

AUGUST 1981



SECHABA

official organ of the african
national congress south africa



25th ANNIVERSARY
SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN'S DAY
AUGUST 9th

Anti-Communism in South Africa

It is a known fact that the so-called Suppression of Communism Act in South Africa is a piece of legislation aimed at silencing the voice of the oppressed especially the fighting black masses. Many of our comrades — including priests and religious people — have been arrested and detained under this law; some have even been killed “because they are communists.”

The South African regime — that racist monster on the African continent — is afraid of what it calls the black danger (swart gevaar). This black danger becomes more dangerous when it is combined with another danger: the red danger. Therefore let us do away with both dangers — this is racist logic!

This combination of racism with anti-communism expresses itself in anti-Sovietism. This anti-Sovietism takes ridiculous forms in our country. Let us take one example. Recently the underground guerrillas of our liberation movement intensified the struggle inside the country through strikes, demonstrations, sabotage and armed actions. In their attempt to minimise the effects of these attacks, the racists invented a story: they told the world that these actions were planned and masterminded by Dr. Solodovnikov, the Soviet ambassador in Lusaka, Zambia! One wonders when the Soviet ambassador has time to do his diplomatic work when he is busy “planning and masterminding” the South African revolution!

The racists do not stop at that. They tell the world that they have to occupy Namibia so as to counteract Soviet influence; they attack Angola because of the presence of the Cubans there; they attack Mozambique because it harbours

members of the African National Congress there.

The racists are able to do this because of the support they receive from international imperialism. The imperialist countries support the racist regime not so much because of the so-called Soviet threat but because they participate in the super-exploitation of our people and the resources of the country and the militarisation of the Indian Ocean, especially Diego Garcia, is seen by them as an aspect of their global strategy. Hence the talk about racist South Africa's existence being an aspect of the defence strategy of the major imperialist countries: if you do not support us we shall not give you any minerals.

Recently the Reagan administration had a lot to say about what they called “international terrorism.” Yet the frontline states are being daily threatened or attacked by the forces of racism in Southern Africa. Angola is a case in point and Namibia is being misused to attack Angola, a country which does not share a border with South Africa. This attack on Angola, this attack on Mozambique, this colonisation and misuse of Namibia to attack independent African states, these attempts at destabilising the region of Southern Africa — this is “international terrorism” and yet Reagan has nothing to say about it!

A characteristic feature of the bogey of anti-communism in South Africa is that the Blacks are not at all involved in this diatribe. They find such discussions irrelevant; a waste of time. They remember the words of Nelson Mandela in his Rivonia speech when he said:

“It is perhaps difficult for White South Africans, with an ingrained prejudice against

communism, to understand why experienced African politicians so readily accept communists as their friends. But to us the reason is obvious. Theoretical differences amongst those fighting against oppression is a luxury we cannot afford at this stage."

Mandela went on to explain the activities, role and struggle of the communists in South Africa and stated:

"Because of this, there are many Africans who, today, tend to equate freedom with communism. They are supported in this belief by a legislature which brands all exponents of democratic government and African freedom as communists ... under the Suppression of Communism Act."

The Blacks are concerned with more relevant issues; they are busy discussing the

Freedom Charter, that is solving the ideological questions of our struggle and shortening the spears. They are demanding the release of Nelson Mandela and all political prisoners in South Africa; they are organising, educating the masses through word of mouth and leaflets; they are engaged in strikes and demonstrations; they mobilise the religious people, the women and youth and they back up their actions with armed struggle and sabotage. They are more and more identifying with the ANC which is the only organisation that will bring about change in South Africa. It seems they are doing all this in preparation for the 70th anniversary of the ANC which takes place on January 8, 1982.

AUGUST 9 – They Threw off their Shawls

August 9, 1981 marks the 25th anniversary of the 20,000 strong women's march on Pretoria in 1956. This day signifies the height of the struggle of our women and their courage, dedication and mass participation in the struggle for national liberation. In the words of the late President-General of the ANC, A.J. Lutuli this day is:

"... one of the most important landmarks in our Freedom Struggle calendar. On this day the women of South Africa ... of all races and cultures, from all walks of life ... made a mighty and memorable demonstration against the issuing of the 'dompas' to African women ... It saw the visible beginning of a United Freedom Front of the Womanhood of South Africa. To a good number of women it marked a point of 'No Turning Back' from the liberation struggle until freedom is won".

This year we are commemorating August 9 on the eve of the 70th anniversary of the ANC on January 8, 1982. It is therefore

appropriate and fitting to look at this event historically and from a vantage point of historical retrospection we shall be better able to take stock; to evaluate our past in the context of present day demands so that we can look into the future with eyes wide open. This is all the more so because the history of our country and especially the history of the ANC was not made by men alone – women also played their role.

History of Resistance

The basis of this massive anti-pass demonstration was laid in the long history of resistance struggle waged by the oppressed people of South Africa against European colonisation and dispossession, a struggle in which women have taken part from the very outset.

Before 1913 passes had been issued only to African men. The first time passes were



*Sol Plaatje – ANC Secretary-general
1912/1917 – “African women: the first
Black Suffragettes”.*

introduced for African women was in the little town of Winburg in the Orange Free State in 1913. Women fiercely opposed this and staged a demonstration to the office of the local administrator, where they made their point: “WE WILL NEVER CARRY PASSES OR ANY OTHER DOCUMENT THAT PERPETUATES OUR OPPRESSION”. Sol Plaatje, the Secretary General of the ANC at the time

appropriately referred to the women as “the first Black suffragettes”. In his classic book “Native Life in South Africa” he devotes a whole chapter to the women’s struggles of 1913.

In this book he states that whilst the ANC was dealing with the problems arising from the Union Act and Land Act a new problem arose — African women in the Orange Free State were being forced either to buy passes every month or to go to prison and in both instances they were exposed to the indecent provision of the law which authorised male constables to insult them. These women were forced to pay one shilling a month with the result that a family consisting of, say, a mother and five daughters would pay the municipality 6 shillings every month “whether as a penalty for the colour of their skins or a penalty for their sex it is not clear”.

The Africans made all possible constitutional appeals against these outrages — without success. A deputation of women from Bloemfontein: Mrs A. Gabashane, Mrs Kotsi and Mrs Louw, went to Cape Town to air their grievances about passes to H. Burton, Minister of Native Affairs. They sent a petition to Lady Gladstone. They exhausted all these constitutional channels; witnessed the spread of trouble



*Women's leaders delivering protest forms: (l-r) L. Ngoyi; H. Joseph; R. Moosa;
S. Williams.*

to the women and children under the Natives' Land Act and they decided to "throw off their shawls" and take the law into their hands. Sol Plaatje relates these events:

In Bloemfontein: "A crowd of 600 women, in July 1913, marched to the Municipal offices at Bloemfontein and asked to see the Mayor. He was not in, so they called for the Town Clerk. The Deputy Mayor came out, and they deposited before him a bag containing their passes of the previous month and politely signified their intention not to buy any more passes."

At Jagersfontein a similar demonstration was led by a Mozambican lady. They were arrested. They refused to pay the fines: "As the authorities were scarcely prepared for such a sudden influx of prisoners there was not sufficient accommodation for fifty-two women, who were conveyed on donkey carts to the adjoining village of Fauresmith".

In Winburg there was similar trouble. 800 women marched to the Town Hall singing hymns and addressed the authorities. Women were tired of making friendly appeals which bore no fruit. They resolved to carry no passes, much less to pay a shilling each per month for passes:..."they all resolutely refused to pay their fines, and there was a rumour that the Central Government had been appealed to for funds and for material to fit out a new jail to cope with the difficulty".

Brutal methods were used to deal with the women protesters:

"The first batch of prisoners from Bloemfontein were conveyed south to Edenburg: and as further batches came down from Bloemfontein they had to be transferred north to Kroonstad".

Plaatje visited the prison in Kroonstad in August 1913 accompanied by the wife of Rev. A.P. Pitso of Kroonstad and Mrs Pretus. He was shocked to see the conditions of the women:

"A severe shock burst upon us, inside the prison walls, when the matron withdrew the barriers and the emaciated figures of ladies and young girls of our acquaintance filed out and greeted us. It was an exceptionally cold week and our hearts bled to see young women of Bloemfontein, who had spent all their lives in the capital and never knew what it was to walk without

socks, walking the chilly cemented floors and the cold and sharp pebbles without boots. Their own boots and shoes had been taken off, they told us, and they were, throughout the winter, forced to perform hard labour barefooted ... "

Plaatje and the members of his delegation reacted to this scene and their hearts were filled with pity and sympathy — but there was a sense of pride and confidence which expressed itself in mutual solidarity:

"Tears rolled down our cheeks as we saw the cracks on their bare feet, the swellings and chilblains which made them look like sheep suffering from foot and mouth disease ...

