 to over 20,000 in just 6 months. Despite the more than 100 arrests of activists, the union has called on the people to oppose independence. At the end of August 1981, a mass meeting attended by residents of Mdantsane and Duncan Village proclaimed the birth of the Border Civic Organisation (BCO). At the meeting, Ciskei independence was denounced and a motion passed calling for the release of Nelson Mandela. The BCO aims to act as an umbrella body for residents' committees throughout the area including Mdantsane, King Williamstown, Dimbaza and Zwelitsha.

It is clear that despite the draconian powers of Sebe's one party Bantustan, the people are organising and uniting against the imposition of this phoney independence. Reflecting this fact Brigadier Charles Sebe told 200 trainees of the Ciskei's 141 Battalion that "you have returned home



**Desolate Ciskei—'Resettlement' camps and dire poverty its hallmark**



**(from training in the Transvaal) during an unfortunate period in the Ciskei. This is a time of upheaval in the Ciskei but it will be your duty to quell this upheaval".**

**The Sebes and their henchmen are**

**digging their own graves as they dance to the tune of Pretoria. Our people's struggle for full democratic rights in a unitary non-racial South Africa will never be quelled!**

# 70th Anniversary — Appeal to the World

The African National Congress invites friends and supporters of our liberation struggle to join with the South African people in commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the formation of the ANC. This anniversary year has been dedicated to the pursuit of the objective of united national and international action. For this purpose the National Executive Committee has proclaimed 1982 as the Year of Unity in Action.

On January 8th, 1912, representatives of the African peoples of Southern Africa assembled at Bloemfontein. From all parts of South Africa, from the Rhodesias, Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland had come peasants and chiefs, workers and professionals, ministers and traders. They were all involved in the struggle against British colonialism and in particular against the consolidation of British-Boer domination as evidenced in the formation, two years earlier, of the so-called Union of South Africa.

All those who had gathered recognised the predominant need to unite all the African people, to merge their strengths into an organisation that would serve as an instrument of their liberation as a unified nation. The conference of 1912 thus marked not only the birth of the ANC but also of a nation: the consolidation of a national consciousness which has since grown to embrace South Africans of various ethnic and racial origins.

A loyalty of a new type was born in the creation of the ANC - a non tribal loyalty, a loyalty which was inherently anti-colonial

and would in the course of time develop to become non-ethnic, non-racial and anti-imperialist.

The formation of the ANC was a continuation in Southern Africa, under new historic conditions, of the anti-colonial and national liberation struggles which had begun with the advent of colonialism. During the course of the past 70 years, that struggle has acquired global dimensions and has developed into an irresistible force. Great colonial empires have collapsed and disappeared from Asia, Africa and Latin America, yielding place to new independent sovereign states with a total population comprising nearly two thirds of mankind.

In the continuing worldwide struggle for freedom, peace and social progress, the ANC has taken positions of solidarity with all peoples fighting against colonialism, fascism, racism, the exploitation of man by man and any other manifestations of imperialism. Speaking from the people's daily experience of British-Boer rule in Pretoria, the ANC warned against the granting of the mandate over Namibia to Pretoria, and consistently supported the peoples of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland in their opposition to being incorporated into the Union of South Africa.

The ANC, acting in the name of the oppressed, exploited and democratic majority in South Africa, was fully involved in the international movement which led to the formation of the Organisation of African Unity and the Non-Aligned Movement. The ANC has been an integral part of the liberation forces of Africa, which, waging



united struggles, have pushed the boundaries of freedom from the north of the continent to the Limpopo and Kunene rivers in the south. In the process, the ANC has won for the South African liberation struggle many powerful and dedicated allies, friends and supporters among the greater majority of the peoples of the world. The regional unity we achieved in 1912, has merged with an ever-growing and ever-advancing alliance of world progressive forces.

With the liberation forces in Namibia and South Africa together confronting the South African regime, the long and protracted struggle for the total liberation of Africa has now witnessed its final and most difficult phase. The peoples of Namibia are marching heroically and triumphantly behind SWAPO to the conquest of their independence. Within South Africa, the ANC leads a seasoned and invincible fighting movement of the oppressed, exploited and democratic masses whose urgent and non-negotiable goal is to liberate their country and all its people.

Through the years we have remained resolute in the face of ruthless and brutal repression. We have refused to sell our South African birthright for a mess of Bantustan pottage. We have demonstrated our readiness to make sacrifices and die in the course of achieving the free and democratic South Africa projected in the Freedom Charter. We have created a people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, that is acknowledged as a skilful highly trained and courageous force, capable of attacking the enemy's most prestigious and vital installations and bases. As it celebrates its 20th anniversary on December 16th, 1981, this army will increasingly feature as an effective weapon against the forces of racism and fascism.

Through these 70 years we have maintained, consolidated and extended our unity and we have forged a powerful alliance across race, colour, religion and territorial boundaries. But the apartheid system has not been destroyed. The occasion of the 70th anniversary provides a challenge,

especially with reference to our capacity not only to intensify the struggle but to do so in unity. We call upon the international community to stand resolutely with us, to match the unity in action that is being and will be further demonstrated throughout South Africa, in this coming year, with an intensive mobilisation in support of the intrinsically linked liberation struggles of the Namibian and South African peoples.

In 1982, the Year of Unity in Action, we must revitalise our campaigns, intensify our resistance, launch new offensives and gather additional forces for the final onslaught and defeat of racism and fascism in South Africa.

**OUR VICTORY IS CERTAIN!**

**O.R. TAMBO  
PRESIDENT OF THE ANC**



# ANC Women's Conference

A very successful Conference of the ANC Women's Section was held in Luanda, People's Republic of Angola from September 10th to 14th, 1981.

The opening session of the Conference was honoured by the presence of Comrades Sam Nujoma, the President of SWAPO, who officially opened the Conference; Alfonso van Dunem Mbinda, the Secretary of the Central Committee for External Relations of the MPLA-Party of Labour, Member of the Central Committee, Joao Haloinda, Representative of the OAU in Angola; Maria Jose da Gama, Member of the Executive of the Organisation of Angolan Women (OMA), the Secretary of the SWAPO Women's Council and Comrade Oliver Tambo, the President of the ANC.

This was the first Conference of the ANC Women's Section in the External mission. The Conference took place at a very crucial time when the South African fascist troops are occupying parts of Southern Angola. Nevertheless, we came together as women and mothers, to discuss and find solutions to problems affecting women and men in South Africa, including the continued occupation, attacks and harassment of the Frontline States with emphasis on Angola, Mozambique and Zambia.

There were 80 delegates, members of the ANC Women's Section, coming from four continents and representing our women in 17 countries of Asia, Africa, East and Western Europe and the America's. They came together firstly to commemorate the 25th anniversary of August 9th, South Africa Women's Day. 25 years ago on August 9th an activity of a very unusual

type was witnessed when more than 20,000 women, representing all national groupings in South Africa, converged on Pretoria, the capital of racist South Africa, and demanded to see Strijdom, then Prime Minister to tell him that women will never carry passes. The women used this occasion to rededicate themselves to the role they as mothers are playing to consolidate the activities of all South African women working from countries outside South Africa and in South Africa itself; to live up to the cause they serve and to reaffirm in words and in deeds the promise they made 25 years ago on August 9th, 1956: that the women shall never rest until they have won for themselves their children and people, fundamental freedoms and human dignity.

Secondly, they came together to re-examine the situation of women under apartheid, which had for decades been getting worse instead of improving. Women continue to suffer untold miseries — poverty and separation from their children and husbands. Mothers give birth to children whom they watch die because of a complete absence of maternity care.

The Conference viewed the whole situation prevailing in the country: the education of children; health facilities for black people; a study of the conditions of urban and rural women; the situation of South Africans living in different countries in the external mission; children born in exile; child care and upbringing; the necessity of creating creches and kindergartens; and problems facing the primary and secondary school age groups. The ANC women met to discuss what their role should





be in the light of these developments.

The selection of delegates to tackle these issues was very broad. There were women from the medical field, teachers, women workers, housewives and a broad selection from the students in many fields. Also attending the Conference were the gallant women, militants of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the People's Army. Because of this broad representative combination, and the determination to meet these challenges, it became possible to include in the discussion matters affecting them and their children in the struggle and to make a thorough assessment of both the social and military situation in order to find means to meet this situation and to apply new strategies and tactics to combat it.

The Conference drew its strength and inspiration from their struggling sisters and comrades-in-arms at home, who are bravely confronting the enemy on all fronts, covering the political, social and economic aspects. The continued forced removals of our people from places they have occupied for years remains a thorn in the hearts of all of us. The Conference addressed itself to this problem, which forms part

and parcel of the separate development scheme, which the regime is imposing upon us. The residents of Crossroads and other areas of resistance were highly commended for their bold stand in refusing to move. Attention was also focussed on the extension and enforcement of pass laws to African women. The Conference strongly re-affirmed the position taken 25 years ago and vowed never to rest until the overthrow of the system that has trampled on the dignity of the black people for so long.

