

JUNE 1987



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EDITORIAL

WALTER SISULU — MAN OF THE PEOPLE

Comrade Walter Sisulu became 75 years old in May. He celebrated his birthday in prison. He was not the only one. There are thousands of Sisulus in South African gaols. He is definitely the most prominent of them.

This month we also commemorate the 11th anniversary of the Soweto Uprising — an incident which took place in June, ten days before our June 26th.

Comrade Walter Sisulu is connected with all these events. He grew up politically in the midst of all these events. He was involved in the June 26th Alexandra commemorations, when our people lowered the flag in honour of the dead killed on May 1st, 1950. He was deeply involved in the preparations for the Defiance Campaign, which started in June 1952, and was the main organiser of the Congress of the People in 1955 and the drafting of the Freedom Charter. He has been the kingpin of Congress activities since he became Secretary-General in 1949. Since then, the ANC has been transformed into a revolutionary movement. Since then, the ANC has become a real people's movement.

The ANC constitution of 1958 has behind it his spirit. Walter was very much involved in the formation of Umkhonto We Sizwe, and was Accused No 2 in the Rivonia Trial.

25 years later, he is still in prison for life. He is not the only one. There are thousands of political prisoners. Some of them have been executed, Washington Bongco was one of them; he was followed by Vuyisile Mini, Zinakile Mkhaba, Wilson Khayingo, Solomon Mahlangu, Marcus Motaung, Thelle Simon Mogoerane, Jerry Semano Mosololi, Benjamin Moloise, Clarence 'Lucky' Payi, Siphon Xulu and Andrew Sibuyiso Zondo.

He was instrumental in the formation of the ANC Youth League in 1944. The ANC Youth League regenerated the whole movement. He was a political mentor of Mandela and many

other leaders of the ANC.

"Walter Sisulu," it has been said, "was not a man for the public occasion, though he could rise to any. He was the man who made the public occasions possible ...

"Walter Sisulu had other, rarer, qualities too. He had the capacity to concentrate on the principal issues; by his own example of seriousness and dedication he had the ability to persuade those with doubts and those with differences that these should at no cost be allowed to prevail over the central objectives of the struggle. Walter Sisulu did not command; he persuaded ... he despaired of any change except by the masses, and he lived in the hope and confidence that they would rise to the challenge."

His name has appeared and reappeared in newspapers and on walls, and he has been mentioned more than once in meetings. His name has been central in popular gatherings and public demands. He has been what he has always been — a man of the people. One needs to go around Soweto to see the writing on the walls — "Mandela and Sisulu Lead Us."

People talk about him in streets, buses, trains and at home. His whole family is involved in the struggle for the liberation of his people.

Today, 22 of our people are on death row. They are being executed for fighting against apartheid. Hundreds of thousands of women and children are being detained. More are dying of starvation. Others are being killed in the streets.

The recent elections have demonstrated that Botha and his ilk are not prepared to release Mandela and all political prisoners. Former Robben Island prisoners have been killed in Maseru or Gaborone and others have been maimed.

How long will this continue? It will continue as long as we allow it.

WINNIE MANDELA

RECTOR OF GLASGOW UNIVERSITY



Nomzamo Winnie Mandela was installed for a period of three years as the new rector of the University of Glasgow. The Rectorship was accepted on her behalf on the 9th of May by Amanda Kwadi who read the following speech sent by Winnie Mandela to the University:

I am deeply honoured and humbled by this honour. On very many occasions, honours have been bestowed upon Nelson Mandela and myself in our representative capacity. Never before have I been elected to such a position. It is ironic that in our own tragic land I have never been allowed to stand for any position nor has any other person been allowed to do so freely.

Only those who subscribe to and endorse a vicious system of discrimination may do so. Only two days ago, the world witnessed confirmation of a timeless dictum that persons of privilege would rather self destruct before giving up any of their privileges. The tragedy is that the majority will suffer even greater hardship, oppression and death. There are only two parties to the election — the White Nationalist Party and the African National Congress. Only the constituents of the Nationalist Party were allowed to vote. The election would have been irrelevant to the disenfranchised majority except for the fact that it was about the oppressed majority. None of the participants referred to a democracy. From the right-wing Progressive Federal Party which

proudly proclaimed that it was not in favour of majority rule, to the extreme right HNP which stated that Blacks would be shunted back to the homelands. However all parties agreed the election was about the majority.

It is particularly significant that unknown brothers, sisters and friends so far away in Scotland care more about us that all those who voted a few days ago in our own country. It is this message that is very important to the oppressed, and to the oppressor.

Over the next few months this message will filter through to the oppressors and they will produce quislings with Black faces who in turn will claim to represent us. Guard against them. They will not represent us. They represent the oppressor. To us they are of no consequence. They will come and go but nothing the oppressor does or will do can halt our inevitable achievement of our freedom.

For the Students' Representative Council, the University and the caring persons who elected me to this honoured position, I say thank you. I accept the position in my representative capacity and I hope that during my own term of office I will be able to come to Glasgow as a full and free citizen of my country to express the gratitude of a nation.

With best wishes.

UNITED STATES POLICY TOWARDS SOUTH AFRICA

By Mzala

Only a few years ago, no one in the government circles of the United States (or even Britain) cared for a minute about the viewpoint of the ANC concerning the nature of the changes that must occur in South Africa. As we endured and fought against the most inhuman oppression over the years — when our people suffered mass removals, when some died of torture in detention or were merely butchered in the streets by the fascist army and police, no leader of American government bothered about our hopes for South Africa.

Nowadays we are invited to discussions and luncheons, the ANC is suddenly courted like some beautiful lady. Why? and why was this interest in us not shown just ten years ago? What is the grand strategy? Let us begin by looking at the genesis of this whole development, analyse the circumstances influencing the evolution of the United States policy toward South Africa, examine the imperialist policy, and then leave it to the reader to answer the question whether or not the imperialist can abort our revolution.

The People's Uprising

Since September, 1984, to be more precise, every newspaper in South Africa has been carrying in its pages, on a daily basis, some news about the development of our people's uprising. Throughout the length and breadth of the country, people have risen to a state of general rebellion against apartheid rule, resulting in the emergence in some areas of the country of what has been described as partial insurrectionary zones. Most historians concur in the view that this is the most serious political rebellion challenging the authority of government in the history of South Africa since Afrikaners took up arms against British rule.

Between September 1984 and January 1985, the country had already become so ungovernable that out of the 32 town councils, 29 of them had become inoperative. More than 240 local Black councils, resigned either voluntarily or were forced to do so by the militant detachment of the people. During the process, more than 3 000 people have been recorded killed. On two occasions the government has declared a state of emergency within a time difference of less than a year!

The uprising has since moved into a fundamentally new stage, whose main feature is the development of an increasing number of revolutionary organs of people's power which have stepped in to fill the void created by the collapse of the government authority. This development is taking place at the same time as the resurgence of the ANC as the leader of this revolutionary process of change.

The oppressed people more than ever before have clearly entered the theatre of struggle for political power. The political crisis facing the apartheid regime today is the crisis of power and illegitimacy. There is no longer any prospect that the government will be able ever again to reassert its authority in the Black townships except by the direct use of the military forces.

There was a time, not so long ago in South African history, when the struggle for political power was perceived by the mass media as the business of the White political parties in parliament. Whenever an organisation of the oppressed featured in the political process, it was considered by the media as merely a protest movement seeking civil redress. Perhaps that was the history of the ANC as well, before it was banned, or even the nature of the people's methods of political struggle and their demands hitherto. But those times have gone never to return again.



President Tambo in the United States, with the Rev. Jesse Jackson and the Rev. Allan Boesak

Genuine Freedom

The ANC had made no secret of its strategy for the armed seizure of power by the people in South Africa. And that it intends to lead a government that shall establish people's democracy. We represent people who have been robbed of their birthright, who have no state of their own, who enjoy neither liberty nor rights which citizens in a democratic order are entitled to. In a nutshell, the ANC has a political programme that rejects the apartheid constitution and stands for the right of all people who inhabit South Africa to participate, as equals, in the administration of their country. Such a new constitution for South Africa, we insist, can only be based on the principles of the Freedom Charter.

The Freedom Charter also puts to the fore, as one of the leading questions of the South African revolution, the issue of property ownership. We hold a firm belief that imperialist exploitation of South Africa's mineral resources as well as monopoly capitalist ownership of the major

means of production, is the economic cornerstone of our national subjugation. We believe that a liberation struggle that champions people's economic needs, must have an economic policy that plans to abolish poverty and other economic sores.

Imperialist Fears

For these reasons, imperialism is haunted by the spectre of a victorious revolution in South Africa. They see in the ANC the most uncompromising revolutionary force determined to put an end to continued economic plunder of our region by international capital. The US is convinced that unless it intervenes in the apartheid crisis, unless it acts as leader of the inevitable process of change from apartheid, South Africa will rapidly and irresistibly move toward the kind of revolution whose scope will threaten the imperialist interests in the region and the world. The United States has always projected itself as the

leader of the freedom movement in the world. That is how it wants to be seen also in South Africa.

Its various spokesmen have repeatedly stated their concerns about South Africa's social destiny, and the intentions of the United States to create a situation in South Africa which will make revolution unnecessary. It is hoped that a so-called solution can be found which will altogether exclude the possibility for the implementation of the Freedom Charter.

United States Interests in South Africa

The United States has never had colonies in Africa. But since Africa is rich, the United States has had a policy of getting these African riches. The case of South Africa is one of the best to illustrate this point. More than 50% of the United States need for over two dozen minerals deemed of strategic importance to America national defence, are imported from South Africa. Three at the top of the list — chromium, manganese, and platinum — are obtained in large part from South Africa: and the fourth, cobalt, is obtained from landlocked Southern African countries through South African transport system and ports. The United States policy toward South Africa is determined in the first and last instance, by its regard of South Africa as an area of profitable investment, a source of high profits, a storehouse of valuable raw materials, an extensive market for the sale of industrial goods and military hardware (usually via Israel.)

Recently the United States Congress passed legislation imposing limited sanctions against South Africa (called the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986); and ironically, it was Pretoria's Minister of Foreign Affairs Pik Botha who responded to this American legislation by saying its decision (i.e. United States) not to include strategic minerals imported from South Africa in the sanctions "simply proves how dishonest and immoral the legislation is. That which the United States needs for its strategic interests, suddenly is not subject to sanctions. (Quoted by the *The Washington Post* weekly edition of 16.2.87.)

South Africa also holds 60% of the whole western world's gold reserves, and gold is unquestionably South Africa's most important

foreign exchange earner. In 1984, for example gold exports represented roughly 48% of total foreign exchange earnings. In return for access to this cornucopia of riches, the western world pours billions of dollars into South Africa, and has made its economy the leading one in Africa. About half of the oil consumed in South Africa is refined at plants belonging to United States concern.