"To our surprise, however, they vowed never to buy passes, even if they had to come back".

The white racist attitude towards this inhumanity was characteristic: "instead of being sent to prison with hard labour, these mad caps should be flogged".

Plaatje as Secretary-General of the ANC telegraphed General Botha "and pointed out to him that over two hundred coloured women were at that time languishing in jail for resenting a crime committed upon them." Botha remained silent.

The women's struggle continued under the new and difficult conditions imposed by the First World War. It was not until 1918 that the Bantu Women's League was formed as a "branch" of the ANC. Charlotte Maxeke was the moving spirit. We have already written a profile of Charlotte Maxeke (Sechaba, August 1980. p.23) Perhaps at this juncture it is important to mention that in 1930 Dr Xuma wrote a 27 page pamphlet entitled: "Charlotte Manye (Mrs Maxeke): What An Educated African Girl Can Do, with a foreword by Dr W.E.B. Du Bois. In his foreword Dr Du Bois, a leading Afro-American and African statesman and academic wrote:

"I have known Charlotte Manye Maxeke since 1894 when I went to Wilberforce University as a teacher. She was one of the three or four students from South Africa, and was the only woman. She was especially the friend of Nina Gomer, the student who afterward became my wife. We were interested in Charlotte Manye because of her clear mind, her fund of subtle humour and the straight-forward honesty of her character ... she did her work with a slow,

MARCHING TO PRETORIA...

One picture of the women's demonstration last Thursday shows:

(Top Left): Up they come! Getting the Afrika salute the women of the first group reach the amphitheatre after the long climb from the foot of the garden of the Union Buildings.

(Bottom Left): For some hours there was a steady stream of women filing up the steps, carrying sandwiches, eggs, lunch baskets and dispatch cases with petition forms. They had come prepared for the day.

(Top Right): The four leaders of the demonstration have collected the protest forms and are on their way to deliver them to the Ministers. From left to right, Miss Sophia Williams, Mrs. Rahima Mosen, Mrs. Lilian Ngoyi and Mrs. Helen Joseph.

(Below): Once again the women file down the steps. The day of protest is over.



Million Signature Campaign Opens in Eastern Cape

PORT ELIZABETH.—The first in the Eastern Cape—a sign for the collection of a million signatures for the Freedom Charter was held at Vereeniging on the 2 of October, at the regional meeting of the A.N.C. As hundreds of people gathered around the table, eight to all

quiet determination that augured well for her future. Since then, and at long intervals, I have had the opportunity of following her work through the glimpses which I have had from far off South Africa. I regard Mrs Maxeke as a pioneer in one of the greatest of human causes, working under extra-ordinarily difficult circumstances to lead a people, in the face of prejudice, not only against her race but against her sex. To fight not simply the natural and inherent difficulties of education and social uplift, but to fight with little money and little outside aid was indeed a tremendous task. I think that what Mrs Maxeke has accomplished should encourage all men, and especially those of African descent. And in addition to that, it should inspire the white residents of South Africa and of America to revise their hastily-made judgments concerning the possibilities of the Negro race."

This was a great tribute by a great man to a great woman.

This pamphlet by Xuma on Charlotte Maxeke is interesting for another reason. In our article in Sechaba we said she was born in Ramokgopa in the Northern Transvaal and Xuma says she was born in Fort Beaufort in the Cape where her mother came from. Her father came from

Ramokgopa. Again in the Sechaba article we said she was called by Enock Mamba to work among the Thembus and Xuma said it was Paramount Chief Dalindyebo. We mention these seemingly minor details because they show a discrepancy between the facts given by T.D. Mveli Skota (whose book was the main source of the factual material used in our Sechaba article) and Xuma. Mveli Skota knew Charlotte Maxeke very well; so did Xuma. All this means is that there is a need for more research to be done on the life and times of Charlotte Maxeke. Perhaps the Women's Section of the ANC should undertake to do this. But why the Women's Section? Charlotte Maxeke was not just a women's leader, she was a national figure, some people may argue. This is all true but somebody has to take the responsibility of doing research on this fabulous woman before the racists relegate her to oblivion.

Charlotte Maxeke died in 1939 but her spirit did not die. One of the resolutions adopted at the annual conference of the ANC held at Bloemfontein on December 14-16, was the "Resolution on the Women Section" which read:

"That this conference recommends to the parent body the necessity of reviving the women's section of the congress in terms

of the provisions of the constitution. Further that women be accorded the same status as men in the classification of membership. That the following means be made to attract the women:

- a) to make the programme of the Congress as attractive as possible to women
- b) a careful choice of leadership"

In 1943 the ANC Women's League was formed, under the leadership of Madi-Hall Xuma and it was inaugurated at the 1948 Annual General Conference of the ANC.

It should be noted that the women were not just involved in women's problems. They were involved in ANC and ANC Youth League politics. Writing about the ANC Youth League at the time of its formation in 1943 Mary Benson states:

"Two of the Youth Leaguers were medical students, others were teachers, young women too; one — Albertina, a nurse — became Walter Sisulu's wife in 1944".

The ANC Women's League set itself the following tasks:

"Apart from their duties as members of the ANC, women members of the Congress have special additional duties and responsibilities:

- a) to arouse the interest of African women in the struggle for freedom and equality; and assist the widespread organisation of women;
- b) to take up special problems and issues affecting women; and
- c) to carry on propaganda against Apartheid and discriminatory laws among African women."

This shows abundantly clear that the women saw the struggle for women's emancipation as an inseparable aspect of the struggle for national liberation; that the oppression of the women — as Blacks, workers and women — was a product of a system which had to be destroyed in order to end the three-fold burden of their suffering. This was in the early 1950's.

Another significant organisational development, which played a fundamental role in raising mass participation of women, was the formation of the Federation of South African Women in April, 1954. The Federation was formed in response to a growing need that women felt for an organisation which would:

- * "Embrace all women irrespective of race, colour or nationality;
- * help to strengthen, build and bring together in joint activity the various women's sections in the liberatory movements and other women's organisations;
- * express the needs and aspirations of the house-wives, wage earners, peasants and professional women of South Africa;
- * bring about the emancipation of women from the special disabilities suffered by them under laws, customs and conventions and strive for a genuine South African Democracy based on complete equality and friendship between men and women, and between each section."

The Federation of South African Women united women of different nationalities and cultures on the basis of an unequivocal commitment to the liberation struggle. Together with the ANC Women's League with which it intimately worked and whose membership played a leading role in it, the Federation expressed an organisational unity which, in many respects was a prelude to the broader unity which was to encompass the Congress movement at the historic Congress of the People in Kliptown in 1955. Women were organising to meet the fascist monster which was rearing its head in South Africa.

Passes

A pass or reference book! This is a thick 48 paged document with a hard black cover. Six and a half by three inches. The document must be carried by every African man or woman in South Africa, above the age of 16. Failure to produce the pass on demand means on-the-spot arrest. The document serves the ends of the Apartheid rulers in South Africa — to regulate the movement of Africans to restricted areas; to determine where an African can or may not be employed; where he can live; where his dead body may or may not be buried and even to determine who one's wife or husband should be!

The Nationalist Party, on coming to power in 1948, launched a vicious assault against the few rights and liberties remaining to the oppressed Black majority. This offensive was threefold:



Firstly, the regime aimed to suppress any organisational resistance of the oppressed and instal indisputable exclusive white domination;

Secondly, in an attempt to increase control over the labour force, the regime sought to tighten and extend the functioning and practice of the pass laws and influx control;

Thirdly, to achieve a physical separation and dispossession of the Black majority to their right to full political, economic and social rights in a unitary South Africa; a process of Bantustanisation was set in motion which had as its corollary the Group Areas Act for the Indian and Coloured communities.

All these measures were intimately linked and combined with the Bantu Education and Industrial Legislation Acts to extend, tighten and strengthen fascist control and domination over the oppressed. The so-called "Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents Act of 1952" had absolutely nothing to do with abolishing passes. Instead, it meant that the hated passes were again being introduced to women. These women, who are regarded

as "superfluous appendages", were to be kept out of the urban areas, which only need the cheap labour of African men.