The Conference stressed the continued discrimination against women as regards salary scales and wages. They discussed matters concerning work security, the conditions of health for mothers and children, maternity leave and child care. They demanded the right to work where one chooses, to organise and be organised as workers, and equal job opportunities for all workers, including women.

Particular attention was paid to the hardships facing women in their day to day lives caused by the evils of migrant labour that separates women from their husbands, thus causing untold social problems. This was found to be the direct cause for broken families, which has adverse effects on the up-bringing of children and a permanent unhappy life to the families involved.

Health care was one of the areas which received passionate attention from delegates. This included inadequate health facilities for Blacks in South Africa, the result of which affects children's minds. The remedy for this, it was concluded, is the total destruction of the apartheid system and its replacement with People's Power. In this regard, it was resolved to continue as before, to take up arms and stand to be counted in this historic path to freedom.

The general atmosphere of the Conference was one of very serious concentration on issues that affect women most. The deliberations by all delegates were directed towards finding solutions to these different issues tackled.

The attitude towards the invasion of the People's Republic of Angola by the racist

South African troops, together with foreign mercenaries, was that of indignation. The Conference categorically condemned the dastardly invasion of the People's Republic of Angola. The refusal of the South African regime to grant independence to Namibia was also denounced and the call made for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the racist troops from these territories.

The Conference noted with deep concern the continued political, economic and military support accorded to the racist minority regime by the Governments of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany, Canada, Japan and the fascist junta in Chile. They observed how these countries continue to flout all United Nations resolutions to this effect. In this regard they called upon the United Nations and the OAU to respond to this threat by South Africa on Angola and all Frontline States.

A special appeal was made to women in South Africa to desist from allowing their sons and husbands to join in this unjust war of aggression stating:

"We appeal to you mothers, African, Coloured, Indian and White: The Botha-Malan regime is involving our country in a blood bath — they are sending your sons by planes and tanks to kill innocent people in Namibia, where people are struggling for freedom. They have invaded Angola — a black independent African



state, where the South African army is responsible for the destruction of whole villages and the killing of innocent women and children.

Your sons have no business there! You don't want them to be there, where they are sure to meet their death. Your sons are your blood and your hope. Their presence in those counties will only serve to destroy and to affect our relations with the neighbouring states in future.

As mothers who gave life to our children, we have a duty to those mothers in the countries that are being daily invaded. We have a duty to preserve life! The only way we can do this is to prevent our husbands, our sons and brothers from going to war against innocent people. We don't need war! Billions of Rands are being spent on war materials, while the price of bread is being increased!"

The Women's Conference was a great success. A vast amount of work and research had been done during the time of preparation. The background papers provided all the information needed to stimulate discussions and arguments. Of great importance was the level at which the discussions were held. This was in relation to the businesslike manner in which the proceedings were conducted; the serious atmosphere in which discussions were held; the fierce concentration with which speakers addressed the topics presented for discussion; the prevalence among the participants, both individually and collectively, of a sense of mission inspired by the constant awareness of the national and international challenges posed for the women of South Africa and the ANC women in particular, in this decade of the eighties — the decade of destiny.

In an effort to make the best of the Conference, decisions were taken, which when implemented, will definitely advance our struggle and bring nearer the goals we are striving for.

The Conference was closed by our President, Comrade Oliver Tambo, who after attending the proceedings, described the Conference in these two words: "supremely successful".

The Women's Section is not an end in itself. It is a weapon of struggle, to be correctly used, against all forms and levels of oppression and inequality in the interests of a victorious struggle of the people.

*Comrade Tambo, in his opening speech, attacked the illegal occupation of Namibia, the invasion of Angola and the Reagan-Thatcher axis. He said: 'Angola is honoured today in Namibia and South Africa, in Southern Africa and on the continent, and is admired among the progressive forces of the world as the symbol, the embodiment, the expression of Africa's resolute determination not only to fight and win victories against colonialists, fascists, racists and imperialists, but also to consolidate and fight to the last child in defence of those victories. In this connection, we hail the heroes of FAPLA, we salute the women of Angola who have suffered the worst in these years of war, beginning from 1961 to date'.*

*At the end of the conference President Tambo reiterated the same points which he dealt with in his opening speech with a new emphasis. Here is what he said:*

Comrade Chair,  
Comrade Leader of the ANC Women's  
Section,  
Members of the National Executive  
Committee of the ANC,  
Members of the Secretariat of the  
Women's Section,  
Comrades,

Allow me to begin by expressing on behalf of the National Executive Committee our very deep appreciation of the work done by the outgoing leadership of the Women's Section. We know it was a long and lonely struggle to keep the Women's Section alive in the first instance and to build it to the force that it is today.

Secondly, we equally want to express our appreciation of the choice you have made in electing the new leadership. We congratulate especially Comrade Gertrude, senior, experienced and mature leader of our people, on her appointment to an office in the movement that is going to be increasingly challenging. We wish her and her Secretariat every success; we assure her that, as the Nat-



National Executive Committee, we shall support her to the best of our ability.

Comrades,

The meeting of the Women's Section which commenced on September 10, 1981, with an opening address by Comrade President Sam Nujoma, President of SWAPO of Namibia, has now completed its business. I believe it is the general consensus among all the participants that a fair and objective assessment of the meeting would be best conveyed by two words only: supremely successful. This would be a reference to the business-like manner in which the proceedings were conducted, the serious atmosphere in which discussions were held; the fierce concentration with which speakers addressed the topics presented for discussion; the prevalence among the participants, individually and collectively, of a sense of mission inspired by a constant awareness of the national and international challenges posed for the Women of South Africa, and the ANC women in particular, in this decade of the Eighties, the Decade of Destiny. To have held a success-

ful conference is to have put substance into our verbal expressions of gratitude to the MPLA-Party of Labour, the Government and people of Angola, and especially to the Organisation of Angolan Women (OMA), who made the meeting possible in the first instance.

To have held a successful conference is to have vindicated the confidence and trust which the international community has in the ANC and its Women's Section - confidence and trust reflected in the generous financial and other material donations without which the meeting could have remained a remote dream.

To have held a successful conference at this critical moment in the Southern African situation is to have focussed the attention of everyone in South Africa on the presence in Angola, in this very month of September, of two types of South Africa: the one type concentrated in the South of Angola, the other assembled in Luanda—the question being: Which of these two is the true South Africa? Which one represents those forces which the people of South Africa must and will destroy and annihilate - Is it that unsightly army of marauding murderers in Southern Angola, or is it the glorious band of ANC women in Luanda?

On the other hand women in the ANC should stop behaving as if there was no place for them above the level of certain categories of involvement. They have a duty to liberate us men from antique concepts and attitudes about the place and role of women in society and in the development and direction of our revolutionary struggle. In fear of being a failure, Comradé Lindiwe Mabuza cried, sobbed and ultimately collapsed on top of herself when she learnt she had been appointed ANC Chief Representative to the Scandinavian countries. But, looking at the record, could any man have done better or even as well?

The oppressor has, at best, a lesser duty to liberate the oppressed than the oppressed himself. The struggle to conquer oppression in our country is the weaker for the traditionalist, conservative and primitive restraints imposed on women by man-dominated structures within our Movement, as

also because of equally traditionalist attitudes of surrender and submission on the part of women.

We need to move from revolutionary declarations to revolutionary practice. We invite the ANC Women's Section, and the Black women of South Africa, more oppressed and more exploited than any section of the population, to take up this challenge and assume their proper role, outside the kitchen among the fighting ranks of our movement and at its command posts.

The Women's Section is not an end in itself. It is a weapon of struggle, to be correctly used, against all forms and levels of oppression and inequality in the interests of a victorious struggle of the people.

Comrade Chair and Comrades,

If I have perchance overstated the case for a more balanced distribution of tasks and responsibilities within our Movement, it remains true that the burden that women carry is seldom recognised. Their silent fortitude as they toil under the weight of man-made hardships often pass unnoticed and unsung.

Comrades,

Every passing day brings confirmation of the fact that while racist minority rule persists in our country, its violence cannot be contained within the borders of that country, or confined to any single country outside those borders. While continuing to occupy Namibia and Angolan territory, the regime has now sent its fascist troops to invade Zambia. It will be another country next time. In due course, it will be all the countries of this region, and then all Africa from Cape to Cairo.

The burden of the South African fascist regime on the young independent African nations of this region is growing. The regime has embarked on a campaign of provocation and destabilisation. It is looking for war, using our country as its base, and our slave labour as its logistics.