Although there has been a marked decrease in the amounts of foreign investment, (since 1983 at least 61 United States companies have withdrawn from South Africa. As of September 1986, 241 United States companies were listed as having assets in South Africa) in direct or indirect United States investment in South Africa totalled some \$13 billion, second only to Britain (15 billion). A revolution that can have scope in cutting off this free flow of mineral resources would have an undeniable impact on the United States economy itself. South African economy virtually subsidises the United States of America. So critically strategic is South Africa to the United States's own economic standing that the only viable alternative for it would be to increase its imports from the Soviet Union. It is also this potential impact of a likely denial of the free flow of the mineral resources that determined United States policy.

"Cape Sea Route"

Another, yet not so often mentioned, strategic significance of South Africa to the whole western industrialised world, is the so-called Cape sea route. Because of various limitations of the Suez Canal (including its incapacity to service huge modern tankers as well as the high rate of traffic), 75% of oil and 44% of total foreign trade freight of the NATO countries pass round the Cape. To the United States policy makers, who see every region in the world not for what it objectively is, but an area of conflict between East and West, one of its "global responsibilities" is to prevent any social revolution that will bring into government a political party or organisation that is hostile to American interests.

A recent report of the United States Secretary of State Advisory Committee on South Africa spelt out this aspect of the United States concern in these terms: "It is important for our long-term

strategic interests that South Africa not fall under the control of a government hostile to the United States or one allied with the USSR that might allow the establishment of a Soviet military presence."

Memorandum 39

Other than a few occasional condemnations of the "actions and policies of South Africa" and calling on the racist regime to "abandon its policy of apartheid and racial discrimination" during debates at the United Nations, especially during the period of the 1960 Sharpeville events, the United States was conspicuously silent on the question of South Africa at policy level at the beginning of this decade. It vetoed every Security Council initiative. Even as one country after another became independent on the continent, the United States adopted a very "simplistic" approach to this decolonisation process. The reason is probably that it did not see the nature of these political processes as deep-going and fundamental social changes.

The first comprehensive statement of policy toward South Africa was formulated by Henry Kissinger (then US Secretary of State) in 1969. The policy document was known as National Security Study Memorandum 39, which was endorsed by the Nixon administration. The fundamental shortcoming of this document is that it proceeded from an incorrect premise, namely, that no political changes were likely to happen in Southern Africa through the liberation movements, and therefore concluded that, ultimately, it is the "Republic of South Africa" that carries the leverage for political changes in the region (we shall come back to this question). In this way, the US gave itself moral justification for developing more and more economic and political contacts with apartheid South Africa.

The Memorandum went so far as to propose the "easing" of the U.S. sanctions against the then Rhodesia, partially lifting the arms embargo on South Africa and actively encouraging the US investments in South Africa and Namibia.

The calls for dialogue with South Africa had a definite aim of pulling Pretoria out of diplomatic isolation on the continent, undermine African unity by creating radical and moderate elements with regard to the attitude to South

Africa, and then weaken the anti-imperialist thrust of the liberation movement. No wonder racist South Africa responded to this call by also promising its hand of "friendship" to Africa but on condition that Africa did not "interfere in the domestic affairs of South Africa".

In 1971, the US Senate undermined a UN Security Council decision on sanctions against Rhodesia by approving the Byrd Amendment for lifting the embargo on the purchase of Rhodesian chrome. A year later, the Secretary of the Treasury, on instructions from the White House, signed an order abolishing all restrictions on trade with Rhodesia; it permitted the import of asbestos, copper, nickel and manganese, in addition to chrome. In 1974 the triple veto of the United States, Britain and France at the UN Security Council saved South Africa from being expelled from the United Nations.

Collapse of Portugal's Colonial Empire

1974 was the year of the collapse of the Portuguese colonial empire in Africa, and the emergence of people's power in Mozambique and Angola. This marked the beginning of a new political era in the region. The options made by the two countries for an independent economic policy, was viewed by the imperialists as a declaration of war on their economic "interests", particularly in Angola. Both countries are still paying a very high price for choosing for their peoples an independent economic destiny.

Fearing a likely repetition of armed victory in the remaining colonies of Southern Africa, Dr Kissinger made a trip to the region and made a policy speech in Lusaka on April 27, 1976. This speech signalled the beginning of active US involvement in efforts to negotiate peaceful settlements that would make armed revolution either unnecessary or impossible.

During the period of the Carter administration, the US verbally identified more strongly with the need for change, even holding meetings and giving awards to whom they considered as moderate personalities in South Africa. Channels for scholarships to Black university students were opened, while exports of certain items to the South African police and military were slightly tightened up, particularly following the death in detention of Steve Biko.

In his book *'In Search Of Enemies'*, which came out in 1978, John Stockwell, a former CIA colonel, made a post-mortem of Angola and concluded that the U.S. had made a mistake in backing a wrong horse, namely, UNITA. If it had concentrated on the MPLA, Angola would not have gone that far in her economic policies. Those are his views.

"Constructive Engagement"

When Ronald Reagan came into office in 1981, a review of U.S. policy toward South Africa was undertaken. What finally emerged was a strategy of "constructive engagement", a phrase that was coined by Chester Crocker for the first time in an article he wrote shortly before he became US Assistant Secretary of State for Africa.

"Constructive Engagement" rested on the following assumptions:

- (1) that the apartheid regime had sufficient economic and military power to manage any internal or external pressures for change;
- (2) that the Pretoria government could be persuaded to agree to an internationally recognised settlement in Namibia if its withdrawal from Namibia was linked to the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola;
- (3) that progress could be made faster in resolving the problems of South Africa if the United States toned down public criticism of apartheid and instead expanded and utilised the existing official channels (and not public ones like the UN) for its criticism and persuasion; and
- (4) that once assured of American credibility and goodwill, the apartheid regime would take steps to reform the apartheid system up to, if possible, the establishment of a constitution for "power sharing".

Recent events, however, have demonstrated to the American authorities that the struggle for change in South Africa as mounted by the liberation movement (led by the ANC) do have the capacity of dislodging the regime from power, as illustrated by the inability of the regime to govern the vast majority of Black townships despite military presence there. The regime's intransigence and unwillingness to make the least compromise over Namibia also blocked the very initial steps towards progress in the realisation of constructive engagement policy. South Africa

hardened its bargaining position on the Namibian question, and instead embarked on a concerted military and economic campaign to establish regional dominance by destabilising and intimidating neighbouring African states. Also, no amount of "toning down" of US criticism of the apartheid policy or persuasion through the official channels have led any nearer to the dismantling of the system. Whatever reforms the regime has made and announced to appease public criticism, they are all cast within the framework of apartheid.

Today even officials of the Reagan administration admit that "the administration's policy of constructive engagement has failed to achieve its objectives ... The South African government's response to the opportunities offered by constructive engagement was disappointing".

Search For New Options

The first indication of shift in the US policy direction was in 1983, when the then Under Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger, strongly criticized the apartheid policies in these terms: "The political system in South Africa is morally wrong. We stand against injustice, and therefore we must reject the legal and political premises and consequences of apartheid ... We reject unequivocally attempts to denationalize the Black South African majority and relegate them to citizenship in the separate tribal homelands ... Neither can we countenance repression of organisations and individuals by means of administrative measures like banning and detention without due process of law. By one means or another, South Africa's domestic racial system will be changed". Recent official pronouncements of the US government (1986) have stated that their "most fundamental interest in South Africa is to assist the ending of a political and legal system in which over 80% of the population are denied basic individual rights on the basis of race alone."

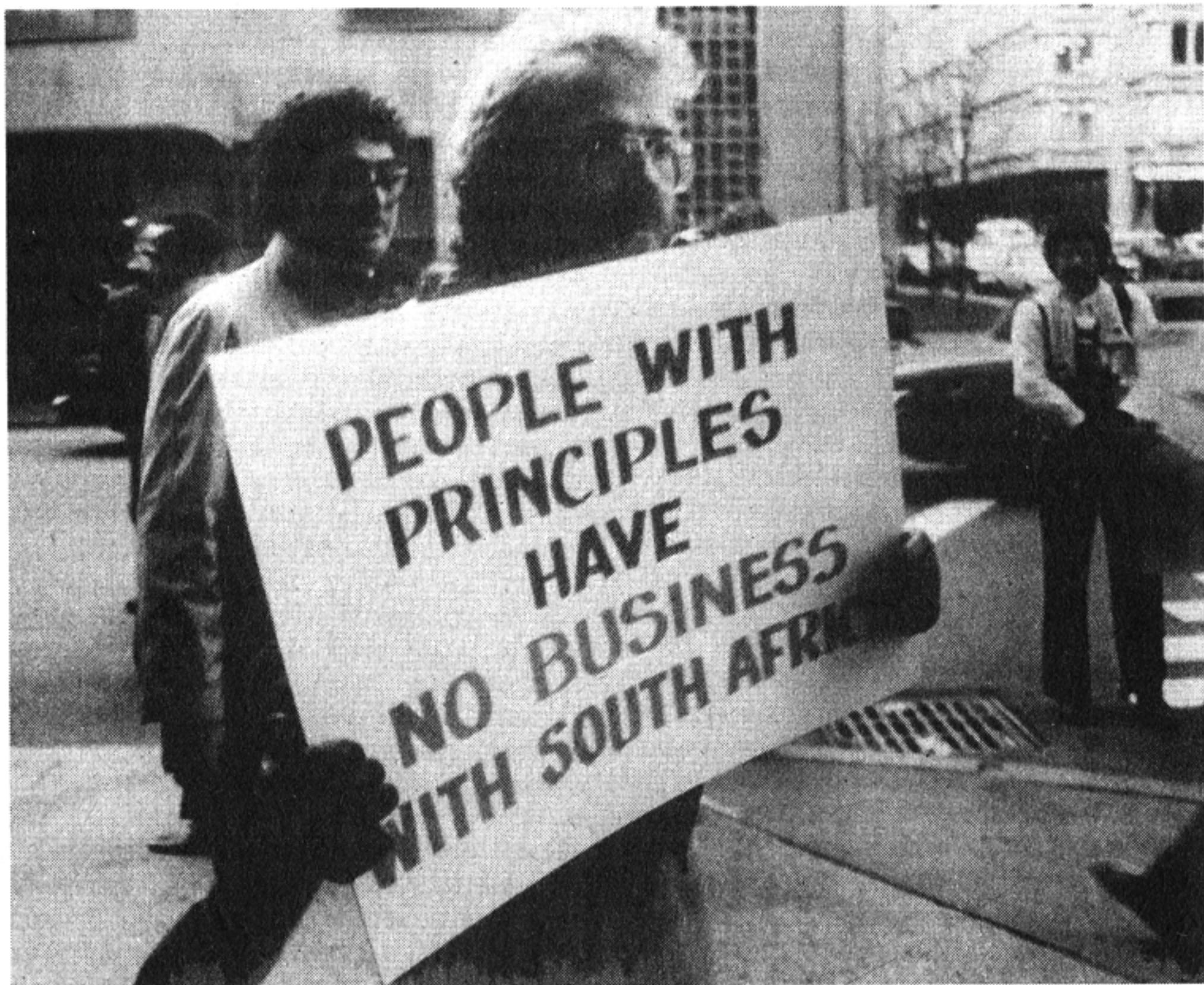
In furtherance of this goal, the US has, for the first time adopted limited, although relatively wide-ranging, sanctions against South Africa, when in October 1986 the US Congress voted, by overwhelming margins in both houses, to over-ride a presidential veto of the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act. At the same time, the