Signs of Resistance

A government statement said that the first passes would be issued to women in the Orange Free State, the area that had been most active in the previous anti-pass campaigns. The successful introduction of passes in this area would have meant that the regime would not be faced with a lot of resistance in other areas. The same statement threatened that "if anybody, like the African National Congress, attempted to launch a campaign of resistance, the government would take the necessary steps." Three million books — the passes — were ready, and these were to be issued immediately.

By this time the ANC had issued directives to all its branches to take up and fiercely resist the issuing of passes to African women. The ANC Women's League in particular, in collaboration with the Federation of South African Women, begun organising for a massive campaign.

At the founding conference of the Federation, the women had resolved to become active in campaigning against the pass laws, which were "hounding their men":

"The intensification of pass raids in recent months has reached alarming proportions and created an intolerable situation, which has infuriated the mothers of Africa", they declared.

During the whole of October 1955 vigorous preparations were made by the ANC Women's League in Johannesburg to stage a demonstration in Pretoria, the Administrative Capital of South Africa.

Letters were sent out to the Ministers of Interior, Labour and Justice, requesting for an appointment with them for October 27th, for the women to present their petitions. The pass laws, the classification of races, procedures, the Group Areas Act, restrictions on civil liberties and trade union legislation were some of the issues to be raised at the meeting. The issue of passes was however the most urgent.

Despite difficulties created by the regime to prevent the women from staging their demonstration, which had been declared illegal, 20,000 women filled the amphitheatre of the Union Buildings. They quietly stood there, while the leaders of the demonstration went up to the offices of the three Ministers. But none of them was to be found. One of them had replied to the request for an appointment with the women: "Racially-mixed delegations from racially-mixed organisations are not received." Typical apartheid racial hatred! The pile of protest letters was left on the doormat of the deserted offices.

ANC Take up Women's Pass Campaign

The annual Conference of the ANC held in December, 1955 paid a great deal of attention to the Women's Anti-Pass struggle. The report of the National Executive Committee stressed that the pass laws were the most burning grievance of the people. The statement went on:

"We who know the suffering the pass laws have brought to us over the decades will not tolerate the extension of this hated system to our womenfolk. We warn the government: making women carry

passes will be like trampling on the tail of a puff adder."

And the next few years' fierce anti-pass resistance proved just that! Branches throughout the country embarked on house to house, yard to yard, location to location and factory to factory campaigning. The women were particularly enthusiastic and fearless. Lilian Ngoyi summarised the feeling of the women:

"If the government deports women in the impending struggle against passes, they will bring new hope to those in whose midst they are thrown in their deportation; if they are sent to jail they will convert the jails into institutions of universal education."

The women knew that the government was ruthless and savage in its attacks on the African people and on their rights, and that the campaign, like others before it, would not be easy. But they knew the burden that their men had to carry under the pass laws, and spoke as sufferers under these laws. The pass is a badge of slavery, and had to be rejected by all means.

It is not possible to record all the demonstration, all the deputations and petitions to the Native Commissioners that were sent during the whole of 1956. The mood was the same everywhere, and the message was one; "We do not want passes. We fear for our homes when we too are arrested under the pass laws. What is to become of our babies dependent on their mothers' milk, if we are to be torn from them for failing to produce a pass. We do not want to carry a pass."

On March 11th, 1956 the Transvaal Region of the ANC Women's League organised a meeting to commemorate March 8th — the International Women's Day. Prominent on the agenda of that meeting was the issue of passes. It was from the same meeting that a resolution to march to Pretoria was unanimously adopted by the over 2,000 delegates present at the meeting.

Meanwhile, women in the Free State who had been tricked into accepting passes, had moved to the office of the Native Commissioner. They had the passes in a bag, some had them in their hands. To the utter disbelief of this government agent, they poured petrol over the passes

and set them alight! A deputation from Klerksdorp had handed a letter to Verwoerd, which concluded: "If you force us to take pass books we shall burn them in front of your eyes."

The country was on fire. In Cape Town, Johannesburg, Germiston, Brakpan and everywhere else women were presenting petitions, demonstrating and organising for the anti-pass campaign.

By the 2nd of August, an official letter had been written by the Federation to the then Prime Minister to meet the National Protest at the Union Buildings on Thursday, the 9th of August at 2.30pm. On the 6th of August, Strijdom replied to say that it was not possible to meet the demonstrators. When there was such evidence to the contrary, he further said that it was "not true that pass laws were being extended to Bantu (African) women"!

August 9th 1956

The little town of Lady Selbourne, on the outskirts of Pretoria, had turned into an overnight transit place for the over 20,000 women who answered the call for the National Demonstration. Coming from every corner of South Africa, with delegations of as much as 500 from one area, they converged on the capital from as early as August 7th. Every participant in this demonstration signed the protest form. Signature collectors worked the whole night collecting these signatures. The women were in high spirits. During the night preceeding August 9th, Lady Selbourne's Town Hall was made into a make-shift concert hall. Different delegations presented songs, most of which were on the anti-pass campaigns in their areas. The hit song of the night as presented by the Free State delegation, related the story of the burning of passes by women in Winburg.

The next morning, tired but determined, the women moved out of the houses, churches and halls. It took two and a half hours for the procession to file through the entrance to the Union Building amphitheatre. After all had passed through, nine leaders selected from the different areas and carrying huge piles of protest forms, moved from the amphitheatre to enter the Union Buildings. They were stopped by a Commissioner, who after consultation with

the police, agreed to let only five of the nine women leaders through.

The Union Buildings has always been a hive of activity. Being racist South Africa's administrative centre, it is remarkable that on that day the state machinery had been brought to a halt! Not a single soul was to be seen inside the building. In spite of the "non-admission" sign that had been put up on the door leading to Strijdom's office, the gallant leaders, Lilian Ngoyi, Helen Joseph, Lily Diedericks, Rahima Moosa and Sophie Williams marched in and left the bulk of petition forms with his secretary. In all there were more than 100,000 signatures.

Meanwhile, outside the thrilling singing of a few national songs chosen for the occasion continued. The most popular and expressive was the now famous:

"Strijdom, wathint' abafazi,
Wathint' imbokodo,
Uzakufa."

Translated:

"Strijdom, You have touched the women
You have struck a rock,
You have dislodged a boulder,
You will die."

The leaders of the delegation then stepped out, briefly reporting to the multitude of women what had happened. With their thumbs up in the Afrika salute, the women rose to observe a chilling half hour of complete silence. Only the occasional sound of crying babies accentuated the tense stillness. After this gracious display of disciplined resolve, the 20,000 heroines silently dispersed. They had added a page in the history of the struggle of the women of South Africa against oppression and humiliation. They had done something the world will never forget.

The great August 9th demonstration was not only in Pretoria. For every woman demonstrator in Pretoria, there were many more in the homes and villages who were part of this snowballing protest movement. For many years after 1956, the anti-pass campaign gained momentum. The regime was prepared to go on with its enforcement of passes. The people's fighting spirit was undaunted. As Lilian Ngoyi had predicted, the women converted the jails into institutions for universal education and reorganisation. They led hunger strikes to protest about conditions in the jails.

Enforcement of Passes

By 1957 the regime was using all tricks at their disposal to enforce passes on the African people. Without a pass one could not get a house, a job and could be thrown out of an urban area at any time. Without a pass the children could not be registered. Most ridiculous was the fact that one was not even expected to die without a pass, because the family left behind would have problems in burying the body. After Sharpeville, when 86 people, including 40 women and 8 children were brutally shot and killed by the police during an anti-pass demonstration, thousands of people were arrested and charged for pass offences. Many leaders of the Congress Movement that had organised the anti-pass campaigns were either arrested, banned or banished. This weakened the organisational capabilities of the anti-pass resisters. Thus when Proclamation 268 and Government Notice 1722 of 26 October 1962 were announced, resistance was scattered and sporadic. These laws made it obligatory for African women to carry passes as beginning from February 1st, 1963.

In the rural areas land hunger, the imposition of Bantu Authorities and other abuses, such as the maintenance of livestock dipping tanks by unpaid female labour, the prevention of home brewing and the opening up of state beer halls, combined with anti-pass resistance to set the countryside aflame. Militant defiance in Zeerust and Sekhukhuneland, Pondoland, the Ciskei and in the Orange Free State unleashed a reign of bloody state terror, with hundreds of resisters being arrested and imprisoned, tens of hundreds were driven from their homes, beaten, shot and wounded, the homes burnt and their livestock confiscated. Democratically elected leaders were banished to remote regions far from their people and others were forced to flee to neighbouring states, seeking refuge from the regime's violence which was scouring the countryside.