Which one represents South Africa as an accepted member of the African, the Non-aligned and the international community? Is it the armed thugs in Southern Angola or the

ANC Women fighters for world peace and progress?

Which one represents man as having travelled the least possible distance from the medieval ape, which killed and murdered with insatiable relish? Is it those in Luanda who are discussing the role of women in the development of human society and the upbringing of children, or is it those in Southern Angola who are savagely bombing women and children; destroying houses, towns, bridges?

To have had a successful conference in this country at this moment in its era of independence is, therefore, to have re-affirmed that our cause is a just cause, it is the cause of all progressive mankind. It shall prevail. On the other hand the racists have no cause, no future, and no place except perhaps among the ghosts of dead empires.

To have held a successful conference now is to have paid a worthy tribute to 25 years of heroic struggle by the women of South Africa.

But in assessing this conference as a great success we are making a preliminary judgement; we are talking about the immediate past rather than the future. It is the testing period ahead, it is the rugged and boggy terrain of implementation now opening up before us, which will decide the correct place of this conference in the history of our struggle.

The decisions of this conference, to be endorsed by the National Executive Committee of the ANC, bear upon our entire struggle and their implementation is a task confronting all the cadres of the Movement at all levels and all centres.

Perhaps it is necessary here to address the all-important question of the position of women in our Movement.

The mobilisation of women is the task, not only of women alone, or of men alone, but of all of us, men and women alike, comrades in struggle. The mobilisation of the people into active resistance and struggle for liberation demands the energies of women no less than of men. A system based on the exploitation of man by man can in no way avoid the exploitation of women by the male members of society. There is therefore no

way in which women in general can liberate themselves without fighting to the end the exploitation of man by man, both as a concept and as a social system.

Having said this, we need to recognise that the capacity of the women to contribute fully in the liberation struggle depends, in part, on what we in practice conceive to be their role as women.

If we are to engage our full potential in the pursuit of the goals of our revolutionary struggle, then, as revolutionaries, we should stop pretending that the women in our movement have the same opportunities as men. There is little evidence of it, if the high calibre of the women meeting here today is anything to go by. For this has been a meeting of women who are worthy of Lilian Ngoyi and her great impact on our whole struggle.

Far from the racist regime being subjected to a so-called communist onslaught, it is the peace-seeking nations of Southern Africa who are the targets of a total terrorist onslaught by a minority which came to Africa as foreigners some 300 years ago, and which, by its conduct, is as foreign to Africa today as it was then. These racists murdered, pillaged and plundered their way from the Cape to Angola then; they are murdering, pillaging and plundering their way northward still. Colonial domination from Cape to Cairo was their dream then, they have been testing nuclear bombs, evidently in pursuit of the same dream.

And if for Africa it is business as usual while this regime is liquidating Namibians and Angolans, invading Angola and staying for the duration of its pleasure on Angolan territory; if Africa's optimum response is a condemnatory resolution as one country after another is occupied, can it take very long before the fascists cross the equator?

There is another dimension to this possibility. Reagan's USA, Begin's Israel and Racist South Africa (hereinafter referred to as 'RSA') form a war-waging triangle with its apex in Washington and its base running across Africa from Cape to Cairo and beyond to the capital of Israel. There is no weapon the US Administration will not deliver to Israel or help Israel produce. For the



Reagan Administration, RSA is fast becoming the Israel of Southern Africa, equally deserving of military aid. Africa falls within this war triangle—Africa, the continent of the future, the richest in untapped mineral resources. Quite clearly, imperialism is planning ahead as well as looking ahead.

In that event, the piercing screams emanating from Pretoria about a communist onslaught, and the deafening and senseless noise about Cuban soldiers in Angola and a Soviet presence in Southern Africa, are all a cover for the most sinister designs against Africa. In this connection, the possession of nuclear weapons by Israel and RSA, which both deny—naturally—and the certainty of both being supplied with the neutron bomb, should not be treated lightly.

Relevant to these designs is the fact that the South African regime, by invoking such slogans as 'communist onslaught' and 'international terrorism', and by committing provocative aggression against Southern African States, is desperately trying to internationalise the struggle for national liberation and transform it into a West-East global war, precisely to create the situation which would justify the re-conquest of Africa, as well as ensure the survival of the regime itself.

As a liberation movement we cannot presume to tell independent Africa what to do. But as part of Africa, as a fighting force based at the headquarters of the worst enemy of Africa, as a people and a movement committed to the total liberation and independence of Africa, as fighters for a new world order and for peace, we dare not close our minds to anything that bears upon the realities of the world in which we live and fight. That is why we heartily welcome the decision of the recent Lagos Summit of Frontline States to recommend the introduction of troops from African countries in the war against the South African invaders.

Our struggle is, therefore, both local, regional, continental and global. It is against this background that we must see the glorious challenge we face, the ennobling task assigned by history to the people of South Africa, to the women of our country, to her youth and to her workers: We are called



upon to save Africa, to defend her independence, and contribute towards world peace by seizing power in our country. We have the capacity; if we do not, let us develop it. We have the strategies; if they are wrong, let us correct them.

In our opposition to the regime whose preoccupation is the domination of black peoples everywhere, we are a united majority in South Africa comprising not only the oppressed and exploited masses, but also people from every racial group. These include that brave brigade of women known as the 'Black Sash'—veteran fighters for justice and peace; they include thousands of white youth and students who are convinced that the regime is digging a mass grave for their future; they include a growing number of white democrats—true patriots of our land; they include white members and leaders of the religious community, who have come to appreciate the essential justice of

the cause we fight for.

In our determination to liberate our contry and ourselves, we shall be deterred by nothing—least of all by the prospect of death. In our struggle as a detachment of the world anti-imperialist forces, we shall disappoint no-one.

We have the manpower, for we are not alone. 'We are 35 million', declared President Samora Machel of the People's Republic of Mozambique. We are even more than 35 million; we are hundreds of millions. We have our friends and supporters—the countries of Western Europe such as Sweden and other Nordic countries, Holland, France and Italy who support our cause, the peoples of Europe, including the churches, who are isolating Racist South Africa in support of our struggle. The potential for support of the ANC in Europe is tremendous. The Socialist countries will always be with us.

In Canada, support for the ANC has reached new levels. The people of the United States, particularly the Blacks, are becoming a powerful lobby for the struggle against racism and resent the role of the US Administration in Southern Africa. The people of New Zealand have emerged as ferocious opponents of the apartheid system and great allies of Africa and the liberation forces in South Africa. 660 million people in India stand firmly in support of the struggle led by the ANC. The world community as a whole is on our side.

We acknowledge this support today as we have done in the past. And we know that while, without it, we would have made little progress in our struggle, unless we register progress we shall be without much of it. For, what is being supported is a struggle, not a state of being or a status quo. That is the reason why we do not expect the OAU to support the ANC merely to keep it alive. It is also the reason why we should be surprised if the OAU found no cause to give encouraging material assistance to the obviously escalating struggle led by the ANC in South Africa.

Comrades, on December 16th, three months hence, we shall be commemorating the 20th Anniversary of Umkhonto we Sizwe, and three weeks later, the 70th Anni-

versary of the ANC. The run-up to these two uniquely historic events will be marked by intensive activity at home and abroad.

On behalf of the National Executive Committee of the ANC and of our Military Command, we call on all our people in South Africa to prepare to observe these occasions in a manner and on a scale worthy of our long history of struggle and of the countless martyrs and heroes who surrendered their lives, limbs and liberties in the cause of our liberation and in the cause of a united, non-racial and just society in our country.

We call on the brotherly peoples of Southern Africa and all Africa, as well as friends of our struggle the world over, to join the ANC and the people of South Africa in observing these anniversaries. In the name of the Conference of the ANC Women's Section held in Luanda, we invite the women of Africa and of the rest of the world to share with the women of South Africa the burden of 70 years of struggle and the prospects of an impending victory.

Once again, and on behalf of the African National Congress and the ANC Women's Section, on behalf of all our people, including our leaders and colleagues on Robben Island, Pretoria Central Jail and other prisons, on behalf of our workers and youth; and on behalf of Umkhonto we Sizwe, we thank Comrade President Jose Eduardo dos Santos and the Central Committee of MPLA-Party of Labour, the Government and people of Angola, including, and in particular the Organisation of Angolan Women, for all the support they have given and continue to give our struggle.

We express our people's solidarity with the people of Angola, Zambia and other Southern African States.

We stand firmly and solidly with our comrades-in-arms, SWAPO of Namibia. Our conviction in the certainty of their victory is unshakeable.

We salute all peoples all over the world fighting against imperialism, colonialism, fascism and against all other crimes perpetrated in the name of imperialism.