US government, again for the first time, has officially acknowledged the crucial role of the African National Congress in the processes of change in South Africa; there is now almost consensus in government circles that channels of communication with the ANC should be opened at all levels. Recent meetings between the ANC leadership and some officials of the US government, including Secretary Schultz, testify to this new development. Crocker explained it this way:

"What we are doing with policy is to seek to promote the agenda of negotiations to try to get both the government and other White parties as well as the Black opposition parties — the ANC, the UDF — internal organisations of various kinds — to look at issues of negotiation, to think hard about what the options are to avoid a kind of polarising violence that could go on and on and prolong the agony of South Africa".

Objective Contradictions

The principal reasons for these developments in the United States policy toward South Africa is traceable to what is at present happening within South Africa itself. Other than the subjective conditions of the crisis of apartheid, lie other more fundamental and objective reasons. Apartheid South Africa has developed two basic contradiction which have now reached their peak. The first one is between the level of the growth of the productive forces (which have given the production process a social character by concentrating thousands of workers in single industrial enterprises) and the private monopoly form of the appropriation of the wealth, resulting in the enjoyment of what is produced nationally (and also socially, in another sense) by a few families of the monopoly capitalists, owing to their private ownership of the country's wealth. (Anglo-American, SANLAM and Old Mutual are



Demonstrators in the United States

estimated to control 76.3% of the values of all shares listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange as of January 1987) This condition results in mass poverty and extreme deprivation of the population.

The second contradiction is between capitalism (as a mode of production) and the apartheid political institutions. This second contradiction needs further elaboration as it explains precisely both the present political processes within the ruling class and current policy of the United States. An historical approach to the analysis of apartheid colonialism in South Africa will make it clear that whereas at the initial stages of its growth it was needed by capitalism, when capitalism preferred and could only maximise profits by the exploitation of cheap unskilled Black labour, at the present stage of this development, monopoly capitalism is finding the apartheid system no longer compatible with the requirements of capital's industrial expansion; apartheid is acting as its fetter.

In a narrow sense, it is principally the apartheid system that is responsible for the economic crisis experienced in the country (in a broader sense this is also a crisis of capitalism); it is because of apartheid that the country's economy needs to finance the war in Namibia and the deployment of racist troops in the townships; it is because of apartheid that South Africa has to bribe its way into the oil and military illegal markets (usually at exorbitant prices). And to maintain a cumbersome bureaucratic structure which also drains on government finances. As a result, South African state agencies and banks are forced to borrow even short-term loans. (short-term borrowing by South African banks and state agencies in the international financial market increased from \$6 billion in 1980 to over \$13 billion in 1984.)

Opinion of Big Business

The Federated Chamber of Industries, the Afrikaanse Handelsinstituut, the Association of Chambers of Commerce of South Africa and the Chamber of Mines of South Africa have all issued strong statements condemning apartheid policies as the cause of this economic crisis. Chris Saunders, the Chairman of the Tongaat-Hullets Group, is reported by *The Sowetan* to have said: "We are paying now for all the problems and

mistakes made over the past thirty years by men like Strydom, Verwoerd and Vorster ... In the long term, we are paying, very simply, for the apartheid system;" Gordon Wadell, the chairman of the Johannesburg Consolidated Investment Company, said in his annual report in 1984: "Our economy simply cannot afford the present plethora of public expenditures, which have their origin in the ideological policies of the past ..."; Chris Ball, the managing director of Barclays National Bank, seemed to have been even harsher against the regime when he said; "Regardless of one's political affiliation, perhaps there is some truth in the fact that this government has been in power for too long." What has gone wrong with the fraternal relationship between apartheid South Africa and the monopoly capitalists as well as international capital? Was it not only recently that South Africa was regarded by foreign investors as one of those rare places in the world where profits are high and problems small?

Apartheid Has Outlived Its Purpose

A century ago, foreign companies that built South African industry were attracted precisely by the apartheid laws which trapped the African workers within colonial disadvantages; they had no need for more skilled labour force than the White population alone could provide. In the course of time, over this century, capital accumulated, turning from its primitive preferences to the building of giant industrial machines which require to be serviced by skilled personnel. Under these conditions, the White population can no longer provide sufficient personnel. And capitalism, being motivated solely by the need to make profit, no longer needs Bantu Education, Job Reservation, Group Areas or even to finance the government's bureaucratic structures responsible for managing an obsolete system with no direct relevance to the economic base. These legal provisions hinder the growth and availability of a stable and skilled Black labour force. It is in this sense that apartheid has outlived itself, since it is becoming a hindrance to the very economic development it was originally designed to promote.

It is this sharp contradiction that now exists in the political economy of South Africa. This contradiction carries within it the possibilities of be-

ing resolved in a revolutionary way by changing the whole political and economic foundations of mass exploitation (as the Freedom Charter proposes), and in that case a starting point shall have been made toward a lasting solution of the crisis problems; and there also exist, objectively, the possibilities for a less fundamental change, the mere change of the superstructure in order for it to serve the imperialist system of exploitation more perfectly, in that way a neo-colonial, bourgeois democratic "solution" shall have been found. We do not want this.

Each of these possibilities is represented by distinct political forces, and there is taking place presently (even within the diplomatic front) such a struggle between the forces of revolution and the forces of reform. On the one hand stands the ANC and its allies, holding high the banner of peoples' democracy, and on the other are the imperialist forces, led by the United States, manoeuvring to abort a genuine people's revolution in order to save the present system. There is no middle course. Capitalism, which operates as an internationally integrated system, and is supported by the imperialist governments, always looks for ways and means to save itself from unfavourable conditions.

It is therefore logical and expected for the United States government to join the chorus of condemnations of apartheid and to seek ways of changing it, as soon as the question of colour has come into conflict with the whole needs of its productive system. In a sense racialism, at an institutionalised level, no longer became the best shell in which the capitalist system can exist. This development also proves just how correct our analysis has always been when we insisted that racialism is only a tool used by the bourgeoisie to extract superprofits; when it no longer ensures this, the bourgeoisie do not hesitate to look for new ways to adapt their system, to opt for an end to "a political system in which over 80% of the population are denied basic individual political rights on the basis of race."

American Public Opinion

American public opinion has made an important contribution to the recent developments in United States policy. Organisations like TransAfrica and

the Free South Africa Movement, have helped tremendously in making the question of apartheid a major public issue in the United States by picketing the South African Embassy and consulates, co-ordinating sit-ins at colleges and universities. Also churches, trade unions, civil rights groups and the Congressional Black Caucus have all joined in pressing for a more active policy.

The system of apartheid, like Hitler's fascism, compels mankind to unite across continents and ideological differences in opposition to it. Freedom is a fundamental value which everyone with a sense of morality can defend in the world. It is indivisible. If freedom does not exist in one single part of the world, then the world is not free. About forty years ago, humanity stood up as one to defend freedom against Nazism. This was not merely an issue of German concern. This was an issue concerning the whole of humanity.

Those who live to see a free South Africa will also tell stories similar to those of the survivors from Auschwitz, Buchenwald and other concentration camps. Apartheid is also a system of human annihilation. Our gas chambers in South Africa are in the open streets, where racist soldiers and police move from yard to yard killing and maiming thousands of Black people and other opponents of apartheid. Without this restless passion for justice and a sense of duty to other people, there would be nothing honourable about mankind. The American people are known also for their history of resistance to slavery and racial discrimination.





U.S. OUT

*Free
South
Africa!*



VICTORY TO ANCS & SWAPO

U.S. OUT

*Free
South
Africa!*



VICTORY TO ANCS & SWAPO

Gencor KILLS MINERS

By Jean Middleton



Only seven months after the Kinross mining disaster of September 1986, yet another disaster was added to the already shameful record of the General Mining Union Corporation (Gencor). On the night of April 9th-10th 1987, 34 miners — 31 Black and three White — died in a methane gas explosion in a Gencor colliery at Ermelo in the Eastern Transvaal. 16 were injured; and 12 were admitted to hospital. Six were on the critical list; they were dizzy, confused, semi-conscious, suffering from carbon monoxide poisoning.

Methane gas is a continual danger in coal mines, for it can be released from the coal face at any time. It is highly combustible, and in its presence the slightest spark — even from a spade or a pick — can cause it to ignite and explode. The explosion removes oxygen from the air, and — depending on the amount of oxygen that was present — replaces it with carbon dioxide or carbon monoxide gas. Breathing carbon dioxide, the workers down the pit suffocate from lack of oxygen; breathing carbon monoxide they grow drowsy, and die within a few minutes.

Frequent and regular testing is crucial in detecting the presence of the gas, and the ventilation system down the mine is crucial in preventing build-ups.

The number of deaths caused by methane gas down South African mines is increasing. According to the London *Guardian* of April 11th 1987, there were 42 in the 1970s, and there have already been 177 in the 1980s. Two days before the Ermelo disaster, 16 workers were injured in a methane explosion at the Bosjespruit Colliery, owned by SASOL, at Secunda in the Eastern Transvaal. (This was apart from the other two mining disasters that took place a few days later — the groundfall that killed seven and injured three at the Randfontein Estates Gold Mine on April 13th and the pressure burst at Vaal Reefs the next day, that killed three and injured 20.)

Long Record of Death

The record of deaths and injuries on South African mines is bad enough; the record of Gencor stands out as among the worst. The history of Gencor disasters, its history of negligence in matters of safety, goes back a long way.

■ Gencor owned the Clydesdale Colliery near Coalbrook in the Transvaal, where, in 1960, the worst mining disaster ever to take place in South Africa killed 435 men, who were cut off by a rockfall. A methane gas explosion was suspected, and at the enquiry later there were doubts about whether testing had taken place that day. There were rumours that the men working that day's shift had suspected something was wrong, and hadn't wanted to go down. Their bodies were never recovered; to this day, no one knows whether death came for them swiftly or slowly; and there they still lie, far below the surface, in the grave where they died.