Undeterred and fearless, the people continued their defiance, destroying dipping tanks, boycotting schools and post offices and attacking all those symbols of apartheid terror. Puppet leaders installed by local Native Commissioners without the consent and against the will of the people feared

to move from their kraals. In the Transkei, for example, dusk to dawn curfews were imposed around the kraals of the Bantu Authority 'chiefs', and many did not escape the wrath of the people. The people of the rural areas were prepared to make the supreme sacrifice in their struggle to defend themselves and their people. Chieftainess Madinoge Pholokwe of the village of Madibong in the Northern Transvaal and 15 others were sentenced to death for their resistance to the imposition of Bantu Authorities in Sekhukhuneland. The ANC was banned in many of these regions in 1958, marking the prelude to a massive campaign of repression by the regime which was to follow a few years later.

Makabongwe Amakosikazi

The women of South Africa have been no less responsive to the demands of the liberation struggle than women of other lands and times. This rich page of history has been indelibly printed on the collective experience of the oppressed people of our country as our struggle advances towards the seizure of power. The women have shown and are showing today that for national and social emancipation they are prepared to sacrifice all. As Blacks, youth, workers and women, in our people's army, in trade unions and community organisations, in the churches, South African womanhood is playing a decisive part in the all round struggle being waged against the fascist Botha/Malan dictatorship. The people, intent on waging the struggle to its inevitable just conclusion are resourceful and inventive, devising new ways and means of overcoming every obstacle placed in their path, drawing from the experiences of their brothers and sisters, parents and forefathers, the rightful heritage of a struggling nation.

August 9th Lives On!

The fact that it took the regime of Apartheid 50 years to extend their hated pass laws to African women shows the organisational talents of the women of South Africa. Today the predictions of the women of the 50's have come true. Passes have been the cause for the break-up of

African homes. Pass laws have prevented African women from getting employment in the urban areas. Failure to produce a pass has resulted in more than 50,000 African women being thrown into prisons each year. But the legacy of August 9th lives on, not only in South Africa, but throughout the world, August 9th is commemorated by democratic and progressive forces.

As we commemorate the 25th anniversary of the South African Womens Day, let us remember our sisters who are political prisoners in Botha's dungeons. Let us intensify the campaign for their release. Let us involve more women in our struggle and let us say: "MALIBONGWE IGAMA LAMAKHOSIKAZI" WE THANK YOU WOMEN!

GUEBUZA SPEAKS



On June 26th, 1981 the ANC President Comrade O.R. Tambo and the Mozambican Deputy minister of Defence, Comrade Armando Guebuza, addressed a rally in London to mark South Africa Freedom Day. We reproduce extracts of their speeches below.

During the meeting, there was a short but very moving presentation of the Isitwalandwe/Seaparankoe award to Arch-Bishop Trevor Huddleston, President of the Anti-Apartheid Movement, by ANC President O.R. Tambo. The Arch-Bishop, then Father Huddleston first received the

award at the Congress of the People in 1955 — this then was only to standardise the medals now done in gold.

In his speech to the June 26 Freedom Day Meeting, Comrade Armando Guebuza underlined the ties of friendship, brotherhood and solidarity between the peoples of Mozambique and South Africa: "We hear the echo of people crying in Soweto. We see the wounds of those militants, dedicated South Africans who are killed in Soweto or Matola".

Referring to the widespread anti-Republic Day protests that took place in May of this year, Comrade Guebuza emphasised what was involved in the burning of the racist South African flag which occurred a number of times: "It is the flag of oppression, of fear, of massacre. It is the flag flown by the troops who committed murder in Sharpeville, Soweto, Matola and in so many other places. The real flag of the South African people is the one that was flown from the rooftops of Soweto on 16 June — the flag of the African National Congress".

Comrade Guebuza also emphasised the dangers involved for the peoples of Southern Africa which he described as one of the critical zones of the world at the moment — a zone which faces the constant danger of war. He stressed that this threat came from the fascist Apartheid regime. At the same time as this menace exists, the US administration and their western allies were playing a very dangerous game over the future of the people of Namibia, he said. "We think that the West should realise that time is running short. Africa cannot wait all this time ... We think also that it is time for the Western world, to prove that it is against inhuman, brutal

treatment against the people of South Africa and Namibia.”

The issue of sanctions was also dealt with by Armando Guebuza who exposed the fraudulent arguments put forward by western countries that they are against sanctions because these will harm the frontline states more than South Africa. “The economy of South Africa depends on the Western powers. The Western powers should be the ones to apply economic sanctions! We shall know how to play our

role.”

Comrade Guebuza ended his speech by reiterating his country's determination to support the liberation struggle in South Africa and Namibia and declared: “We are sure that with the courage of the people of South Africa but also with the responsible attitude on the part of other peoples and other countries, in particular those that sustain the South African regime, we are going to win sooner than the apartheid regime expects.”

O.R. TAMBO — The Spirit of June 26

I think you will agree that we have together just listened to a most inspiring message from the representative of a country of no mean consequence for the people of Africa and especially the people of Southern Africa.

Yesterday, as Comrade Armando Guebuza has said, was FRELIMO's sixth anniversary of independence, Mozambique's independence. We should like from this platform, to convey to Comrade Guebuza, through him, to the people of Mozambique our congratulations and our gratitude for the struggle of the Mozambican people.

Not only are we neighbours by geography, but these two crucial dates affecting our countries are also neighbours. ANC and FRELIMO have marched together for many years now, have been up and down together and have supported each other. As President Samora Machel said in February after the Matola Raid, the people of Mozambique will always support the struggle of South Africa. Indeed he declared that we are bound together in the same struggle — in the struggle for political, economic, social and cultural liberation.

We greet the people of Mozambique on this day in the name of the people of South Africa, and we welcome particularly the great honour done us today in having in

our midst one of the topmost leaders of that country, to participate with us on our National Day. Long live the Peoples Republic of Mozambique!

I should like also to make special note of the fact that not for the first time and I know, not for the last, we are celebrating this occasion in the company of our brother peoples of Namibia, led by SWAPO and represented here today by Comrade Bechavi Munyaro.

What binds the people of South Africa to the Namibians is, apart from anything else, that we are fighting the same regime. We are fighting almost on the same basis for the illegal occupation of Namibia differs only in degree from the illegality of the occupation of South Africa by a white minority regime. Like the Namibians we have no control over our country. We the majority. South Africa is another military camp differing only in degree from the military camp into which Namibia has been turned.

We are fighting in Namibia a coloniser across the border. In South Africa, we have a local coloniser, who has been dispensing “independence” to tribal groups in the past few years and intends to do so again in December. We are fighting together a particularly racist regime. Together we are fighting the last national liberation



Comrade Ruth Mompoti chairing the June 26 meeting addressed by President O. R. Tambo.

struggle on the African continent and we have become very close in this struggle.

Today also, of course, we are participating side by side with the British Anti-Apartheid Movement and MAGIC. We are pleased to note the heavy representation of the diplomatic corps, the presence of Church leaders, the trade union movement, and the representation of some of the political parties of this country. I should like, at the very outset, to express the very deep appreciation of the African National Congress and of the people of South Africa for this demonstration of solidarity and support which is expressed in your presence here today.

More than a National Day

June 26th is more than a National Day. It is an occasion for rededication by the people of Southern Africa. It is an occasion when we look more to the future than to the past. It is an occasion when we ask

the question: For how much longer? And with each passing year, this question becomes more pressing.

The first time June 26th was marked was in 1950. Today, 31 years later, we must ask how much longer. We need to try and understand why it has taken 31 years in our case and what is required to be done to avoid an additional 31 years. The persistence of the apartheid system in that period of three decades can be evaluated in terms of hundreds of thousands of people who have either died prematurely at birth, in childhood, killed by the system, by its viciousness, by its violence, by its destructive nature, thousands killed deliberately — murdered.

These years can be expressed in terms of the dispersal of a whole people into exile, into different parts of the world, into different parts of South Africa — removed by force. If that were not enough, the system by its very nature has crossed our borders and is reeking terror, destabilisation and mass murder in Southern Africa. How much longer? Angola has been

subjected to these murders from the day that the South African army invaded that country. The permanence of the apartheid system has been the permanence of the misery, death and destruction in Namibia. Thanks to this system there is insecurity and instability, uncertainty about the future in Southern Africa. How much more of this?

Have we Sacrificed Enough?

Experience in Southern Africa alone clearly teaches us that there will be no voluntary abdication of power by this regime. There is no basis upon which we can expect anything but another 31 years unless on occasions like these we make a new and resolute pledge.