**A LUTA CONTINUA!**

**MAATLA KE A RONA!**

# The Formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe (1961-64)

On December 16, 1961, organised acts of sabotage against government installations took place, marking the emergence of Umkhonto we Sizwe (The Spear of the Nation) which was later to become the armed wing of the ANC. The date, December 16, which was chosen for the initial sabotage acts, was of historical significance. It is a public holiday in South Africa commemorating the military victory of the Afrikaaner Voortrekkers over the African warriors on the banks of the Ncome River (re-christened by the settlers as Blood River) in Natal in 1838 and is thus symbolic for the ascendancy of white power over the Blacks.

To the Africans this day symbolises resistance and the indomitable quest for freedom - it was on this day that Jhannes Nkosi, a communist activist was killed in Durban in 1930. Hence it was logical that on December 16, 1961 a leaflet issued by the High Command of Umkhonto we Sizwe was widely distributed in the country. The leaflet stated that:

".... Umkhonto we Sizwe will carry on the struggle for freedom and democracy by new methods, which are necessary to complement the actions of the established national liberation organisations. Umkhonto we Sizwe fully supports the national liberation movement and our members jointly and individually, place themselves under the overall political guidance of that movement".

This document goes on to say:

"But the people's patience is not endless. The time comes in the life of any nation when there remains only two choices: submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means within our power in defence of our people, our future and our freedom ... We are striking out along a new road for the liberation of the people of this country. The Government policy of force, repression and violence will no longer be met with non-violent resistance alone!".

The document then determines the place and role of Umkhonto we Sizwe in the overall strategy of the movement:

"Umkhonto we Sizwe will be at the front line of the people's defence. It will be the fighting arm of the people against the Government and its policies of race oppression. It will be the striking force of the people for liberty, for rights and for their final liberation.... In these actions, we are working in the best interests of all the people of this country black, brown and white - whose future happiness and well-being cannot be attained without the overthrow of the Nationalist Government, the abolition of white supremacy and the winning of liberty, democracy and full national rights and equality for all the people of this country".

In other words, this document spells out the policy of armed struggle as conceived by 17

our movement; it signalled the dawn of a new era - that of armed struggle in its proper perspective, that is, under the overall political guidance of our movement.

Mandela explained that the problem was not whether to fight but how to continue the fight. The main issue to resolve was not a technical one, i.e. the military training of cadres to advance the struggle along a violent path. It was essentially political and lay at the heart of the discussion on the new strategy and the future conduct of the struggle.

These problems were of a temporary and transient nature. The policy and politics of Umkhonto we Sizwe at the beginning of the 1960's were to be later explained - ably at that - by Nelson Mandela in his address at the Rivonia Trial. To understand this policy well and properly one needs to know who Mandela is - the founder member of Umkhonto we Sizwe and its first commander-in-chief.

In organising the May general strike - which included travel throughout the country, living now in African townships, then in country villages and again in the cities - Mandela was guided by the All-In African Conference which took place in Pietermaritzburg on 25 and 26 March, 1961. This conference was attended by 1,500 delegates from town and country, representing 145 religions, social, cultural, sporting and political bodies. The conference established an All-In African Action Council - Mandela became its Secretary. The conference further resolved that, to avert the dangerous situation developing in South Africa a "sovereign national convention" representative of all South Africans to draw up a new non-racial and democratic constitution should be called. This convention would discuss the national problems of South Africa and work out solutions which would seek to preserve and safeguard the interests of all sections of the population. The Convention was to be called before May 31 and failing which, country wide demonstrations would be held on the eve of the Republic - that is from the 29th to 31st May. Further the Africans would be called upon to refuse to co-

operate with the proposed "Republic".

Mandela as Secretary of the National Action Council wrote a letter to the Prime Minister, H.F. Verwoerd on April 20 and again on April 30. No reply, no acknowledgement was received. On the contrary the racist Government called upon the army and police. White civilians armed. More than ten (10) thousand Africans were arrested under the pass laws and meetings of Africans were banned. But, in spite of this, the strike was a success.

It was during this period of underground mobilisation that the ANC received an invitation to attend a conference of the Pan African Freedom Movement for East and Central Africa (PAFMECAO - it later became PAFMECSA, including Southern Africa and was one of the predecessors of the OAU. Mandela attended this conference in Addis Ababa and addressed it on behalf of the ANC. Part of his mission was to tour Africa and to make direct contact with African leaders on the continent. "The tour of the continent made a forceful impression on me" he later remarked.

This African trip of Mandela was very important for the strategy of our movement and the nascent Umkhonto we Sizwe. Mandela states:

"I started to make a study of the art of war and revolution and... underwent a course in military training. If there was to be guerrilla warfare, I wanted to be able to stand and fight with my people and to share the hazards of war with them... I acknowledge that I made these studies to equip myself for the role which I might have to play if the struggle drifted into guerrilla warfare".

Mandela did not stop at that. He also made arrangements "for our recruits to undergo military training... The first batch of recruits actually arrived in Tanganyika when I was passing through that country my way back to South Africa".

Whilst on the African tour Mandela had discussions with leading African politicians and freedom fighters:

"I had discussions with leaders of political movements in Africa and discovered that almost every single one



On December 16th—Heroes' Day—a day of rededication to the cause of freedom, we remember our fallen martyrs. The picture above depicts the funeral at Matola, which was addressed by President O.R. Tambo and attended by many international dignitaries

of them, in areas which had still not attained independence, had received all forms of assistance from the socialist countries, as well as from the West, including that of financial support. I also discovered that some well-known African states, all of them non-communists, and even anti-communists, had received similar assistance.....

I made a strong recommendation to the ANC that we should not confine ourselves to Africa and the Western countries, but that we should also send a mission to the socialist countries to raise the funds which were so urgently needed".

These are some of the results of Mandela's trip to Africa about which he reported to the ANC. Mandela returned to South Africa in July 1962 and worked underground until he was arrested in Natal on August 5, 1962. He was convicted on November 7, and sentenced to three (3) years' imprisonment on the charge of incitement and two (2) years for leaving the country without valid documents. At the close of the trial the crowd ignored a special prohibition on all demonstrations relating to trials and marched through the streets singing "Tshotsholoza Mandela" (struggle Mandela).

The struggle continued. Mandela's 19

colleagues, notably Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Ahmed Kathrada, Raymond Mhlaba, Rusty Bernstein, Denis Goldberg, Elias Motsoaledi and Andrew Mlangeni continued the struggle, planning recruiting, sending recruits abroad for training and continuing with the acts of sabotage.

This continued until 11 July 1963, when the police raided a farm, Lilies farm, at Rivonia near Johannesburg and arrested them capturing a lot of documentary evidence which was later used against them. They appeared in court on October 9, 1963 on charges of 193 acts of sabotage committed between 27 June 1962 and the date of the Rivonia raid. Mandela was brought from prison to become Accused No. 1! These acts of sabotage were allegedly carried out by people recruited by the accused in their capacity as members of the High Command of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Denis Goldberg - it was alleged - had been negotiating for the purchase of components which would have been sufficient for the manufacture of some 200,000 handgrenades; the National High Command had certainly got past the negotiating stage in its efforts to acquire tons of high explosives; boxes had been ordered in vast quantities for the manufacture of land mines. The aim was to start guerrilla warfare coupled with an "armed invasion and a violent revolution or uprising". Among the accused - as was stated before - was Nelson Mandela who was brought from prison to stand trial as the first accused. He had by then completed one year of a five (5) year sentence of imprisonment.

After a long, boring and tedious procedure which involved no less than 173 prosecution witnesses - including Bruno Mtolo and Patrick Abel Mthembu who had inside knowledge of ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe - Mandela made this statement from the dock in Pretoria Supreme Court on April 20, 1964 at the opening of the defence case. The main content of his speech was:

a) to turn the trial from one of defending themselves on a capital charge to that of using the courtroom to indict the racist regime led by the then Verwoerd; to turn the court into an ANC political platform;

to use the court to address our people and inform them about the policy of the ANC;

b) even on conviction by the court to maintain this position and refuse to plead for mercy from the oppressors' courts.

Sisulu was then the next as a defence witness. He followed Mandela's keynote speech in that he refused to implicate others who were still not arrested. By refusing to answer questions the Rivonia accused broke new ground in the South African courts, and certainly new as far as the political trials were concerned. Prior to this case, there had been a series of trials of people said to be members of the Pan African Congress (PAC) or POQO who attempted to exonerate themselves by naming or implicating dozens of others who had participated in their activities and so spreading the persecution even wider.