■ At the time of the methane gas explosion at Hlobane Colliery that killed 68 men in 1983, Iscor had only recently bought the mine from Gencor. The court afterwards found that the ventilation system had been faulty, and Iscor was found criminally responsible for the deaths.

■ Gencor is the owner of the Kinross gold mine, where 177 miners were killed in September 1986 and 235 injured. The cause of this was fire and poisonous fumes from inflammable material used down the mine, including polyurethane foam, which gives off toxic gases when burning. The fire was caused by a spark from a welding torch, and the NUM later pointed out that there had been no fire extinguisher within reach of the welding operation. Asked by the press afterwards about safety precautions down Kinross mine, the representatives of Gencor gave vague and unsatisfactory answers.

Senior employees of Kinross are now facing charges of culpable homicide arising out of the disaster, and alternative charges under the Mines and Works Act. Cyril Ramaphosa, General Secretary of the National Union of Mineworkers, has protested publicly against this. He said that by deciding to take criminal proceedings against individual mine officials, the state has evaded a proper enquiry, for when such charges are brought there is normally no full inquest.

'Safety' Apparatus

At the time of the Ermelo explosion, the Chamber of Mines had announced it was installing 'self-rescue' equipment down the mines. At Ermelo, when the gas exploded, the lights went out — as might be predicted when an explosion takes place. Gencor had installed 'breathing equipment' in 'refuge bays' which were supposed to be within reach of every worker in the event of an accident, and which Gencor claimed would keep a man alive for up to 60 minutes. In the chaos following the explosion, these safety arrangements proved simply not good enough, for many miners did not succeed in finding the bays and using them.

Some survivors told the press that "something like a storm" filled the tunnels. They said:

"We tried to drag along those overcome by the fumes, but when their bodies stiffened we dropped them because they were becoming heavier as they died. There were screams all over. The lights went out and our lamps only shone as far as an arm's length. We ran into dead ends on several occasions and were forced to go back the way we came, where the fumes were coming from. There was a stampede."

Some survivors in hospital said they remembered the blast, the burning feeling in their lungs, and futile attempts to fit gas masks to their faces, before they lost consciousness.

The mine owners made statements expressing their regret. John Imrie of the Chamber of Mines said, "Naturally, the entire industry is deeply distressed by the latest accident," and a Gencor spokesman told the press: "Safety will always remain a very high priority and an integral and vital part of manpower responsibility." The manager of TransNatal Coal Corporation, one of Gencor's many subsidiaries, through which it owns a controlling interest in the Ermelo mine,

said that mine officials were doing a thorough analysis to establish how many men reached the 'self-rescuers' and used them, how many reached the kits but didn't put them on, and how many put them on but didn't succeed in activating them.

Information Blackout

At the same time as they were making these fine speeches, the mine owners were keeping a tight control on information. Those survivors who gave accounts of events after the explosion did so against the instructions of the employers. On the 11th April, the day after the disaster, the Johannesburg *Sunday Star* of April 12th reported the efforts the press had made to find out what had happened:

"Ermelo Mines, where the tragedy occurred, has placed a tight lid on all information.

"The security personnel at the mine will not allow any outsider on to the premises except on two conditions: that he will not talk to anybody inside the huge complex and that he will not enter any of the buildings.

"A short tour of the mine begins with a ride in a minibus ... and after the three-minute ride, all information about the disaster is complete ...

"Anybody wanting to interview anybody must have a word with the burly security guards manning the entrance ... They will not allow anybody into the compound and will not allow miners to talk to anyone not employed by the mines.

"Those are orders from the top."

On April 16th, six days after the explosion, inspectors went down the shaft. The team was led by the Department of the Mining Engineer of the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs, and seven unions, including the NUM, were invited to attend. However, on the 12th, four days before, TransNatal Coal had announced that a special team was going down to repair the ventilation system to make way for the inspectors. Since faults in the ventilation system are often a contributory cause of methane gas build-ups, repairs may have destroyed vital evidence, making a thorough inspection impossible.

NUM Demands an Enquiry

The NUM has long been in conflict with Gencor over safety standards. It called a stoppage of work over the Hlobane disaster, did a great deal to expose the scandal of Kinross and called another stoppage, and now it has demanded a full enquiry into the disaster at Ermelo.

The accident figures down Gencor's coal and gold mines are only part of the disgraceful story. Through two other subsidiaries, Gefco and Msauli, it owns asbestos mines in the north-eastern Transvaal and the northern Cape.

South African asbestos mines were first worked during and after World War I, when the dangers of asbestos were not yet known. During the 1950s and 1960s it was discovered that inhaling asbestos fibres produces two diseases: mesothelioma and asbestosis. Mesothelioma is a cancer. Asbestosis is caused by fibres penetrating the tissue of the lung itself, so that a mass of scar tissue is set up. Both diseases are incurable, and lead to a slow and painful death.

The full figures of asbestos-related disease among the miners of 20, 30 and 40 years ago are not available now. The mines were worked largely by migrant labour, some of it from as far as Botswana, Mozambique and Malawi, and it will never be known how many died, as a result of working with asbestos, after their return home. They never received the paltry 'compensation' of R1 491 that is due to them (Whites get R26 000). There are many kinds of deadly lung diseases among the exports of the South African Chamber of Mines.

Even in South Africa itself, figures are incomplete, but in 1981 one doctor reported 50 cases a year of mesothelioma alone in the northern Cape, and in 1982, the year Gefcor bought the notorious Penge brown asbestos mine, there were 79 cases of asbestosis among the work force.

Profits Before Lives

The mine owners and the state collude in putting profits before the lives of human beings, and in making statements to deceive the public. In 1967, when the facts about asbestos and lung disease were already well established, Carel De Wet, then Minister for Mines and Planning, was saying:

"I am satisfied that, with the various precautionary measures now in existence, the risk of asbestosis can, proportionately speaking, today be said to be slight."

In July 1984, the consultant physician to Gefco was saying optimistically:

The risk of asbestosis for a miner who's entered the industry in the past five years is remote."

As late as 1986, the managing director of Gefco dismissed public concern over the issue by calling it "hysteria."



South African mineworkers, facing constant danger of death or disablement.

In Britain, a government report of the early 1980s found that there is no safe level of asbestos fibres in the atmosphere; but the legal limit is laid down as 20 000 per cubic metre for blue and brown asbestos and 500 000 for white. The Pretoria government lays down a limit of 2 000 000 fibres per cubic metre for all kinds of asbestos in the atmosphere where asbestos is being worked. Even that limit does not seem to be enforced, for at Penge in 1984, 80% of the employees were found to be working in levels higher than that, and in the sorting plant and the processing plant levels as high as 9 9000 000 were read. The owners have not been prosecuted.

Gencor has said a lot about the wet working methods it uses to keep down the fibre count inside the mills where the asbestos is extracted and packed. But in the countryside, near mines that are still working and those that have been abandoned, the waste dumps remain; the mine owners have left them, and the law has done nothing to prevent it. Some dumps are covered with a crust, but the crusts break. People walk on the dumps. Children play on them, and cases of mesothelioma have been reported among children of 11 and 12. Some people use the dust for plastering the houses they are obliged to build for themselves because the regime does not provide housing for them. In some areas, when the wind blows, the air is filled with clouds of white asbestos dust.

In 1984, Gencor sold Bewaarkloof, a worked-out mine, complete with its waste dumps; it is to be incorporated into Lebowa as a residential area. Death is exported to the bantustans.

Countries like the United States, Britain and the Federal Republic of Germany are now using considerably less asbestos, and therefore importing less. Sweden has banned its use altogether. However, the managing director of Gefcor, in his interview with the *Financial Mail* in May 1986, said that his company still held out a hopeful future for investors:

"There is little competition ... particularly in developing countries ... This is because of the low cost and simplicity of making asbestos cement. They can virtually make their own pipes with asbestos fibre and cement."

However, nearly three years earlier, in August 1983, the same paper had printed an interview with Barry Castleman, an American expert on



toxic substances, who had recently toured South African asbestos mines. He saw the issue differently:

"It appears that the factories are extremely concerned about bad publicity ... They appear concerned that increasing knowledge and fear of the hazards will spread to developing countries, where they still have markets for their products."

The manufacturers of certain drugs, like Depo Provera, with dangerous side effects, dump them in the developing countries when they are not wanted in Europe and America. It is the same with asbestos. There are many ways of exporting death.

Continued on page 18 ►

RELEASE THE CHILDREN!



Zacharia Makhanjane, 13 years old, was detained from August 21st till 5th December, 1986. He is seen here with his mother.



These children, the youngest aged eight, are among the thousands who have been in detention. They were charged with public violence in March 1986, and here they are shown in court with their lawyer.



Gloria Shenuane, Sylvia Habangu and Angel Phiri, all 16 years old, soon after their release from detention.



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◀ *Continued from page 15*

The Unions Confront Gencor

The Black Allied Mining and Construction Workers' Union (BAMCWU) has campaigned for some time to get asbestos mining banned in South Africa, and in this it is supported by the NUM. The matter has gone to the International Labour Organisation in Geneva. Barry Castleman, addressing a conference called by BAMCWU in June 1985, said:

"Enough blood has already been coughed up on the altar of greed and in the name of profit."

The unions have been in conflict with Gencor over wages and strikes as well as over safety.

At the Gencor Marievale gold mine near Springs, 1 100 workers went out on strike in 1984, demanding wage parity with other mine-workers. Gencor threatened mass dismissals, and then evicted 42 of the strikers from the hostels.

The NUM took the case to court and lost, but in the Industrial Court it won. The judgment noted (among other things) that Marievale had paid little or no heed to the fairness of its actions, that what it had done was "not conducive to generating conciliatory or sound industrial relations" and that it had acted contrary to an agreement.

The national wealth of our country, the heritage of South Africans, shall be restored to the people;

The mineral wealth beneath the soil, the banks and monopoly industry shall be transferred to the ownership of the people as a whole;

All other industry and trade shall be controlled to assist the well-being of the people;

— *The Freedom Charter*

In January 1986, 23 000 workers were dismissed after a dispute at Impala Platinum, a mine in Bophuthatswana owned by Gencor through another subsidiary, Implats.

In 1985, Gencor stepped out of line by giving an increase of 2% less than that offered by the other companies in the Chamber of Mines. The manpower director of Gencor told the *Financial Mail*, in effect, that his company could not afford the increase. "The future viability of the industry is at stake," he said. In other words, wages are kept low to keep prices down.