I want to say thank you for the compliments paid to the African National Congress in its leadership of our struggle, thanks very much for recognising the sacrifices that have been made by members of Umkhonto we Sizwe. Thank you too for noting the militancy of our people, their determination. But let us face it. Have we sacrificed enough?

On this day, which each year is a milestone marking not only our advance towards victory, but also the passing of time, we should not stop at congratulating ourselves. We should say quite frankly and boldly: Need it have taken 31 years since the first June 26th?

I believe however, that these questions are being put by our people to themselves. I believe that the National Executive Committee of the ANC is putting precisely this kind of question to itself. I believe that the cadres of Umkhonto we Sizwe are saying — is what we have done enough?

What is wanting? Aggressiveness, making apartheid unworkable; facing up to the torture which is there anyway; accepting the possibility of being kidnapped into prison where so many have gone anyway; facing up to the possibility of being killed and shot which is happening to many anyway.

New Dimension of Unity

There is some indication that the level of unity in the opposition to this regime has reached a new dimension. At the beginning

of this year, most people in South Africa and certainly the Blacks, were horrified and angered at the brutality of the Matola murders. United in that anger.

Later, elections were taking place, election campaigns among those with a privileged skin colour and a government was put into power with their mandate. In May that government was leading its people in celebrations of the 20th anniversary of this Republic. The most significant thing about those celebrations is the extent to which they united the opposition to the Republic and even more significant were the armed actions which in that context were directed at the Republic itself.

Where do we go from that point? These forces which united against the Republic should now hold together and defuse, reject the Republic in actions. The workers are doing this. The students are doing this. People in different walks of life are involved in this but not yet the combined mass of our people, not yet all the workers. Great credit is due to those who have sustained the struggle. But what we need to do is to bring the regime down, to bring its structures down, to bring its economy down, to bring its forces down.

Why am I saying this in London? What is this to do with their Excellencies who have come here? Why would the trade union movement represented here be interested to know? Because I believe that those who have come here are the concerned and because they are the concerned, they are part of the worldwide movement of people who would like to see justice, freedom and peace everywhere in the world and certainly in Southern Africa and particularly in Namibia and South Africa itself. I believe you should support us not because we are making the sacrifices we ought to. You should support us the more perhaps because we are weak and it may be that we are not doing more because you are not supporting us more. It is your struggle as it is ours and we dare not pretend to you, lest it should take another 31 years.

There has been ready reference here today to the role of South Africa in Southern Africa. Particularly in relation to Namibia. The importance of this question lies in the fact that it has been complicated not only for the Namibians but also to some extent for the South Africans, by the

declarations of the United States administration. By its demands that defy all logic, by the indications of South Africa being an ally of the United States, especially in relation to matters of national liberation struggle; the conditions which South Africa demands are the reason why the United States is going back on their agreement that it had settled last year. These demands are rejected by the people of Namibia, led by SWAPO, they are rejected by Africa. In South Africa we reject them too.

We think the international community has been all too accommodating to the racists. But the implications of an alliance with South Africa which has set itself the task of dominating the countries of Southern Africa, all of them, the implications are that the United States is now going to be actively involved directly and indirectly in subverting these countries.

We feel that the United States administration should be made aware of the hostility of mankind to its move to destabilise the world, to its move to perpetuate the apartheid system and even the continued illegal occupation of Namibia. The other aspect of the US policy related to what is a national liberation movement. South Africa defines national liberation movements as "terrorist, communist organisations". And having sent this signal to the western countries, it proceeds to murder, to kill, to massacre, in the name of western interests. In doing so it has the support and approval and no doubt, the assistance and the encouragement of the United States.

We are projected as the vanguard of an expansionist move by the Soviet Union. The reason, it is said, and I have been hearing this wherever I have gone, is that SWAPO and ANC are supported by the Soviet Union.

That is the only reason. Reject support from the Soviet Union - you cease to be a terrorist communist. Who takes the place of the Soviet Union. Will Washington? Can they give us the guns? Did they not give them to Portugal and to Ian Smith? Would Southern Africa be what it is if the liberation movement had no weapons to fight with? Could they have had those weapons if they did not have countries like the Soviet Union which were ready to donate them?

And tomorrow we shall be needing more and more weapons to fight and destroy this criminal regime. We shall go all over the world including the Soviet Union and if they give us weapons, we shall be grateful. But we do not like this distortion of facts.

Many people in Britain give us their political, diplomatic and even material assistance. Many governments in Europe, in western Europe, are indispensible in their support for our struggle. We should like to assure those who are concerned about where we get our assistance from, that we shall continue to accept assistance from the enemies of apartheid and racist domination. But that acceptance does not dictate in any terms what we want our countries to be. Indeed it is based on what we say we want to be.

The assumption that a black person is motivated in whatever he or she does by considerations of pleasing someone else - that contempt of black people, of Africa; this refusal to accept us as equals; this continued excuse for subjecting us to continued domination is bound to fail. It is bound to fail because even black people, and this is true of black people in the United States I have found, and certainly in Southern Africa where we have gone through all these wars, we cannot be deceived by this kind of propaganda. We just hope that our friends will not be deceived either.

The spokesmen of the African continent are very clear about what we all want. Therefore we need to try and convey to the Reagan administration and its allies in Europe and elsewhere, that no matter what the US administration does, the struggle will continue until we reach the objective that we have set ourselves.

Increase Solidarity

I should like to conclude, by acknowledging the support which we have received from the Anti-Apartheid Movement in this country and from the body known as SATIS - South Africa The Imprisoned Society, especially for the campaign to secure the release of political prisoners. We plead that this should not be slackened let alone abandoned. Our people are trooping into jail. The voice of the rest of mankind will need to be heard more loudly



Bishop Trevor Huddleston awarded the Isidwalandwe/Seaparankoe by Comrade O. R. Tambo.



Bishop Trevor Huddleston awarded the Isidwalandwe/Seaparankoe by Comrade O. R. Tambo.

and not merely as a voice but as a device it must be employed to make sure that at least those who have been there for years upon years, like Nelson Mandela and others, are released. That fight should be fought with determination. We appreciate what has been given by way of support in this regard.

We appreciate the support of the countries represented at this meeting. We appreciate the support of the international community. But we always have a special appeal to make to the people of Britain because Britain is the source of our misery in South Africa. This is not a matter we can reasonably or realistically place before the Prime Minister of this country but I think we can realistically place it before the British people.

What is their true role in Southern Africa, the British? In whose name other than that of the British people does the British Government decide on policy in relation to apartheid South Africa and Namibia? It is this kind of action by the British people as well as by us in South Africa which is going to bring the problems of Southern Africa to an end. Those who

hate racism should fight with increased vigour.

We must welcome today, the encouragement we received from fellow freedom fighters, the PLO, the Chilean people, POLISARIO, opponents of fascism everywhere in the world, fighters for peace everywhere in the world; those who are opposing the determined efforts to bring about a world conflagration; those who are resisting attempts to arm the whole world and saturate it with destructive weapons. Those who are mobilising armies, distributing weapons, those who are working desperately for World War Three — they should be denounced as the enemies of mankind.

For what we are fighting for ultimately, as liberation movements, is for peace. Peace, where today violence prevails, the violence of the system. We wage wars of liberation in pursuit of peace. We hope that the next 12 months will bring in Namibia as well as in South Africa, changes of a kind which indicate an early emergence of peace in Southern Africa.

Thank you.

PRESENTATION OF ISITWALANDWE / SEAPARANKOE

On June 27th 1981, the President of the African National Congress (SA), Comrade O.R. Tambo, presided over a very solemn and dignified ceremony at the Connaught Rooms in London.

It was the occasion of the awarding of the Isitwalandwe/Seaparonkoe Awards — posthumously to Bishop Ambrose Reeves and in absentia to Govan Mbeki (serving life on Robben Island). The awards were received by Mrs Reeves and Comrade Zanele Mbeki on their behalf. Awards were also presented (standardised golden ones) to

former recipients -- Izitwalandwe.

Those awarded at the Congress of the People: Dr Y.M. Dadoo and Chief A.J. Lutuli. Dr Dadoo was present and Comrade M.B. Yengwa received on behalf of the Lutuli family.

For the late Comrade Moses Kotane who was awarded on August 9th 1975, it was received by his son Comrade Joseph.

The dignity of the ceremony signified the seriousness with which the ANC takes the honour of those who have made an outstanding contribution to our struggle.



For the late Chief A. J. Luthuli, the Standardized Isitwalandwe/Seaparankoe is received by M. B. Yengwa on behalf of the Luthuli family.