But the Rivonia accused were political people. They hoped thus to set a new standard which would be followed by others in political trials in South Africa's future. In fact, the example they set there has become a precedent, and in subsequent political trials many of the accused have followed it; many unwilling witnesses have refused to testify and have faced months of imprisonment for this refusal.

All the accused went through the same process. We cannot repeat all what they said - for lack of space - but as an illustration of their calibre, courage and conviction (in the face of a death sentence) we shall take the case of Ahmed Kathrada.

Vernon Berrange led Kathrada's evidence. He was as much concerned to let the judge see the man as to get him to see the case. Berrange led Kathrada through the story of his life - how he had come to dedicate himself to political struggle, and what led him to devote virtually the whole of his life and activity to the national liberation struggle of the black people. Kathrada described his reaction when the African National Congress had been declared illegal in 1960: "I was greatly disturbed" he declared. "For many years the African and Indian Congresses had co-operated on numerous issues which affected both races. I believed that the



MK militants receiving instruction 'somewhere in the bush'

disappearance of the ANC from the political scene in South Africa would deprive the African people, or should I say all the oppressed people in the whole of South Africa, of a most responsible leadership".

Berrange: "And as a member of a minority group where do you think your future lies?"

Kathrada: "I have long come to the conclusion, and so have the Indian people, that our future lies with the policies of the African National Congress".

Kathrada explained and described how he had been placed under house arrest order in 1962. This prohibited him from entering factories, though his work at that time required his daily entry into printing works for whom he was a canvasser. It prohibited him from communicating with any other banned or listed people, from attending social gatherings, or from being out of doors during the hours of darkness or over the week-ends. Up to 1963 - he said - he had been arrested "something like seventeen times since 1946.... I am not including

charges for just putting up posters or distributing leaflets or that sort of thing. In fact I was acquitted on nearly every charge except five". The story went on up to the time of the Rivonia raid when they were arrested.

Then Percy Yutar, the state prosecutor, started his cross examination. It was really a battle of unmatched weights. Dr. Yutar on the field of politics was in the flyweight class; Kathrada being a heavyweight with a devastating upper cut and unexpected left. The case was much to the amusement of the accused and the public, who enjoyed nothing quite so well as seeing Kathrada strike out with that left and uppercut to the discomfort of Dr. Yutar who spoke in a voice several octaves higher than his normal tones, a real sing-song voice, rising to a crescendo; a dramatic wail accompanied by a dramatic falsetto which resulted in a cacophonous sound. Yutar's aggressive fashion and aggressive attack on Kathrada brought out the really aggressive side of

Kathrada's personality. Yutar's manner acted as a spur to the aggressive sarcasm of Kathrada in discussion. Let us take a few excerpts of this battle to illustrate our point:

Yutar: "You have called them (the cabinet ministers) amongst other things, criminal"

Kathrada: "That's what they are"

Yutar found it hard to keep his temper with Kathrada, especially when Kathrada refused to answer questions about other people and their activities.

Yutar: "Sisulu adopted that attitude in the box and you are doing the same"

Kathrada: "Is there anything wrong with that?"

Yutar: "Don't ask me.... I am telling you that you are adopting the same attitude as Sisulu".

Kathrada: "That's obvious".

Yutar: "And this political organisation to which you owe this loyalty; does it also include the African National Congress?"

Kathrada: "Yes"

Yutar: "It also includes the Umkhonto?"

Kathrada: "If I knew anything about the Umkhonto I would not tell you. If the fact of it was to implicate anybody, I would not tell you".

Yutar: "Then how am I to test your story and what you are telling us?"

Kathrada: "I feel very sorry for you Doctor, but I am unable to help you there"

Yutar: "How is his Lordship to test the accuracy of your evidence?"

Kathrada: "I am afraid I have no suggestions".

And so it went on. In his irritation Yutar picked up one of the Mandela diaries in which there had been some entries referring to a certain "K". Yutar was rather anxious to prove that the "K" referred to was Kathrada.

Yutar: "Are you sometimes referred to as K?"

Kathrada: "I am not referred to as K".

Yutar: "Never?"

Kathrada: "I don't know anybody who refers to me as K".

Yutar: "Do you know anybody else who goes under the initial K?"

Kathrada: "Yes"

Yutar: "Who?"

Kathrada: "Mr. Krushchev"

There was laughter in court. Yutar is incapable of laughing at a joke at his own expense. He bellowed: "So you are trying to be funny at my expense?" and Kathrada replied that Yutar asked him of a Mr. K he knows of and he replied.

On Friday June 12, 1964 eleven months to the day after the Rivonia arrests Judge Quartus de Wet passed the sentence of life imprisonment on our comrades. The case was over. They were flown secretly to Robben Island where they are still being held.

All these comrades spoke up in defence of their actions; in defence of the movement; in defence of the aspirations of our people and gave an explanation why they took such actions. Their inspiring words are remembered and will be remembered for centuries to come wherever and whenever men talk of freedom. Besides their invaluable contribution to our struggle for decades before the Rivonia arrests - what they achieved in 1963 was to implant Umkhonto we Sizwe in the political history of our country; Umkhonto we Sizwe was born and it later grew and is now bearing fruits. Chief Lutuli, restricted as he was at Groutville, made a statement as President-General of the ANC on the same day of the pronouncement of the sentence:

"The African National Congress never abandoned its method of a militant, non violent struggle, and of creating in the process a spirit of militancy in the people. However, in the fact of the uncompromising white refusal to abandon a policy which denies the African and other oppressed South Africans their rightful heritage - freedom - no one can blame brave and just men for seeking justice by the use of violent methods; nor could they be blamed if they tried to create an organised force in order to ultimately establish peace and racial harmony.....

They represent the highest in morality and ethics in the South African struggle; this morality and ethics has been sentenced to an imprisonment it may never survive".



# Pages from History:



Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje

## First ANC Secretary- General (1876-1932)

Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje was born on October 9, 1876 on a farm called Dornfontein in the north-western part of the Orange Free State, some thirty miles north east of Kimberley. He came from a family with a tradition of contact with christianity that goes back to the 1820's. Later he went to Pniel near Barkly West in the Cape where he attended school. At the age of 9 and 10 he attended a Church of England mission school in Beaconsfield, some 18 miles from Pniel. This was in the late 1880's. Then back at Pniel he was progressing far beyond the other pupils; so he began to receive additional private instruction from the missionary, Ernest Westphal and his wife.

At 13 he passed the Cape Education Department's standard 4 examinations: almost certainly the first pupil at Pniel to have achieved this. In February 1892 he was appointed a pupil/teacher, a post he held for two years. In March 1894 Plaatje left the mission station to take up a job in the Post Office in Kimberley as a letter carrier — a highly sought-after job because it was one of the relatively few avenues of opportunity open to Africans for employment. At 17 he seemed to have been well prepared for a life outside the limited confines of the Pniel mission.

On March 1, 1894 Plaatje began work as a letter carrier in the Kimberley Post Office. The Kimberley Post Office had been the first in the Cape to employ Africans as messengers and letter carriers. This was in 1880 when the Post Office found it impossible to secure reliable and inexpensive white labour. This provoked the anger of the whites who felt threatened by this act. Plaatje remained in his job for 4½ years. This afforded him the opportunity to improve his command of the English language.

Outside working hours Plaatje became part of an identifiable and quite conscious social stratum whose cooperate life he was closely associated with. Kimberley then had a permanent population of about 8-9,000 employed in a wide-range of activities. The African community was cosmopolitan. Some of them were mission

educated Africans. These were people like Rev. Jonathan Jabavu (brother of Tengo Jabavu, the editor of *Imvo Zabantsundu*) Gwayi Tyamashe and David Msikinya. Isaiah Bud M'belle whose career and achievements embodied — perhaps more than anyone else in Kimberley at this time — the aspirations and ideals of this social group to which Plaatje belonged, became his life-long friend after they first met in 1894. (In 1898 Plaatje married Elizabeth M'belle, sister to Isaiah Bud M'belle).

In June 1895 Kimberley's most able and articulate Africans formed the South Africans' Improvement Society for meetings and discussion at fortnightly intervals. This organisation provided Plaatje with the ideological, social and literary training ground. The name of the society itself is interesting because for the Africans "improvement" like "progress" was an absolutely key concept. The aims of this society were:

"firstly, to cultivate the use of the English language, which is foreign to Africans; secondly, to help each other by fair and reasonable criticism in readings, English composition etc. etc."

We should remember that those were the days when Africans aspired to a full participation in the predominantly English South African society.

### An Interpreter in Mafeking

On August 5, 1898, Plaatje applied for the position of interpreter to the Magistrate's court in Mafeking. He was a linguist: his knowledge and proficiency in both African and European languages had greatly improved. He spoke Tswana, Sesotho, Xhosa, Zulu, Koranna, English, Dutch and German. The career of an interpreter was one of the most highly regarded jobs in the Cape Civil Service that an African could pursue.