High Profits and Ruined Lives

Wages are kept low, but profits are not. In March 1987, Gencor declared profits (before tax) of R705 million, an increase of 45.4%. It has expanded into Latin America, and is developing a gold mine in Brazil. It has subsidiaries registered in the United Kingdom and two offices in London, and mines it owns are quoted on the London Stock Exchange. (British Petroleum owns 30% of the shares in the Ermelo mine.) Gencor is controlled by the giant SANLAM, but it is a giant in its own right, and constantly growing.

In May 1986, the director of TransNatal Coal told the *Financial Mail* that his company was "looking for a growth in South African coal exports of about 8% a year." He mentioned that

some trade would inevitably be lost to the El Carrejon mine in Colombia, a country whose mines are notorious for low wages and low standards of safety.

The number of miners' lives lost in Southern Africa, or ruined by disablement, probably runs into thousands every year, but investors continue to draw their profits, and western countries continue to import South African coal because it is cheap.

The British Government refuses to support full sanctions against South Africa because — it claims — such sanctions would create unemployment; South African workers would lose their jobs. It doesn't mention the nature of these jobs; that the collusion between the Pretoria regime, the employing companies and the investors means that every worker down South African mines runs a heavy and unnecessary risk of death or crippling disease. Profit is the motive that prevents the western countries from implementing the United Nations policy of sanctions, and greed for profit is not a humanitarian motive.

The mine workers in South Africa are prepared to lose their jobs in the cause of freedom; they, and indeed, the whole democratic movement, are calling for: **Sanctions now!**

ANC INTERNATIONAL

US SOLIDARITY DEMONSTRATIONS

The campaign, Mobilisation for Justice and Peace in Central America and Southern Africa, came to a climax in the US on April 25th, with two huge demonstrations, one in Washington DC, for demonstrators from the eastern states and one in San Francisco on the west coast.

In both Southern Africa and Central America the Reagan administration has intervened by giving assistance to reactionary forces. The connection between struggles for freedom in both regions has recently been made even more clear by news about the complicity of South Africa and Israel in arming the contras in Nicaragua, and the allegations made in the *New York Times* a few weeks before, that South African pilots had been involved in this supply of arms.

The demonstrators protested against US support for the Nicaraguan contras, the Pretoria regime in South Africa, UNITA in Angola and the MNR in Mozambique. They demanded an end to the illegal occupation of Namibia.

They showed their support for the struggles for freedom of the South African and Namibian people, the economic and military struggle of the Front Line States against the Pretoria regime, the struggle of the peoples of El Salvador and Guatemala, and the Nicaraguan struggle for self-determination.

The rally in San Francisco was about 70 000 strong, and was addressed by about 30 speakers, including Comrade Neo Mnumzane, ANC Chief Representative at the United Nations and in the United States, and a speaker from SWAPO. The Washington rally consisted of about 160 000 people, and was addressed by Comrade Pallo Jordan of the National Executive Committee of the ANC, as well as by the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

The trade union federation AFL/CIO did not fly its banners at the rallies, but many of its affiliates brought theirs — The Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers' Union, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, the United Auto Workers of America, among others. There were many other banners, from a wide range of solidarity organisations.

WORLD PEACE COUNCIL AWARD FOR ANC AND SWAPO

At a ceremony in Luanda in December 1986, the President of the World Peace Council, Romesh Chandra, presented the Ho Chi Minh Peace Award to the ANC and SWAPO. The Ho Chi Minh Award is a high distinction, and it was received by President O R Tambo and President Sam Nujoma on behalf of their organisations. Romesh Chandra said:

"It is no accident that the awards of peace are made by the World Peace Council to those who fight for liberation. The African National Congress of South Africa and SWAPO of Namibia stand in the front line of the struggle for peace, for a world without nuclear weapons. And they have at all times pointed out what it is necessary for us to understand — that the struggle is one struggle, the struggle for a world which is free and independent, where liberty prevails, where social progress goes forward and the struggle for a world without nuclear weapons is the struggle for peace."

In his reply, President Tambo said he was receiving the award in the name of those who had sacrificed for the liberation struggle. He said the award was a serious challenge to the people of South Africa and to the ANC, to relentlessly pursue their struggle for the destruction of the imperialist-supported apartheid system and thus make their own contribution to the promotion of peace and progress in the world.

SPANISH AWARD TO COMRADE MANDELA

In March 1987, the United Nations Association of Barcelona in Spain honoured Nelson Mandela with an award of a piece of steel sculpture by a well-known sculptor, and 500 000 Spanish pesetas. The award was received on behalf of the ANC by Comrade Reg September of the National Executive Committee.

The organisation has written to the South African Embassy, protesting against the death sentences imposed on freedom fighters in South Africa, and is circulating a petition.

ANC/SACP—UNBREAKABLE ALLIANCE

The western media have been making mischievous comments on the question of the resignation of Comrade Joe Slovo as Chief of Staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe. We print the two letters in the hope that this will clarify the whole issue.

The President
African National Congress (SA)
February 12th, 1987

Dear Comrade Tambo

As you have already been informed, Comrade Joe Slovo has been elected General Secretary of our Party. The tasks and duties which now rest on his shoulders have multiplied immensely. As the leading public officer of our Party and its chief spokesman, he is called upon increasingly to devote himself to elaborating and projecting its policies and perspectives, and to participate in numerous exchanges with both internal and international groups. In addition, he must play an important part in ensuring that our leading collective vigorously pursues its task of ensuring that our Party carries out its duties as part of our great liberation alliance and as a force representing the historic aspirations of our working class.

In the light of the above we make a fraternal request for the release of Comrade Slovo from his functions as Chief of Staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe. His association with our People's Army began on the very day of its foundation and our Party is proud of the contribution he has made to the growth of MK and to its massive impact in the political struggle.

It is however obvious that his new responsibilities will make it increasingly difficult for him to give the kind of full-time attention to the vital tasks which his army post demands. Conversely, by dividing his energies between the two tasks, he will be prevented from doing justice to his position as General Secretary.

We reiterate that our Party remains firmly committed to the strengthening of the revolutionary alliance headed by the ANC and to its strategy of People's War.

Long Live MK!

Long Live the Alliance!

Long Live the ANC!

Dan Tloome,
Chairman, SACP

The Chairman
South African Communist Party
March 2nd, 1987

Dear Comrade Dan

Thank you very much for your letter in which you inform us that Comrade Joe Slovo has been elected General Secretary of the South African Communist Party.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate both you and Comrade Joe on your election to the respective positions of Chairman and General Secretary of the SACP. I look forward to our continued co-operation in pursuit of the common objective of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa.

Our National Executive Committee has considered and agreed to your request that we release Comrade Joe Slovo from his responsibilities as Chief of Staff of Umkhonto we Sizwe. We appreciate your concern that Comrade Joe should concentrate on his tasks as the General Secretary of the SACP.

As you know, Comrade Joe has been associated with Umkhonto we Sizwe from its very foundation. For a good part of the last 25 years, he has played an important role as a member of its command structures. The NEC is happy with the invaluable work he has done as part of this collective to strengthen the people's army, to activate it and to entrench its traditions of loyalty to the ANC and the perspectives contained in the Freedom Charter. History has assured him his place as one of the senior military leaders of our centuries-old struggle to assert our right to self-determination.

For these reasons, it was not easy for the NEC to accede to your request because we knew that his departure from our military headquarters would deprive us of his experience and talent. However, we had to bow to the inevitable. We are pleased that as a member of the NEC and the PMC, Comrade Joe will continue to make a direct input into the process of the escalation of the armed struggle for the victory of the democratic revolution.

Amandla! Matla!

OR Tambo
President, ANC

TWO NATIONS: THE CHARACTER OF THE WAR IN SOUTH AFRICA

By

Christos Theodoropoulos

The entire western press and literature refer profusely to the armed conflict in South Africa as a 'civil war' or leading to a 'civil war' situation. The literature of the national liberation movement, too, increasingly employs the term 'civil war' to describe the armed struggle now unfolding on the subcontinent. Is the national liberation movement using the term 'civil war' in the same sense as western writers and politicians do? Clearly not. Programmatic documents of the national liberation movement describe the situation in South Africa as 'colonialism of a special type,' and this is different from the western 'civil rights' understanding of the situation.

But, just how much different is the term 'civil war' as used by the movement from that employed in western literature? And, more fundamentally, perhaps, is the term 'civil war' actually relevant to the history and current practice of the South African national liberation movement? Does it depict the real character of the armed conflict in the territory and its true implications? How helpful is it in correctly identifying the enemy?

These are questions which, more than ever before, have important implications for the conduct of the war, the status of the armed forces of the national liberation movement and the duties of the international community towards the struggling people of South Africa.

Definition of Terms

An armed conflict between two socio-political entities can be either a civil war or an interna-

tional war. Civil war arises in domestic or internal set-ups where one section of a nation (whether a majority, a minority, a nationality, a population group, etc) arises or defends itself against another section of the same nation. The dividing line between the two warring sections may vary in character: it may be a predominantly class line as in the Spanish civil war, an ethnic line as in Nigeria's 'Biafra' civil war, a religious line or a combination of the above. Civil war has its own political and legal nomenclature as, for example, the terms 'insurrection', 'insurgency', 'rebellion', 'belligerency', and so on. These terms also denote the level of violence reached in a domestic or internal armed conflict and the rights and duties of both the warring sections towards each other and of third powers and states towards the warring sections. Third powers are, for instance, expected to maintain a policy of strict neutrality and non-interference during the period of insurgency.

An international war is different from a civil war, practically and conceptually. Unlike a civil war between sections of the same people, an international war is an armed conflict between two or more different peoples, nations or states. The legal and political implications of an international war are, consequently, quite different from those attaching to a civil war. For example, third powers are under an obligation to actively side with, and support morally and materially, the victim of aggression and be against the aggressor state from the outset of the conflict.

National Liberation War

Is a national liberation war a civil war or an international war? There is no doubt today (it never was for oppressed and colonised peoples fighting for self-determination, freedom and independence) that a national liberation war is an international war, an international armed conflict between a colonial power and the colonised people. Colonisation, including all annexationist designs of the oppressor, does not by itself destroy the national and political identity of the colonised people, no matter for how long colonial rule has been imposed.

On the basis of their struggle for self-determination and the restoration of their sovereignty, colonial peoples retain their national identity until they achieve independence. Until such time, therefore, the nationhood of the colonised remains distinct from that of the coloniser. This nationhood is elevated to statehood upon decolonisation. A war between a colonial power and a colonial people is, accordingly, an international war between two distinct entities in international affairs, even though the colonial people have, during the period of the anti-colonial struggle, not yet acceded to independent statehood. (See C Theodoropoulos, *Support for SWAPO'S War of Liberation in International Law in Africa Today*, Denver, Vol. 6, 1979).