Comrade Zanele Mbeki receives Isitwalandwe Award on behalf of her father-in-law imprisoned ANC leader, Comrade Govan Mbeki.



*Dr Y. M. Dadoo
with his new
standardized Isitwa-
landwe golden
award. He received
the original award
at the Congress of the
People, Kliptown.*



*Comrade Joseph
accepts golden
version of Isitwa-
landwe which was
awarded to the
father, the late ANC
leader, Comrade
Moses Kotane in
1975.*

*Mrs. Reeves accepts
from President
O. R. Tambo Isitwa-
landwe/Seaparankoe
awarded posthu-
mously to Bishop
Ambrose Reeves.*



NICARAGUA —

A Poor People But Rich in Dignity



During a conference organised by the International Organisation of Journalists (IOJ) in Nicaragua, Sechaba had the opportunity to interview Father Fernando Cardenal, the Coordinator of the Sandinista Youth in Managua, capital of Nicaragua. He spoke about the important topic of the theology of liberation, a theme which is relevant to our own liberation struggle.

What led Nicaragua to the revolution?

Basically, the most important element was the objective situation of oppression, injustice and dictatorship that our people had experienced since 1934. This is the fundamental cause. Gradually conditions became more and more oppressive and at the same time, through the actions of the Sandinista National Liberation Front which was formed in 1961, people became more and more aware and conscious of this oppression, of this structural injustice, that our people suffered.

There were two factors of utmost importance: an objective factor which was the reality of exploitation, dictatorship, misery, the reality lived by the people where a group had seized most of the wealth and most of the population lived in sub-human conditions. But these objective conditions were increasingly deepened by the developing consciousness of the people in two fundamental aspects. First, the realisation that there was a Somoza dictatorship and that there would be no peace in Nicaragua as long as we did not free ourselves of the yoke of this dictatorship. But at the same time the most reactionary sections of the population were becoming conscious of the injustice of the economic system and that there

would be no peace in Nicaragua unless the system itself were changed. As Commander Carlos Fonseca Amador, the founder of the Sandinista National Liberation Front put it, it was not merely a matter of replacing persons or a government, but it was necessary to change the whole economic and political system in order to bring about real justice in Nicaragua.

These two factors, then, made the Revolution in Nicaragua possible, that is to say, the objective situation of exploitation and the developing consciousness through the vanguard role of the Sandinista National Liberation Front.

What role did the US play in Nicaragua since the beginning of this century. What were the characteristics of US involvement?

The role of the US throughout this century has been one of clear and overt military intervention in order to determine the politics of Nicaragua. In 1912, the President of the United States, in a note known as the Knox letter, deposed General Zelaya who was initiating an independent patriotic programme of a bourgeois nature. With Zelaya's deposition from power, the bourgeoisie lost its chance to be a class in their own right and to consolidate themselves as a class.

The US also intervened in 1906, 1912, 1916 and 1926. In 1926 they intervened in order to halt the triumphant revolution led by General Moncada from the Atlantic Coast. The conservatives were protected by this intervention, and succeeded in persuading General Moncada to give in, to halt his triumphant march on Managua and to surrender under the condition that he would be made the new President which was achieved the next year.

During this period the US dismissed and appointed Presidents at will. They also ran the customs, the banks and the railway. They controlled the economy and above all they were in charge politically.

In order to understand the heroism of General Sandino and the anti-imperialist spirit so peculiar to our Sandinista revolution, one has to see the US's role in our country during this century as ever present and manipulating politics through armed intervention.

In answering the first question, you mentioned the role of the Sandinista Front in the Nicaraguan Revolution. Can you tell us more concretely how the Sandinistas emerged?

In 1933, General Sandino succeeded by means of guerrilla warfare in driving out the most powerful army in the world: the US marines. But only one year later, in 1934, Sandino was cheated, asked to go to Managua where he was killed by General Somoza. Sandino remains the patriotic prototype in our history, the man who fights without ulterior motives for autonomy, for national independence: against US intervention, against imperialism.

In 1961, Carlos Fonseca Mador founded that group of young people who were to fly Sandino's flag again, that flag which had become second-rate since 1934, which had been covered in lies and slander by Somoza's attempt to smear Sandino's heroism. The Sandinista Movement took up Sandino's cause again and Carlos Fonseca Amador understood that Sandino was not merely a date when one demonstrated in the universities but also that Sandino provided a means. Sandino shows us the way to oppose dictatorship and imperialism.

It was in that period of struggle against Somoza and imperialism that the Sandinista National Liberation Front was formed and which, after 18 years of battles, or guerrilla warfare and finally spearheading popular insurrection, succeeded in toppling the Somoza dictatorship and in initiating the process of popular revolution. This Revolution has begun to make the first steps towards a total and radical transformation of the socio-political structures of the past.

The Church played an important role in the liberation of Nicaragua. Could you tell us something about its role and the reasons behind it?

The Church in Nicaragua began to undergo profound changes from 1968 onwards, that is to say, after the Latin American Episcopal meeting held in Medellin, Columbia, in 1968. Our Church started to take its inspirations from the spirit of the texts of this meeting which left behind the exaggerated spiritualism — so characteristic of church history — and began to live the Christianity that makes its own the cause of the majority of the people who suffer social oblivion and marginalisation.

This Church spontaneously understood that it is impossible to love God without loving one's neighbour, to be committed to eternity without committing oneself to the temporal. It also understood the impossibility of loving the soul of others without fighting for their problems, for their temporal problems. And this young Church, revived through the 2nd Vatican and the Latin American Episcopal meeting of Medellin, finds that there is a group of young idealists, namely the Sandinista National Liberation Front, which becomes the vanguard of this compromise with the poor's cause. And the masses of this people who are Christians spontaneously joined the struggle.

Many of the people, peasants, workers and students, joined the armed struggle immediately. At the same time priests, religious men and women, started to support guerrilla warfare and the freedom fighters. They started to hide them and supply them with material and logistical aid.

We can say that our Christian people chose to participate in the armed struggle, in the struggle of the Front, and in the spirit of the Latin American translation of the gospel, as the Nicaraguan translation of the understanding reached in Medellin by Latin American bishops, to fight for the liberation of the peoples.

In addition, the Episcopal Conference which did not represent the whole Church, but an important part of the Church, played an important role, because, being concerned with human rights and motivated by love, it strongly denounced and exposed the

Somozaist repression at the right moment. It also denounced the complete lack of all sorts of rights under the Somoza regime when torture, prison and murder were daily events. The voice of the Episcopal Conference which played an important part in our struggle, also demonstrated abroad the justice of the popular struggle, when the bishops attacked the Somoza regime on the issue of human rights violations.

Were there differences of opinion within the Church vis-a-vis the revolutionary struggle during the liberation process, before the war?

In Nicaragua, like anywhere else, the Church is highly divided. Thus Monsenor Romero (Archbishop) was accused of being a communist by the same Salvadorean bishops and Monsenor Casaldani in Brazil was equally accused of being a communist by a fellow Brazilian Bishop. It is true that our Church in Latin America is divided, because our Church is composed of men, and men are tied to particular interests, men who belong to a social class or who have identified with the interests of a social class. In the Church, too, there are positions which originate not from an interpretation of the gospel, but from a class position, from the perspective of a social class, from the interests of that class. We believe that this should not shock us, but rather motivate us to fight more for Church unity, which, in order to be authentic has to be a unity based on the compromise with the poor.

That's where we have to unite: those who presently attend to the interests of the rich and those who have identified themselves with the cause of the poor. We have all to meet, but the meeting place, the place of unity, does not consist in each respective group giving up its aims, because principles cannot be abandoned. We cannot give up our duty towards the poor. We are prepared to give our lives for this obligation towards the poor, and we have done so. We cannot make any concessions on this point. We think that it is on this point that we have to unite. The criticisms of this process have to be made from the understanding that there is an obligation towards the poor and not as is being

presently done by a section, from class interests.

Then we can say there are differences: there are divisions with wide dimensions. There is sufficient maturity in the Church here really to avoid these tensions breaking unity for good. Instead these processes and these divisions are being experienced in a dynamic manner and we are all participating in the work of this Church without allowing the tensions to break our fraternity and cooperation completely.

What was the position of the Church towards the armed struggle?

Our Christian people joined the armed struggle, spontaneously and fought for many months, determined and courageous; amongst them were even some priests, amongst who the most famous, our hero Commander Gaspar Garcia Laviana, died in combat. Our people chose the armed struggle as the only viable option left. They did not choose the armed struggle because it might be nice, because it might be pleasant or comfortable, but because it had become the only means left to fight the Somoza dictatorship after 45 years of struggle and the exhaustion of all other means to fight the regime.