On October 1, 1898 Plaatje went to Mafeking. The population of Mafeking was 5,000 Africans and 1,500 Whites. Mafeking is a railway junction on the line northwards to Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), the administrative capital of the Bechuanaland

Protectorate, market centre for the district. Since 1897, it possessed its own Resident Magistrate and Civil Commissioner. Though much smaller than Kimberley, it was the largest town for many miles around.

It consists of two separate settlements: the European town founded in 1885 and the older settlement Mafikeng (meaning in Tswana "place of rocks" of which Mafeking is a European corruption) founded and occupied by the Tshidi/Rolong and separated by a distance of about a mile from the European town.

The great figure in Tshidi/Rolong history, Montshiwa, had died 2 years before Plaatje's arrival in Mafeking. But memories about him remained extremely strong. Montshiwa was chief of the Rolong for nearly 50 years. He led his people to their new home in the 1860's. Through fierce resistance, skilful bargaining and negotiation his people retained for themselves much of their land and a considerable degree of independence and self-government in the face of white settler expansion in the latter part of the 19th century.

There were other influences and factors in Tshidi politics: Wessels Montshiwa's (Montshiwa's successor) incompetence, the conciliatory role of the Molema family etc. The Molema family was a powerful family and well educated. They had come to accept the Christian belief.

Plaatje came under the influence of Silas Telesho Molema, younger son of the old chief Molema.

Born in 1850, Silas Molema was educated at the Wesleyan Healdtown Institution. He returned to Mafeking in 1878 and set up a school. Molema combined such activities with his other chiefly duties. "The school was often interrupted by the several quarrels with the Boers" Plaatje remembered later, "as the teacher, being a sub-chief, always went on active service at the head of his regiment".

By 1890 Silas Molema had also become a large land owner in his own right, and had a fairly extensive range of business interests, among other areas, in Pitsani over the border in the Bechuanaland Protectorate. It should be remembered that it was from

here, in 1895, that Jameson had launched his unfortunate expedition into the Transvaal — the Jameson Raid. Jameson had promised Molema — if the raid was successful — further tracts of land inside South Africa. But it was not and therefore Molema received £300.

Molema and Plaatje belonged to different generations and were of different social backgrounds — Plaatje, a commoner and Molema, a chief — but Plaatje was influenced by the sense of duty and responsibility which Molema, as a chief, showed towards his people.

In October 1899 the Anglo Boer War broke out and Mafeking, less than 10 miles from the Transvaal border, was immediately surrounded by Boer forces. The famous siege of Mafeking had begun. This is all in the Boer War Diary of Sol T. Plaatje — an African in Mafeking which was first published in 1976 — almost 80 years after it was written. This diary gives us an insight both into the mind of Plaatje and into the history of the siege itself.

With the siege of Mafeking new challenges faced Plaatje. He was not only interpreting in the Magistrate's Court when it was sitting and acting as a junior clerk and office messenger in the Civil Commissioner's office (the Civil Commissioner was also the magistrate) when it was not, Plaatje found himself interpreting in two new courts that were set up — the Court of Summary Jurisdiction and the Officers' Board Court. But he found time to do typing and in 1900 he was the first African to have satisfied the examiners in the recently instituted type writing examination. He knew shorthand.

Plaatje's loyalties were shifting. On March 27, 1902 he handed in his resignation from the Cape Civil Service. There were many reasons for this: one of them being the fact that he was underpaid — "he thought his salary of £130 p.a. a waste of time".

#### Plaatje as Morulaganyi (editor)

Since 1901, together with Sibas Molema, Plaatje was involved in the establishment

of the English/Tswana newspaper *Koranta ea Becoana* (the Tswana Gazette). It was modelled along the lines of the English/Xhosa weekly, *Imvo Zabantsundu*, edited by Tengo Jabavu since the early 1880s. The Mafeking Mail of May 9, 1905 commented:

"The editor of the Mafeking Kaffir newspaper, "*Koranta ea Becoana*", is a studious person who used to interpret at the magistrate's court. He got into thinking during the course of his duties, and a lot of stored up, compressed thought drove him into journalism as an outlet for it."

*Koranta* was born, along with several other new African newspapers in other parts of the country in a period of widespread political expectation; it was a mouthpiece of the voiceless Africans — their voice should be heard — and stood in defence of African rights and interests. *Koranta* could not last — by 1908 it was in a bad shape.

In July 1910 Plaatje established and edited *Tsala ea Becoana* (The Friend of the Tswana). *Koranta* was financed by Silas Molema, but *Tsala* was financed by a few friends of Plaatje based in Thaba N'chu, wealthy African landowners: W.Z. Fenyang, J. Nyokong and Rev. J. Goronyane.

#### January 8

Plaatje, as a leading member of the South African Native Convention convened in March 1909 to discuss the pending Union and was later constituted into a permanent organisation, attended the Convention's annual conference in Bloemfontein in March 1910. Shortly afterwards he headed a deputation (appointed at the conference) to General Botha, then Prime Minister of the Transvaal. The special meeting of the Executive Committee of the Convention, convened in Johannesburg early in August 1911, and attended by Plaatje provided Pixly Ka Seme, an overseas trained lawyer recently returned to South Africa, with the first opportunity to expound his ideas on the need for a new and more vigorous organisation. In a sense Seme was saying

nothing new; he was voicing in a more coherent and articulate manner ideas which were current in South Africa; in any case the Convention had been transformed into a permanent organisation. The problem with the Convention is that it was loose; not adequately representative of all four provinces and its tasks were not clearly defined.

The meeting of August 5 took the first steps in creating the new body, setting up a special Steering Committee. On November 13 a "caucus meeting" took place in Johannesburg. Plaatje again was among those who attended. He played a prominent role in the proceedings — being one of the three people (Seme and Makgatho were the other two) to whom votes of thanks were passed for their contributions: Plaatje also made a closing speech "exhorting the members to be united". (it should be remembered that Plaatje was an active member of the Kimberley branch of the A.P.O., a Coloured organisation, before the ANC was conceived).

The proceedings on January 8 were opened with a speech from Seme. At the end of his speech he formally moved that the South African Native National Congress (as the ANC was then called) be established. This was the first time, he said, that "so many elements representing different tongues and tribes ever attempted to cooperate under one umbrella" and he emphasised the difficulties that they faced. The formation of the ANC though, was the "first step towards solving the so-called native problem, and therein lay the advancement of the dark races who had hitherto been separated by tribal jealousies", Seme's motion was seconded by Chief Joshua Molema, and he was followed by Chiefs Maama (Basutoland), Motlaka (Zoutpansberg), Makgalakgadi and finally by Dr. Rubusana, who also supported the motion in a powerful speech. The motion was then put to a vote, and passed unanimously with loud cheers, all delegates standing. The ANC thus came into existence.

## Plaatje as Secretary General

The President-General of this new organisation was John Langalibalele Dube and Sol Plaatje became its first General (or Corresponding) Secretary. His many years of experience as a newspaper editor and spokesman for his people; his well-known capacity for hard work; his closeness to Cape, Orange Free State and Transvaal African politicians and ready access to the Union administration — these were some of the considerations for his election.

The name of the new organisation became a bone of contention. Plaatje strongly believed that the ANC "be known by a distinctive name and a native name by preference". Although strongly supported by Joshua Molema, the meeting decided by a small majority to adopt the recommendation that the new organisation should be known as the South African Native National Congress. On his insistence the Executive Committee was authorised to remain behind to 'complete the unfinished work and review the constitution'. Plaatje again urged that the Congress's name be changed and he read a letter from Cleopas Kunene (who later became editor of *Abantu-Batho*, the ANC organ) who proposed the name "Imbizo Yabantu". Plaatje was again defeated and Section 1 of the revised constitution now read:

"The name of this organisation should be the South African Native National Congress".

Plaatje and the ANC leadership fought hard battles to establish the legitimacy of the ANC. As Secretary-General of the ANC, he took a leading role in mobilising African opposition to the 1913 Native Land Act. From the time of its passage until his departure from South Africa as a member of a Congress deputation to England a year later, it was the overwhelming pre-occupation of himself personally, of his newspaper and of the ANC as a whole. He was worried by the effects the Land Act was to have on the Africans but what moved him even more was the principle of territorial separation that the Land Act embodied.

Deputations were sent to Cape Town, protest meetings were held, letters written to the authorities. Plaatje was in strong favour of deputations — he did not like strikes. He and his colleagues believed it was essential to exhaust every constitutional option open to them. Plaatje addressed numerous meetings on the subject of Natives' Land Act, collected further evidence of its effects — he travelled throughout the Free State and Eastern Cape on a bicycle — and appealed for funds to pay for the delegation to England.