It is clear from the above that the war, for instance, between the people of Angola and colonialist Portugal was an international war, the forces of national liberation having a clear and undisputed international standing. This was so in spite of the Portuguese annexationist claim that Angola was an 'integral part,' a 'province,' of Portugal, that the conflict was a 'domestic' or an 'internal' one, that third powers had no right to intervene in Portugal's 'internal affairs,' and so on. It is apparent that to refer to this anti-colonial conflict as a 'civil war' and to employ the nomenclature of civil war ('insurgency' and 'rebellion' for example) — something that was unfortunately and unwittingly done even by some supporters of the national liberation struggle — was to play into the hands of Portuguese and reactionary arguments and to minimise the international support due to the victims of colonial oppression.

The Conflict in South Africa

Is the war now unfolding in South Africa a civil

war or an international war of decolonisation? Is it a national-liberation, an anti-colonial war in its full international sense or a national-liberation war internal to a single entity, the Republic of South Africa (RSA)? Answers to these questions seem to differ widely, as positions on this matter reflect different understandings of the national question in South Africa.

A review of the literature of the national liberation movement of South Africa shows, indeed, that the conflicting answers to these questions result in a lack of clarity on this crucial issue. Prevailing attitudes give preference to a civil-war interpretation of the conflict and, consequently, though not without exceptions, utilise the terminology of civil war to describe the situation and the objectives of the armed struggle.

Magqabi Tshonyane, for instance, in his article, *The Pride of All the Oppressed — the 25th Anniversary of Umkhonto We Sizwe* in the *African Communist* No 108 of 1987, speaks of conditions in South Africa that "would culminate in a fully-fledged civil war." His civil-war analysis is further underlined by the use of such terms as 'ruling class', 'government', and 'minority regime.'

Commentators in a leading theoretical journal, the *World Marxist Review*, sometimes refer to the war in South Africa in such a way that the civil-war conception is projected. In its issue No 12 of 1986, this journal states on p.128:

"South Africa is a battlefield. In its efforts to retain power, the racist regime of apartheid is literally waging a war against its own people."

When interviewed by *Sechaba* in the issue of May 1986, Ronnie Kasrils presented the civil-war interpretation in the following terms:

"But we must never lose sight of the fact that, whether in the course of a guerrilla war of the bush, or a civil war, or through urban guerrilla struggle, armed insurrection must figure as the key way in which power may ultimately be seized. For, unlike Frelimo or the MPLA, we are not fighting a bush war against a colonial power that may ultimately grant independence after negotiations and withdraw."

There are some other views in the literature, however, which tend to support a different view of the character of the conflict in South Africa. In the same issue of *Sechaba*, J K Mathebula, for instance, states emphatically that the strug-

gle in South Africa "is essentially anti-colonial in nature and for national liberation." Sisa Majola develops this view further in the *African Communist* No 105 of 1986:

"The contention that South Africa is a colonial type of country, in so far as the political, economic and general social conditions of the Black people are concerned (irrespective of their class affiliation) proceeds from the colonial history of South Africa, which saw the British colonial power changing hands with the settler Boer colonists in the continued political rule of the Black people.

"From the point of view of the constitutional position of the Blacks (despite the recent Botha constitutional changes) they remain as nationally subjugated as were the Zambians, Angolans or Zimbabweans before the independence of these countries. In historic terms, South African Blacks still live in the pre-independence era of African history; and the main content of our struggle is a reflection of this period of history. This implies the presence, within the South African territory, of a colonised nation (an attribute of the continental history referred to) and the urge by this oppressed nation to form a truly independent and sovereign state — in short, to exercise its right to self-determination."

This decolonisation perspective of the national liberation struggle comes into sharper focus as Majola adds in the same article:

"It is beyond doubt that in order to free the oppressed nation from this internal (sic) colonialism, the colonial state of White supremacy must be destroyed and a new one built. Self-determination of nations means precisely this political separation from oppressive national (sic) bodies and the assertion of independence. It would be absurd to insist on the word "self-determination" without understanding that the oppressed have a right to set up their own state, one that shall be based on the principles embodied in the Freedom Charter, a perspective of democracy that envisages the creation of a united people in South Africa without national inequality or racial seclusiveness. It is this colonial origin of the problem in South Africa which demarcates the oppressor and oppressed nations within the borders of a single country."

Despite its decolonisation thrust, the above view, however, amounts only to a modified civil-war position. This view can be referred to as the

civil-war-assimilated-to-decolonisation-war thesis or the quasi-international-war thesis. It proceeds from a basic civil-war view of the nature of the conflict, interpreting the colonialism-of-a-special-type thesis of the national liberation movement as a mere 'internal' colonialism. Indeed, in the article quoted above, Majola refers to the colonised nation of South Africa as a mere 'majority' or even a 'nationality', terms which, in effect, reduce the conflict to a domestic, internal, civil war. (See my letter to the editor of the *African Communist*, No 108, 1987.)

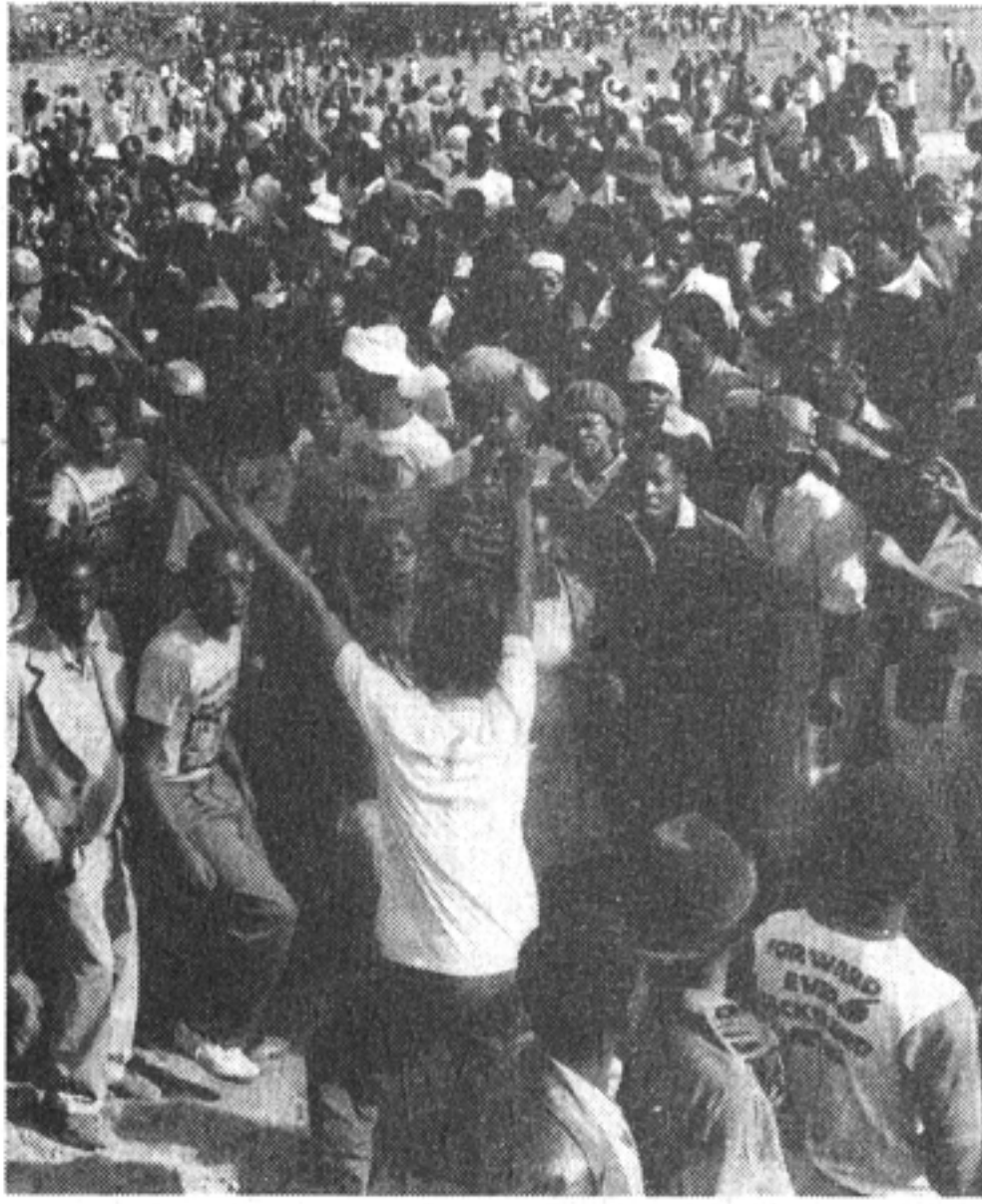
The Character of the War in South Africa

The position one takes towards the national question in South Africa largely determines the interpretation of the character of the conflict, that is, whether it is to be regarded as a domestic, internal, civil war conflict, on the one hand, or as an international, anti-colonial conflict for self-determination and independence, on the other.

The two basic and competing positions towards the national question have been, and remain, the one-nation thesis and the two-nation thesis. (In this context, it is interesting to read Ben Molapo's analysis in the *African Communist*, No 66, 1976.) Civil-war interpretations of the conflict in South Africa (both inside and outside the movement) are generally based on the one-nation thesis. One may present the civil-war interpretations of the character of the war, which interpretations are of two general varieties, as follows:

■ The RSA is an independent and sovereign state of all the people, Black and White; it is an internationally recognised and legitimate state (this is the position of the UN, the OAU and the RSA). The government of the RSA is illegitimate because of its 'minority' foundations. The 'race conflict' between the 'minority' and the 'majority', the struggle for the extension of civil liberties and human rights to all without distinction, for one man one vote and majority rule, leads to a civil war between the 'minority' and the 'majority' sections of the South African nation (this is the position of the UN and the OAU).

■ The RSA is an independent, legitimate and sovereign state of all the people, Black and White, despite the fact that the policies of the government of the RSA are akin to colonialist practices (the 'internal colonialism' thesis). The



The Blacks



The Whites



Is this the new nation in formation?

struggle of the oppressed 'majority' of the nation for one man one vote and majority rule leads to a civil war. This civil war, however, can be 'assimilated' to a national liberation war by assimilating the demand for majority rule in South Africa to the principle of self-determination of nations and people, that is, by regarding, for the purpose of this conversion, the 'majority' as if it were a people fighting for independence (assimilation theories springing up from the internal-colonialism thesis)

The Two-Nations Thesis

Unlike the one-nation civil-war positions described above, the two-nations thesis on the national question of South Africa points to the unalloyed **international** anti-colonial character of the conflict from its inception. The two-nations thesis interprets the colonialism-of-a-special type situation, which still exists in the territory, as settler-colonialism by pointing out that the 'special' characteristic of colonialism in South Africa is simply not of the metropolitan but of the settler colonial type. Both metropolitan and settler colonialism are manifestations of classical colonialism and both, therefore, give rise to classical decolonisation wars.