On various occasions, the bishops had written against violence; they said in a rather unanalytical way and with little depth that they opposed all forms of violence, no matter who were to indulge in it. It seems to me that this judgement was unjust because it equated the violence of the oppressor with the violent resistance of the oppressed. But in the end, a few days before the final insurrection, the Nicaraguan bishops wrote a letter in which they justified the use of violent means in Nicaragua because it had become the last desperate way left to the people to achieve their freedom.

There is a concept some people call the "theology of liberation". Would you please explain to us what your understanding of this concept is?

The theology of liberation is the gospel here and now. The gospel is eternal, it was valid in the 1st, in the 5th,

in the 16th centuries and it is valid in the 20th century, and it also applies to Italy as well as it does to Nicaragua. But this Gospel must be adjustable, it must have interpretations related to our era, our continent and our country.

There is no universal theology, but a theology that adjusts to changing realities or situations, to the realities of each era and of each nation. The Latin American theologians who joined the struggle from some trench, who joined the struggle of the Latin American people, were looking for answers in their individual readings of the Gospel. The problems they wanted to be answered were those emanating from the situation of a continent where cultural injustice and evil — a sinful situation — were dominant, as the bishops say in the documents of Medellin. The reading of the Gospel from the viewpoint of the sinful situation, from the structural situation of evil, lead to an interpretation of the gospel which answers the questions of the people. This interpretation of the Gospel which gives answers to the problems of our times and of our era, is what is understood as the theology of liberation. It gains its highest expression in the Medellin documents, where the Second General Conference of Latin American bishops took place in 1968.

It is a theology which leads to involvement, a theology of flesh and blood; a theology which definitely opts for the cause of the poor, a theology which leaves behind the deviations of the past, the manipulations of capitalism and which abandons for good its concubinage which the Church maintained in many sectors and countries with capitalism. The Church had been living with capitalism and the final divorce officially came about at that meeting in Medellin, 1968. It is a theology that has gained the admiration of the great European theologians and we can say that Latin America, for the first time, has something to say to European theology. For the first time, Latin America ceases to be the continent where missionaries have to come to in order to repeat the catechism to the natives. We are these natives because we are starting to say our word and to think as grown-ups within the Church. All this is the theology of liberation.

What is the role of the Church in the free and liberated Nicaragua of today?

The Church has an eternal role which is its mission to spread the gospel, to make Jesus present in every nation, in every people and in all times. This mission is not changed by the economic or political system in the country. The mission of the Nicaraguan Church continues to be the teaching of the gospel, to make Jesus present, to be the arms, to be the feet, the hands and the mouth of Jesus carrying his message of liberation.

The Church, finding itself in this liberation process which in Nicaragua is called the Popular Sandinista Revolution; without any doubt, must become flesh and blood within this process, and if it does not like to be in the clouds like in the past, if it wants to be like the seed sowed in the ground, if it wants to flourish, then it has to become flesh and blood, then it has to become part of this revolutionary Sandinista process and be the light and ferment, but not from Miami, where many of those who called themselves ferment and Christians escaped to. At the same time they left behind the masses whilst thinking of themselves as being the light, as being the ferment; they went to Miami. The Christian has to stay here with the masses and illuminate, preserve and maintain, in this process, the prophetic, critical and authentic vision of what human and Christian values have to be like in order to make the process succeed.

Concretely speaking, we think that the Church has to have a position with two basic elements which is to support the Sandinista revolutionary process which is a process in favour of the poor. There is no reason why this process should not be supported, seeing that everything is aimed at benefitting the poor.

There is not a single reason why the interests of the powerful, of the ruling classes, should be defended. On the contrary, Christianity has to support this process which is in favour of the poor. But this support has to be a critical one, that is, without idealizing the process and aware of the fact that it is made by men, by sinners which we all are, the Pope, the bishops, us priests and all Christians. And we have to be in a process of perpetual

renewal, that is, us and all those who are immersed in this process. But nobody can be converted from the outside, and in order to be the light and the ferment we have to endorse this process. Our prophetic word should not become a stone-throw from the outside, but should be the critical voice capable of analysing from the inside and indicating errors as well as pushing and supporting whatever is necessary.

What message would you give to the Christians in South Africa especially the oppressed black Christians?

I think the Christian message has got a very important element for these peoples, and this is hope. We have to commit ourselves, motivated by love, by the love for justice, and fraternity. In this commitment our

Christian faith speaks of hope, the hope that grows from the understanding that there is a God working on history, that there is a God who is not alien to the liberation process of peoples, the God who once in Egypt with his people knew how to descend and save the Israelites from oppression in Egypt. And God continues to work through men in history, dying and fighting for the liberation of these peoples. Let us add the strength of hope to the strength of love and the many strength we gain from human sense and from our values. We shall not despair, because victory will be ours. Let us always have hope as a permanent force of energy, knowing that we may die, but our cause will persist and triumph, because it is the cause of justice, because it is the cause of love, because it is the cause of God.

ANC (S.A.) AND SWAPO DELEGATION IN U.S.A.

A joint delegation of Southern Africa's liberation movements, SWAPO of Namibia and the African National Congress of South Africa made a brief but effective visit of the United States of America. The delegation was led by Comrade O.R. Tambo, President of the ANC(SA) and Comrade Moses Garoeb, the Administrative Secretary of SWAPO (who represented SWAPO President Sam Nujoma who could not attend owing to a country-wide speaking engagement of Zimbabwe).

This was a response to an invitation by the African-American Lobby group — TransAfrica and the Southern African Support Project to attend a conference of black leaders in Washington in response to the Reagan Administration's policies on Southern Africa and to visit Atlanta, Georgia.

The invitation came just before what

were then "secret" documents on the meetings between Botha (racist foreign minister) and Malan (racist defence minister) and Chester Crocker in Pretoria and a briefing to US Secretary of State General Haig on the meeting he was to hold with Botha during his condemned visit to the United States. The documents were leaked to executive director of TransAfrica, Randall Robinson, by sympathisers in the Administration staff.

The discussions reveal a serious contemplation of war against the liberation forces and independent states in defence of the imperialist outpost — Apartheid South Africa. They are plots against the people of Namibia and Angola in particular and the rest of the sub-continent. The basis of this special friendship is the commitment to fight what they term "soviet presence" in Africa. In short, they

constituted the most dangerous and deadly recipe for war, fought on African soil but involving the whole of humanity. They are planning to do the impossible — stop the tide of liberation which is sweeping the sub-continent in favour of peace, national liberation and social progress.

The tour and conference per se was timely and effective and could not have come at any better time. It was in this favourable atmosphere that the delegation went about its successful business right in the belly of the beast.

Conference in Washington

The National Conference whose theme was "Building forces against United States support for South Africa", convened on the 8th June, at the Blackburn Student Center, Howard University, Washington D.C. This was preceded by a press conference chaired by Randall Robinson and addressed by Comrade President O.R. Tambo, Comrade Moses Garoeb, Ambassador Clarke (Nigerian representative to the UNO and Chairman of the Special Committee on Apartheid.), Congressman William Grey and Sylvia Hill, Co-chairperson of the Southern African Support Project. This press conference almost degenerated into an American court, with the ANC President in the dock to answer charges on "communism" — which was based on the characterisation of Liberation Movements as "terrorist organisations", which are "an extension of international terrorism and communism". That is the low level to which some journalists have stooped.

The Conference itself was attended by leading personalities from the black American Community, representing the churches, trade unions, solidarity organisations, political groupings and members of the diplomatic corps in Washington.

The welcome address was made by the Mayor of Washington, the honorable Marion Barry. The first session, which was a roundtable discussion on "The struggle to liberate Namibia and South Africa and US Foreign policy collaboration with the South African regime" was chaired by Dr. Robert Cummings, Chairman, Department of African studies at Harvard University. The main papers were presented by the following speakers, who constituted the panel:

* Comrade President Oliver Tambo, President, African National Congress (SA).

* Moses Garoeb, Administrative Secretary SWAPO of Namibia.

* His Excellency B.A. Clark, Ambassador from Nigeria to the United Nations and Chairman, U.N. Special Committee on Apartheid.

* Congressman William Clark, US House of Representatives; Vice-Chairman Congressional Black Caucus; Chairman Black Caucus Foreign Affairs Committee.

* Randall Robinson, Director, TransAfrica.

* Sylvia Hill, Co-Chairperson, Southern Africa Support Project, Washington D.C.

In the discussion that followed the presentations, the points below were made by the participants:

+ Namibia's independence is not the end of decolonisation.