His journalistic work did not stop. In August 1912 he founded (for the third time) another newspaper *Tsala ea Batho* (The Friend of the People). This newspaper differed from its predecessor *Tsala ea Becoana* (The Friend of the Tswana) in that it had articles also in Pedi (besides English and Tswana) and hence the change of name.

In 1914 the ANC deputation was sent to England. On board to England Plaatje started writing what was eventually to become *Native Life in South Africa*. He typed in the mornings and evenings. He wanted it printed "immediately after landing in England".

In London they were met by the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protections Society (APS) which offered to "assist" the ANC delegation. But this Society had its own aims and own very definite ideas. J.H. Harris, the Society's Organising Secretary, explained to L. Harcourt, Secretary of State for Colonies that the Society's policy was "to use our (society's) influence in the direction of securing a modification of their (ANC's) original programme and an abstention from public agitation pending the exhaustion of every constitutional means open to them".

Harris therefore persuaded the delegates to replace the demand for the repeal of the Native Land Act with proposals instead for the modification and suspension of part of the Act. The APS arranged an interview for the delegates with Lord Harcourt on conditions that they confined themselves to the points laid out by the Lord and Harris. But the Colonial Office saw no

reason for the presence of the APS representatives — as Harris wished — at the interview. This was a blessing in disguise. The ANC delegation was free from Harris's influence and supervision. They expressed their views in much stronger and forthright terms than Harris had prescribed. Lord Harcourt was not sympathetic. The APS was annoyed.

There emerged signs of differences of opinion amongst the delegates. They returned home. Plaatje remained to continue the campaign single-handed. He wanted to complete and publish his book about the Natives' Land Act. This decision was a product also of his anger at the way in which the APS had sought to control and therefore undermine the deputation's campaign in England. Relations between Plaatje and the APS were finally broken off at a meeting with J.H. Harris in August 1914 where Harris put unacceptable — to Plaatje — conditions: "a string of extraordinary restrictions and humiliating conditions". (It should be remembered that the Jabavu attitude towards the Native Land Act soured the relations which were up to then warm, between Jabavu and Plaatje — the two editors).

Plaatje spent 2½ years in England, addressing meetings in London, Yorkshire and Scotland — over 300 meetings at times at the rate of one every two or three days.

His book appeared in May 1916 — 2 years after he had started it. He wanted to reach a far wider audience and explain the grievances of his people. The outbreak of the First World War somewhat sabotaged his plans. The APS attempted to suppress the book. Harris attacked Plaatje personally. The problems that faced Plaatje in Britain reflect themselves in the book. They were.

a) the intransigence of the British Government and its officials;

b) the hostility of the APS, a society supposedly devoted to the interests of "native races" of the empire — but it pursued a vicious attack on one of the leading representatives of South Africa's black population.

The theme of the book was that the Land Act is a "tyrannical enactment" 27

that represented the triumph of "Boer principles" over British notions of "fair play and justice"; the Africans — "loyal British subjects" are being crushed by the Boers. Besides the above stated reasons for this stance we should remember that Plaatje's antipathy was directed towards the Boers — his antipathy towards the Boers, who he knew very well in the Orange Free State increased. "Dutch inhumanity" was his favourite phrase and subject. This "Dutch inhumanity" was counterposed to "British justice" hence pride in being "loyal British subjects" or "loyalty to the King". The influence of missionaries is easily traceable here and that of Cape liberalism as well. But this was not all. Plaatje and his contemporaries saw this as a tactic. They had strong views on the oppression of their people. Perhaps the problem here was that of correctly identifying the enemy. Those days the Africans thought that the Boers were the only enemy and they identified the clash of interests between Boer and Briton; they thought these could be used to our advantage; therefore let us win over the British to our side so that they can help us against the Boers. History and experience had to teach the vital lesson that things are not all that simple.

#### Plaatje as a Linguist

The campaign against the Natives' Land Act was the main reason for Plaatje's stay in England. Indeed it was his preoccupation throughout. His stay in England provided opportunities in several other directions. He contributed to Professor I. Gollancz's book: *Tercentenary Book of Homage to Shakespeare* published in 1916 as part of the celebrations surrounding the 300th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. The *New Statesman* thought Plaatje's essay was "the most touching of the 166 contributions".

Plaatje also worked on two books in Tswana: *Sechuana Proverbs with Literal Translations and their European Equivalents* and *Sechuana Reader*, a phonetic analysis of Tswana language, with reading texts. The latter was written in collaboration

with Daniel Jones, a lecturer in the Phonetics Department at the University College, London.

These books, in contrast to *Native Life*, a political book, were a product of Plaatje's cultural identity as a Tswana rather than his political identity as a black South African. There is no contradiction between the two positions. They spring from a common commitment to the defence of a way of life that was being threatened on several different fronts. Political rights and cultural integrity are complementary aspects of a wider whole.

His aim, he said, "is to save from oblivion, as far as this still can be done, the proverbial expressions of the Bechuana people, who inhabit the Bechuanaland Protectorate, Southern Rhodesia, the Northern Division of the Cape Colony, including Griqualand West, the whole of the Orange Free State and the Western half of the Transvaal".

Plaatje regarded the preservation of Tswana as an urgent and important matter and nobody could be more suited to do that than a former interpreter. He possessed a prodigious memory and compiled over 700 proverbs in English. These proverbs embody the experience of a people dependent for their livelihood upon hunting and the keeping of cattle — with emphasis on caution, patience and courage e.g. when hunting a lion; social institutions of the Tswana society like the nature of chieftainship and authority; men's perception of the position of women in that society and vice versa.

This was not just an act of "cultural nationalism". There were political motivations for Plaatje's preoccupation with the Tswana language. He wanted also to correct some of the stereotypes in colonial literature: the Tswanas were being portrayed as "peace loving" and "timid". Plaatje replied:

"Historians describe the Bechuana as the most peace-loving and timid section of Bantu. Their statements however, do not seem to be quite in accord with the facts; for, fighting their way south, from Central African lakes, some of the Bechuana tribes

became known as "The People of the Sharp Spear".

Plaatje asserted the viability, integrity and the worth of his own culture. African languages — although we must acknowledge their limitations in expression of abstract ideas — are fully equipped for the expression of thought and ideas. They show the similarity of pastoral societies in general. By demanding a recognition of his own culture and stressing its universality Plaatje was de facto fighting against concepts about the "backwardness" of African languages. These concepts are motivated by racial rather than comparative or historical explanations of cultural phenomena.

Worried about Tswana orthography — which was then in a chaotic state — Plaatje blamed this to the refusal of the missionaries to work with capable Tswana speakers. He noted:

"It is comforting to know that this anomaly is confined to Sechuana and that Zulu, Xhosa and Basuto worshippers have no worry. That beautiful and elastic South African language — the Xhosa — is the result of a blending together of various dialects. The work was carried out by missionary writers with native assistance. Sesuto literature owes its present state of perfection to native cooperation with missionary bodies working in Basutoland".

Plaatje, Makgatho and others from Thaba N'chu were more often than not bypassed by missionaries when it came to discussions on Tswana orthography. They felt bitter about it and were against Tswana being "massacred" — to use Plaatje's term — by missionaries.

Plaatje was interested in emphasising the variety and adaptability of the cultural forms that existed amongst his own people and utilising the opportunity presented to him to commit these to written form. He contributed to Tswana literature and phonetics.

### Plaatje Returns Home

Plaatje returned to South Africa in early 1917. There was a warm welcome and a

number of receptions organised in his honour. The ANC organised a "variety concert and social gathering" in his honour in Kimberley at the end of March 1917. Several speakers expressed their appreciation of the work Plaatje did in England. Rev. P.E. Kuze, told of how he had met Plaatje in London in 1916 and "saw some of the hard work he had put in, by speaking and writing, to enlighten the English people as to the condition of the natives of this country". Rev. C.B. Liphuko, similarly thought that Plaatje had "proved himself a hero". John Dube, the ANC President-General, sent a telegram regretting his inability to leave Cape Town as he was watching the Native Affairs Administration Bill now before Parliament. Plaatje himself had spent two weeks in Cape Town in connection with it before returning to Kimberley. He called it a "horrible Bill" and was worried about the triumph of "Dutch ideals over English institutions".

From 1914 to 1916 the ANC had largely refrained from any criticism of the South African government as a demonstration of their "loyalty to King and Empire" in the war against Germany. But in October 1916 at a meeting in Pietermaritzburg the ANC became critical of the Report of the Beaumont Commission. This was in connection, again, with the Land Act. Plaatje arrived in South Africa a few months after this meeting and immediately launched himself into the campaign against the bill. He wanted to lobby the English-speaking members of Parliament in Cape Town. His book was quoted frequently in Parliament. The Natal members of Parliament were also against the bill but for wrong reasons: some felt the bill set aside too much land for African occupation in comparison with other provinces! They were not against the bill on questions of principle.