According to the two-nations thesis, a relation of colonial subordination of an oppressed by an oppressor nation exists in South Africa. This means that the RSA is not the independent state of all the people living in South Africa; it is the state of the settler colonial nation only and, as a squatter colonial power, oppresses the as yet not independent colonial, Black people of the country. The conflict between the colonial power RSA and the colonised people of the territory is, therefore, an international war, a national liberation war in the full sense of the term, part and parcel of the armed decolonisation tradition of colonial peoples anywhere fighting for self-determination, freedom, independence and the restoration of their sovereignty.

In successive historical documents, the national liberation movement of South Africa has correctly defined the situation in the territory as colonialism of a special type, and has pointed out the way of its transcendence in the general slogan of a Black Republic, with equal rights and guarantees for all inhabitants in a unitary, non-racial and democratic state.

This strategic objective is squarely built on the

premises of the two-nation thesis. These are that the purpose of the decolonisation struggle in South Africa, as in any other colonial situation, is to dislodge the rule of the colonial power over the territory and restore the independent statehood of the colonised; to remove colonialist RSA and establish an African republic which embodies the self-determination aspirations of the people of the territory.

It seems to us that the above two-nation decolonisation-war position regarding the past and current situation in South Africa is nearer to reality than the other positions, reflects better the actual practice of the national liberation movement and depicts accurately the character of the ongoing conflict in South Africa. (See C Theodoropoulos, *The Decolonisation Approach to the Eradication of Apartheid* in the *Journal of International Law and Politics*, New York, Vol. 18, 1986.)

This position, in addition, defines comprehensively the obligations of the international community both in respect of the struggle of the oppressed people against the RSA and with regard to any possible internal conflict within the oppressed nation itself.

Damaging Effects of Civil-War Positions

One might possibly argue that because of the particular form of colonialism in South Africa (the colonial power usurping and squatting in the territory of its colonial victim), the end result of either the civil-war or the international-war position may be pretty similar if the new state, which will replace the RSA, will be a unitary, non-racial and people's democratic African republic. Thus as Ronnie Kasrils states further in the interview quoted above:

"In our situation, if real change is to be achieved, we have to face up to the question of state power. How will the existing state structures and instruments of force be destroyed?"

It must be pointed out, however, that, until this end result is achieved, the road prescribed by each of the civil-war and international-war positions is not necessarily the same, or of equal distance. The civil-war conception of the struggle in South Africa does not depict the totality of present realities and does not sufficiently encompass all the national forces locked in combat with the colonialist enemy. It does not effec-

tively combat imperialist arguments and practice, which seek to reduce the national liberation struggle to a civil rights, an 'internal' civil affair, hypocritically banking, as they do, on 'peaceful change' and so on. It gives the oppressor RSA and its allies advantages which they should not have. It does not emphasise all the implications, internal and external, of a real and determinative civil war within the oppressed nation.

The civil-war conception is narrower than that of decolonisation war, and is contained in the latter as a most vital part of it. If uncritically pushed to foreshadow the decolonisation-war conception while the situation in South Africa remains a colonialism of a special type, the national liberation struggle may be weakened as a result and left errors be committed in the conduct of this struggle. As it is known, such errors are already rampant among some 'radical' groups which have literally reduced the national liberation struggle into a civil war between the 'White minority' and the 'Black majority.'

The one-nation interpretations of the national question are wrong and mislead theory into un-

comfortable civil-war positions. The national question has been and remains a **colonial** question between the two nations of South Africa and not an 'internal' question of a mythical one-nation thesis, on which the civil-war interpretations are based. The so-called 'one nation' in South Africa exists today only in the fantasy and 'power-sharing' tricks of Botha, who maintains, and wants the world to believe, that "the peoples of the Republic of South Africa form one nation."

Botha Promotes the One-Nation Theory

One is forced to ask what is the difference between Botha's "one nation" and the one-nation perceptions which are sometimes found in the literature of the national liberation movement. It seems that the difference is only a quantitative one: for Botha (as quoted in the *African Communist*, No 105, 1986, p.15) the nation "is a nation of minorities" while for some activists of the liberation movement it is a nation made up of 'majority' and 'minority.' One nation, nevertheless, for both viewpoints.



While Botha promotes his "one nation" to undermine the view that a decolonisation struggle takes place in South Africa, to mask the colonial character of the RSA and to maintain the legality and international recognition which unjustifiably the RSA has for so long enjoyed, the one-nation view of our activists brings grist to Botha's mill and takes them into the blind alley of 'civil war' within the context of the legitimacy of the RSA! The one-nation and civil-war talk within the national liberation movement clearly plays into the hands of Botha and his allies.

The practice of the ANC and the SACP, while laying the foundations for the creation of one nation in a future, liberated South Africa, disproves the contention that 'one nation' already exists in the territory. This practice, which leaves no doubt that a colonial situation still exists in South Africa, emphatically re-asserts the existence of two nations — a settler-colonial oppressor nation organised in the squatter state RSA, and an oppressed nation struggling for self-determination, liberation from the settler colony and the establishment in South Africa of an African unitary, non-racial and democratic republic.

Theory Legitimises Colonialist Repression

The continuing war between these two nations is, historically, politically, legally and in any other sense, an international one. The view that the national liberation, anti-colonial war in South Africa is a civil war not only runs counter to the practice of the movement, it also uncritically legitimises the colonialist aggression, recognises the legality of the RSA on the soil of its colonial victim and, equally important, deprives the struggling people of South Africa of basic rights which they are entitled to as participants in an international anti-colonial conflict.

What are these rights which the civil-war perspective denies the struggling people of South Africa? What are the duties of the international community towards the struggling people of South Africa that the civil-war perspective loses sight of, and the 'traditional allies' of the RSA take full advantage of?

The civil-war perspective downgrades the status both of the war in South Africa and of the liberation forces, undermines the range of relevant rights belonging to national liberation movements and fails to put before the international community as a whole the full range of its

legitimate obligations towards the struggling people of South Africa. This is because:

■ The civil-war perspective hides the true nature and status of the war. The war of the colonial people of South Africa against the colonial power, RSA, is an international decolonisation war. As colonial domination has been declared a permanent aggression and a crime against humanity, all states and international organisations have a duty to side with, and actively support, the victim of RSA colonialist aggression as represented by the recognised South African national liberation movement.

There is no room for neutrality on the part of third powers in a decolonisation war. The fact that western powers still cryptically play on 'neutrality', 'non-interference' and 'peaceful change' has to do only with their skilful exploitation of the civil-war views.

■ It legitimises the colonialist aggression against the territory, which has been going on for three and a half centuries. By regarding 'all' the inhabitants of South Africa as forming 'one nation', it unwittingly destroys the real and vital distinction between the coloniser and the colonised, and magically brings colonialism in South Africa to an end. This civil-war implication has some even more sinister consequences. As it does not regard the RSA as being a colonial power, it hides the question of RSA's illegality and RSA's lack of right to exist in South Africa.

■ It obliterates crucial international responsibilities towards the territory. As a colonial power, the RSA violates the most fundamental norms of the existence of the international community, particularly the norms of non-aggression, self-determination and sovereign equality of peoples. As a squatter colonial power, which usurps the land of South Africa by means of colonialist annexations and dispossessions, the RSA violates the prior and sovereign right of the colonial people of South Africa to control their country. Unlike a metropolitan colonial power, which could 'grant independence and withdraw' into its own territory, and retain there its right to exist, the RSA has not the right to exist anywhere in South Africa.

This right belongs solely to and can be lawfully exercised only by a state freely set up by the colonial people themselves. Not the RSA, but only a (future) state of national liberation, establish-

ed as a result of a successful war of decolonisation, can lawfully claim a right to exist in South Africa. It is the future African state which alone can claim membership to the OAU in accordance with Article 4 of the OAU Charter: "Each independent sovereign African and Malagasy state shall be entitled to become a Member of the Organisation."

This most crucial implication of the national question in South Africa is side-tracked by the civil-war theory.

RSA: Illegitimate Aggressor State

Only the recognition of the international status of the war in South Africa corresponds to the critical events which are now unfolding in the territory. This implies that all states have, in addition to their obligations to assist by all means the oppressed people of South Africa in their just struggle for self-determination and national independence, a duty not to recognise the legality of the existence of the RSA in South Africa.

The international character of the national liberation war in South Africa fully reflects the special type of colonialism in the territory and correctly identifies the warring entities: a legitimate international entity, the oppressed people of South Africa, struggling against an unlawful colonialist entity, the RSA and its illegal occupation of the territory. (See further, C Theodoropoulos, *The Right to Decolonisation in the Context of Settler-Apartheid Colonialism*, in *Presence Africaine*, Paris, December 1986.)

Acknowledgment of the international character of the war by all concerned, therefore, removes all the remaining trappings of RSA legitimacy, particularly in the practice of many states, renders the RSA an illegitimate aggressor state with whom no state or international organisation may have normal relations, and greatly strengthens the position of the national liberation movement by removing all the unwarranted disabilities imposed on it by the civil-war view.

As the national liberation movement always emphasises in the strongest terms, a correct, historically justified attitude towards the national question in South Africa is crucial for the identification of the enemy and the successful conclusion of the struggle. The enemy is the RSA, a colonialist entity distinct in all respects, historically, culturally, politically, economically, socially and legally from the oppressed people

of South Africa. The national liberation war against the RSA is thus not a civil war. It is an international decolonisation war between an oppressor squatter colonial power and its colonial victim. It is a war, to use the words of the ANC, for the restoration of the independence and sovereignty of South Africa to its lawful owners.

Social Significance of the Struggle

The national liberation movement of South Africa is not a 'rebellion' movement, for it has never recognised colonialist authority over South Africa as legitimate. In 1910 it protested when settler colonialism succeeded British colonialism in the formation of the Union of South Africa. In 1960 Nelson Mandela led a national strike against the establishment of the RSA. Soldiers of Umkhonto We Sizwe, and all those who have taken up arms against the colonialist aggressor, RSA, are not 'insurgents.' They are the spear of a nation, which is fast dismantling foreign rule and laying the foundations of freedom and independence, of the emerging unitary, non-racial and democratic African republic, for all inhabitants, Black and White alike.

As any other national liberation war, the national liberation war in South Africa, too, has a national aspect (the decisiveness of the oppressed people's blow against the RSA) and a social aspect (the joint participation of the nation's antagonistic classes in the war). The essence and the results of this war, therefore, have been, and shall continue to be, influenced by the interaction of these two aspects.

Irrespective of class, the colonised people as a whole (with the exception of quislings and other traitors) supports the decolonisation war and has a vital interest in its victorious conclusion. National liberation from settler apartheid colonialism is an all-class question, the uncompromised objective for the solution of the national question. All patriotic forces, including the courageous and democratic forces of the settler colonial nation, and all progressive forces the world over are actively contributing to such a solution, and their advance detachments are indeed fighting side by side with the ranks of the national liberation movement.

The ANC is the national organisation, which co-ordinates and directs the firing power of these detachments to the very foundation of apartheid colonialism, with a view to replacing the alien

The Freedom Charter

We, the People of South Africa, declare for all our country and the world to know:

that South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and White, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people; that our people have been robbed of their birthright to land, liberty and peace by a form of government founded on injustice and inequality that our country will never be prosperous or free until all our people live in brotherhood, enjoying equal rights and opportunities; that only a democratic state, based on the will of all the people, can secure to all their birthright without distinction of colour, race, sex or belief; And therefore, we, the people of South Africa, Black and White together — equals, countrymen and brothers — adopt this Freedom Charter. And we pledge ourselves to strive together, sparing neither strength nor courage, until the democratic changes here set out have been won.

state, RSA, with a state of national liberation, a unitary, non-racial and democratic Black Republic.

The national aspect cannot be viewed separately from the social aspect of the national liberation war. These two aspects form a close unity, and one directly influences the other. The importance of the social aspect cannot be underestimated, particularly as each antagonistic class of the oppressed nation seeks to influence the outcome of the decolonisation war in its favour.

The Class Leading the Struggle

Thus, while there is no doubt that the successor to the RSA will be a state of national liberation, the character of the new state will inevitably be determined by the correlation of class forces upon and after decolonisation.

The class that stands at the helm of the national liberation war is of decisive significance for the content and social results of that war, and the nature of the new state. (See C Theodoropoulos, *Colonialism of a Special Type and its Implications*, in the *African Communist*, No 91, 1982.) Whether the unitary, non-racial and democratic African republic will be a bourgeois or a people's republic depends precisely on the outcome of the class struggle within the oppressed nation. If there is a relevant civil-war term to use in the context of South African liberation, it is in respect of this class struggle taking violent forms. (Of course civil war can also erupt in the unlikely case

of an armed conflict between the antagonistic classes of the settler colonial nation.)

The national-democratic revolution now unfolding in South Africa holds great promise that a civil war within the oppressed nation will be averted and that the internal social question of the nation (the question of state power) will be solved in favour of the toiling masses. Conditions are, indeed, fast being created for a simultaneous solution of the national (decolonisation) and the internal (social) questions facing the territory in favour of the forces of peace and progress, and in a way that guarantees the transition to a people's unitary, non-racial and democratic African Republic.

Towards the fulfilment of this objective, the international-war position in respect of the ongoing conflict is the only one that fully safeguards the general national interest: full support by third powers for the national liberation war against the RSA and non-interference by these powers in the domestic affairs of the oppressed nation.

Currently, there is massive intervention by western powers seeking to prop up a tiny section of the African people against the rest by all means, including the manipulation of their sanctions, as is the case with the two north American states and the EEC. The need for the liberation movement to reaffirm the international-war position in this respect, too, can hardly be over-emphasised.

OBITUARY

GERT NSIBANDE



People's leader Richard Gert Nsibande, 1901-1987

This obituary is reprinted from the SACTU paper, Workers' Unity.

Known in the movement as "The Lion of the East" for his political and trade union work in the Eastern Transvaal, Comrade Richard Gert Nsibande was born in 1901 in Swaziland. He came from a family of farm labourers.

Having moved from Swaziland to Bethal in South Africa, Comrade Nsibande became actively involved in the struggle for trade union rights and the struggle for political and social emancipation, led by the ANC. For his political work he was subsequently banned from residing in Bethal and banished to Evaton. He was elected the Transvaal ANC President at George Goch on October 1959 — a post he deserved for building a strong ANC fortress in the Eastern

Transvaal, and a post he never relinquished, for he died being the last Transvaal President of the ANC. No one was elected when he left South Africa for Swaziland, since the ANC was outlawed.

His family background and the banishment order to rural areas, contrary to the wishes of the racists, contributed a lot to the struggle, making him indispensable from the late 1930s until the late 1950s in the political mobilisation of rural workers and peasants in the Transvaal, to become their organiser. He was the first person to publicise the degrading conditions that farm workers were subjected to in Bethal — disguising himself as a farm labourer to witness and experience farm workers' life. His contribution on this issue was taken up by journalist Ruth First, assassinated wife of the South African Com-

munist Party (SACP) General Secretary, Joe Slovo, and Michael Scott in *New Age* and culminated in the famous and effective potato boycott of the 1950s that swept South Africa and called attention to the conditions of farm labourers.

Through the Agricultural National Organising Committee, Comradé Gert Nsibande had a hand in bringing into SACTU leaders who themselves had been born and raised in peasant families in rural Transvaal. And not only that, his influence as an organiser in farm workers' affairs was deeply felt in the Farm, Plantation and Allied Workers' Union — the union he founded, even though he was banned.

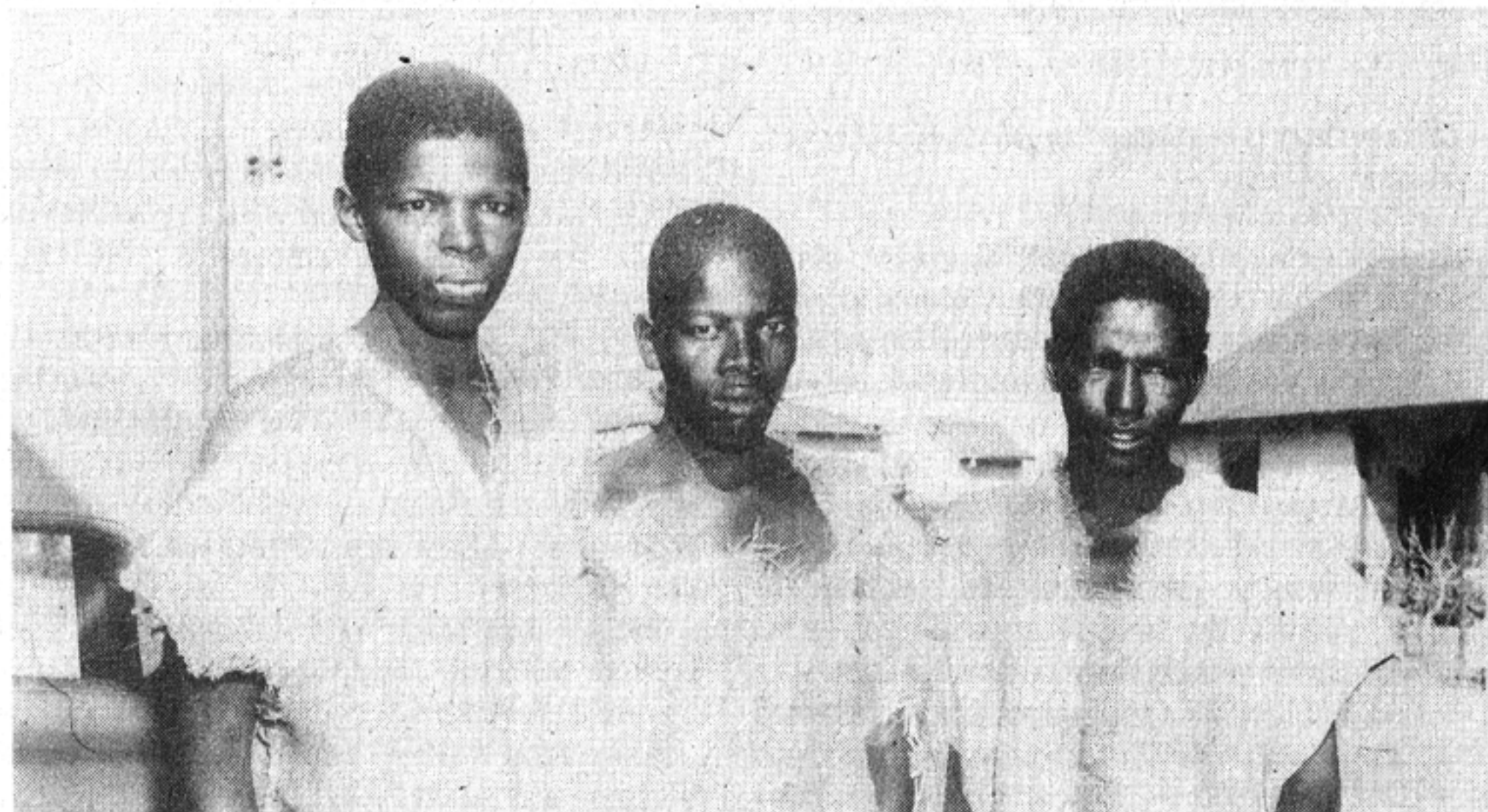
Following his continual harassment by the racist authorities, Comrade Nsibande, who was a Swati by birth, moved to Swaziland in the late 1960s, where he was perpetually troubled by the Swazi authorities ordering him to dissociate himself from ANC and South African workers' activities. He stood his ground on that, telling them that he regarded the ANC as his father and mother.

He continued working for the movement in Swaziland. Whenever there was political work to be done in the Eastern Transvaal he was always consulted to assist — giving advice and so on. Even on his sickbed, dying from an illness related to ageing, Comrade Gert Nsibande always

discussed organisational work. Chief Albert Lutuli's memorable message — "SACTU is the spear, ANC the shield" — delivered at the 1959 SACTU conference — was fully utilised in the outlook and deeds of Comrade Nsibande. As the Transvaal ANC leader, he assisted the movement's units in the overall political mobilisation of rural workers and peasants, thus bringing to the fore and setting a practical pace and example of that vital alliance necessary between the liberation movement and the trade union movement in uprooting capitalism.

Comrade Gert Nsibande, who was among the 156 accused in the treason trial from December 1956 until March 1961, is remembered by Comrade Helen Joseph as a valiant comrade who bore persecution with dignity and courage. Shortly after the end of the trial — in which all accused were acquitted — Comrade Nsibande was banned and restricted to Komatipoort. He leaves behind children from his first wife, who died at Bethal, and from the second wife, still residing in Swaziland, whom he married after the death of the first wife. He will always be remembered as a hard worker, dedicated to the cause of liberation.

**Hamba Kahle Qhawe La MaQhawe!
An Injury to One is an Injury to All!**



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