It was at the annual conference of the ANC in May/June 1917 at Bloemfontein that Plaatje made what the Rand Daily Mail called a "vicious attack on the Government" which "practically sounded the tocsin of a black v. white propaganda". At this conference Plaatje was offered the presidency of the ANC but he turned it

down. But he did agree to serve as a senior vice-President. John Dube and Selope Thema, President-General and Secretary-General respectively, were forced to resign. This was in connection with some misunderstanding in connection with their mission in London. For three weeks the ANC was without President until S.M. Makgatho was appointed President on June 23rd.

In June 1917 Plaatje was arrested in Johannesburg and charged, according to his words, "with infringing half a dozen of the multifarious regulations by which Natives are surrounded in this country".

### Sol Plaatje and the working class

Sol Plaatje was a representative of the emergent African intelligentsia. When he and the ANC delegation consisting of Selope Thema, Mvabaza and Gumede went to Britain in 1919, the African working class was beginning to organise itself. In Britain they met the hard-headed officials of the Colonial Office and Lloyd George, the Prime Minister, seemed to have been more afraid of the threat of Bolshevism and Garveyism than anything else.

It was the socialist movement and the British working class that gave Plaatje and his delegation a warm welcome and reception. Plaatje used this occasion to produce an eight page pamphlet entitled "Some of the Legal Disabilities suffered by the Native Population of the Union of South Africa and Imperial Responsibility". In December 1919 he embarked on a tour of Scotland lecturing under the auspices of the Independent Labour Party. Interviews with him appeared in left-wing newspapers, including one by Fenner Brockway. In a long piece on "The Colour Bar" the Communist Workers' Dreadnought (1, January, 1920) commented that the ANC deputation had been well received by many sections of the labour movement and it "will return to South Africa ... to build up the International Socialists, a solid organisation of black and white workers working together, without distinction of colour, race or creed, to wrest the pow

from the capitalists and to establish the African soviets".

The problem with this assessment is that Plaatje knew very little about "Soviets" and therefore had no intention of establishing "African soviets". Indeed he was hostile to what he called "black Bolsheviks of Johannesburg" and was prepared to make sure that his dear Kimberley was the last place "these black Bolsheviks of Johannesburg" will pay attention to, "thus leaving us free to combat their activities in other parts of the Union". He complained about their activities at an ANC congress in Bloemfontein:

"The ten Transvaal delegates came to the Congress with a concord and determination that was perfectly astounding to our customary native demeanour at conferences. They spoke almost in unison, in short sentences, nearly all of which began and ended with the word 'strike'."

This explains why Plaatje disliked Johannesburg and its "strikes". He did not want to commit Congress to strike action.

Plaatje died in Nancefield, Johannesburg on June 19, 1932. South Africans of all ethnic groups attended his funeral. Rev. Mahabane said of him:

"A great patriot, he devoted his great talents to the service of his people and country. In this service he did not spare himself, but worked day and night. He lived not for himself, but for others, and ultimately laid down his life on the altar of national interests".

Further tributes followed in the press in the succeeding days and weeks, in South Africa and internationally. In Umteteli wa Bantu of June 25, 1932 H.E. Dlomo wrote:

"A great, intelligent leader; a forceful public speaker, sharp witted, quick of thought, critical; a leading Bantu writer, versatile, rich and prolific; a man who by force of character and sharpness of intellect rose to the front rank of leadership notwithstanding the fact that he never entered a secondary school... Never have I found him autocratic, contumacious, or narrow of outlook. Whatever subject he touched upon ... was treated with a brilliancy,



humour, ability and finish that at once surprised and captivated, inspired and humbled me”.

This was no exaggeration. Three years later a tombstone was erected on the site of his grave in Kimberley. It stands to this day. On it is inscribed the following:

Ikhutse Morolong: Modiredi wa Afrika  
Rest in Peace Morolong: Servant of Africa

### His Achievements

Solomon Tshekisho Plaatje led an exceptionally full and varied life: at various times he was an assistant teacher at a mission school; post office messenger; court interpreter, newspaper editor and journalist, political leader, social worker and educator, writer and novelist — he was the first African to write a novel *Mhudi* in English though it received a superficial and often patronising treatment. A man of immense talent and ability, Plaatje rose by his own efforts to become, during his life time, one of the best known black South Africans of his generation; he was in the forefront of his people for the greater part of his adult life. One of his greatest achievements and contributions were in the sphere of Setswana language and phonetics. His life had been — in its range of interests, activities and achievements — a remarkable one, especially when one considers that he left school at Standard 4. He contributed to our political history, history of the press and literature. When one considers the difficulties, discouragement and financial embarrassment throughout his adult life his achievements assume a new perspective.

He worked hard and with persistence and determination to serve the interests of his people. He served the interests of his people — in a narrower and broader sense of the word — in conditions and circumstances that were most trying. This gave unity and sense of purpose to Plaatje's many-sided life and career.

The contradictions that existed in Plaatje's speeches and behaviour reflected the real contradictions that existed in the South African society. These contradic-

tions did not distract him from his consistency and sense of purpose and direction. This was his strength and perhaps limitation as well. We say “limitation” because his beliefs were overtaken by events and changes in South Africa. He never really understood (or he disliked) the emergence of the working class hence his dislike for Johannesburg. He never came to terms with these realities or their permanency or the new loyalties they produced.

Plaatje did not become conservative with age; he was consistent right through — his values, beliefs and philosophy — were overtaken by forces over which he could ultimately exercise no control. He lived in an age that was complex. But his political beliefs and aspirations were valid and realistic in terms of his own experience and theories. He has to be understood in the context of the times in which he lived.

One of his greatest contributions to our struggle is that he, together with his colleagues, established African political opinion as an autonomous factor in its own right in South African history. This tradition is being pursued and developed by the ANC and not Mangope. On the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the ANC we remember Sol Plaatje and all founding fathers of the ANC.

He was afraid that “radical ideas” might lead to victimisation: he did not want to be in the “bad books” of the Government. He was preoccupied with the land, the countryside, and regarded the workers as “displaced rural cultivators”. He never came to terms with the new reality or permanency of these changes or the new loyalties they produced.

The problem here is that the emergent African intelligentsia was unwilling to align itself with the emerging working class. They either sought new ways of serving the interests of the people or found alternative outlets for the expression of their energies and ability.

Plaatje was witty and humorous. Once when rebuked for ingratitude by a government representative and told to remember “all the blessings the white man has

bestowed upon you", Plaatje replied: "I do; I always do - especially brandy and syphilis".

What caused Plaatje's frustrations?

Perhaps, the financial embarrassment or loss of his manuscripts or the destitute state of his family after his return from abroad, especially from America.

On October 22, 1920 Plaatje left Liverpool on a ship bound for Quebec and Toronto where he spoke from the same platform as Marcus Garvey. He went to New York, the headquarters and stronghold of Garvey's movement and also to smaller towns like Buffalo. The enthusiasm and interest of black Americans in what Plaatje had to say was overwhelming. He sold his books including : *The Mote and the Beam*. The contact with Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois was interesting in another demension. It offered Plaatje the opportunity to send his address to the Third Pan African Congress in September 1921 which was read by Dr. Du Bois on his behalf.

But one problem he could not overcome was financial embarrassment. Even when he returned to London in August 1922 this problem was with him. He was stranded abroad without a return ticket, his wife was suffering at home and his daughter died while he was abroad. In November 1923 he finally returned home. He sold his furniture and even the printing press. But the people of Kimberley bought him

a house in appreciation of his work.

But one important lesson he learnt from his trip abroad was that the future well being of his people would have to be fought within South Africa and that new strategies would have to be devised to come to terms with the realities of the South African situation.

But in subsequent years Plaatje became more involved in education, temperance work of the Independent Order of True Templars (IOTT) and even edited their journal "Our Heritage", and economic enlightenment of his people through the bioscope: a fragile old cinema projector and films for entertaining lepers in asylums. All this voluntary work left Plaatje even more seriously impecunious. This was perhaps as a reaction to his lack of success in politics in a country which was becoming more industrialised and he regarded himself as a spokesman of the "inarticulate rural Natives". At this time he became a prolific writer: he finished two biographical essays of 19th century Rolong chiefs, wrote a history and traditions of the Bhaba, translated into Setswana Shakespeare's *Julius Ceasar*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Romeo and Juliet* - the manuscripts for his Shakespeare translations got lost. He wrote other books on Setswana Folk Tales and translated Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* which he called *Diposho-posho*.



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