+ Communism has never been a threat to Africa — only colonialism, racism and imperialism. "communism" is used as an excuse and this is meant to confuse people about the real perspectives of the African liberation process — hence labels of "Terrorism and Communists" to liberation movements.

+ The Western press distort and misrepresent Liberation Movements in Africa.

+ Conference will seek to clarify to American people the relation between racism and war and that "to stand up against what is happening in Southern Africa is to stand up for ourselves." There is a need to galvanise against racism and war

+ A representative from Grenada, brought special greetings from the Prime Minister of Grenada to Comrade President Tambo and the ANC. She also declared that the "Caribbean people stand with the people of the US in the struggle against Reagan's policies. Caribbean people will always support the people of South Africa and Namibia — led by the ANC and SWAPO".

+ the participants commented at length on the "secret" documents. "They contain an attack on the U.N. by attempting to use the old tactic of divide and rule. These are attempts to split the UN, the OAU and the non-aligned movement. To say the UN is not responsible for the independence of Namibia is to attack a policy which has been there (since 1945). The struggle for



*President
O. R. Tambo
with Randal
Robinson,
executive Direc-
tor of Trans-
Africa in
Washington —
D. C.*

global resources is bent on destroying the people of the third world.”

The 2nd Sessions' theme was the “Summation of the Current efforts in the United States to mobilise opposition against US Collaboration with South Africa.”

There were panel presentations on “An overview of the US Anti-Apartheid Movement” and “The Task of building a National Network Against U.S. Collaboration with South Africa” presented by Belvie Rooks from the Bay Area Support Committee, San Francisco, California and Sylvia Hill, respectively. The session was chaired by Canon Robert C.S. Powell, Director, Africa Office, National Council of Churches, USA.

In the discussion that followed, these what is left is the translation of the commitments made into united mass action against the Reagan policies.

Rally at Howard University

In the evening, at the Compton Auditorium on the campus of Howard University, a moving rally was organised to “show the world over visible support for the liberation struggle in South Africa and Namibia.”

The rally was addressed by Comrade President Oliver Tambo, Comrade Moses Garoeb and the Rev. Ben Chevis of the Wilmington 10. On the chair was the director of TransAfrica, Randall Robinson.

The messages were interspersed with the beautiful and political music of Sweet Honey — a Washington based musical group, who captured and conveyed in song and poetry the struggle against racism in the United States and against apartheid fascism in South Africa.

The rally was indeed a fitting tribute and welcome to the delegation of the liberation movements. Their response was an assurance that in the children of Africa in the United States, the people of Southern Africa have a powerful and natural ally.

Meetings

On Capital Hill, the seat of power, separate meetings were held with the representatives of Congress, House of Representatives and Senate sub-committees on Africa.

There was also a meeting at the editorial offices of the Washington Post with the newspapers' editors, including the former editor of the World and Post, Percy Qoboza who is on the Washington Post editorial staff.

A discussion on the perspectives for further developing and strengthening of links between the liberation movements and the solidarity movement was held with representatives of the Southern African Support Project.

The delegation, accompanied by Randal Robinson went to Atlanta where they were received as guests of the mayor. After

a brief meeting they were introduced to elected black officials in the State of Georgia. Also attending were religious and community leaders, students and political activists on African issues. The meeting was addressed by Comrade President O.R. Tambo and Comrade Moses Garoeb.

Immediately after the meeting there was a press conference co-sponsored by the Mayor Lowery, Senator Julian Bond and Mrs Corretta Scott King — widow of Dr Martin Luther King Jr.

This was followed by a business lunch with Andrew Young, the former ambassador of the United States to the UN and Mrs Corretta Scott King. Thereafter the delegation was taken on tour of the city and saw the graveside and construction site of the Dr Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Center.

Atlanta University

The politics department of the University of Atlanta organised a briefing session on the situation in Southern Africa. The discussions focussed mainly on the policy of the US on Southern Africa and the level of the struggle both in Namibia and South Africa.

These discussions were very lively, fruitful and frank. They benefited the students who had already showed their points were made:

- * Successive administrations have never had relations with liberation movements, nor have they ever called for severing relations with South Africa.

- * That the current policy is not a completely new policy.

- * Participants were in favour of working towards a policy on sanctions against fascist South Africa. It was also noted that no administration has ever supported sanctions.

- * Also discussed was the arrogance of US administration's "linkage" policy of making Namibian independence conditional on the withdrawal of Cuban friendly forces from the Peoples Republic of Angola.

- * There is a definite need for setting up a machinery to mobilise material and overall support for the liberation struggle in Southern Africa.

- * Participants were urged to attend an ICSA regional conference to be held in

New York in October. The need for commitment towards rallying support for this conference was emphasised.

The last stage of the Conference was a discussion of a draft national declaration calling for commitment towards specific programmes to rally support for the liberation struggle in South Africa and Namibia. The document was unanimously adopted with a pro-viso that the points raised in the discussion be incorporated in the final report. On the whole, the Conference achieved its main purpose and solidarity in January of this year when they launched a demonstration against the brutal murder of ANC cadres at Matola in Mozambique.

An evening discussion with 41 people, mainly from the support groups in Atlanta was introduced by Comrade President Tambo and led by Comrade Moses Garoeb of SWAPO. The focus of the discussion was the Reagan policies and means of organising to oppose them.

Also in attendance were the black author and activist James Baldwin and the widow of Walter Rodney. The meeting concluded by agreeing on a date for a discussion on how to organise in Atlanta and link up with other groups mobilising in other parts of the United States.

The Atlanta programme was also a great sign of encouragement and inspiration. All the support and welcome the delegation enjoyed came amidst a tense and demoralising atmosphere engendered by the unsolved murders of black children. On Behalf of the delegation, the ANC President expressed the condolences of the people of South Africa and Namibia to the parents and residents of Atlanta.

At the United Nations

On the morning of the 11th June, the ANC President and Comrade Garoeb addressed a special session of the United Nations Special Committee on Apartheid, chaired, for the last time, by Ambassador Akpokorode Clarke, Nigerian Ambassador to the UN and Chairman of the Special Committee. The meeting was attended by the member-countries of the Special Committee and other representatives from the diplomatic corps.

Both Comrades Tambo and Garoeb paid tribute to the work of Ambassador Clark and to Nigeria on their practical example in dealing effectively with South Africa's allies — the latest example being the warning they had given to New Zealand on the consequences of allowing a springbok tour of that country.

In turn Ambassador Clarke expressed his appreciation for the honour accorded him and his country in chairing the Committee. The main content of the messages dealt with the current balance of forces in South Africa and Namibia and the implications of the war policies of Reagan and his allies in the imperialist west.

Conclusion

The tour by the delegation of the liberation movements had a very resounding impact on those people and organisations who are committed to building support for the liberation struggle against Apartheid Colonialism and mounting effective opposition to Reagan's policies. On the side of the liberation movements the tour was a source of inspiration gained in the knowledge that our firm and dedicated allies in the United States are growing in strength.

The resilient and consistent fight on both fronts, — the United States and South Africa — is the main effective guarantee that plots hatched in Washington and Pretoria will be defeated.

XIHOSHE: Poetry Towards the Revolution

We have temporarily digressed from our specific examination of particular black South African poets so that we might briefly look at a few theoretical issues. We shall be returning, as promised in an earlier article, to poets such as Sepamla, Serote, Brutus, Kunene, and also to phenomena such as the use of "street language" in poetry; and in the meantime we welcome comment on the series.

We have in two earlier discussions looked fairly closely at individual poets and/or poems, and in the first had raised questions which have since been left largely unanswered. We wish with these points and notes to mix the two approaches to our subject, and to hazard some answers, a few perspectives.

SCHOOLS & MOVEMENTS & STREAMS

When we proposed dealing chiefly with poetry of black South Africans, it was

certainly not to be "racially" exclusive, not even in terms of an apartheid in reverse overturning of the prominence in publication and appraisal heretofore bestowed on white South Africans, however much such a redress is needed, especially to indicate the mass, weight, tone and direction (as well as influence) of this generally neglected oral and written material.

No, rather it was an expression of a strongly held certainty that to an extremely large extent the last two/three decades have seen an outpouring of and a manifestation in poetry from Blacks that is tantamount to a "black" poetic renaissance and a "new" aesthetic. Now, this renaissance (with its coincident aesthetic) is one aspect of the art-cultural utterance that accompanied the experiences, activities and awareness of the political, social and economic realities of South Africa, of Southern Africa, and of the world, as certain very important changes were taking

place, and were made to take place in the aftermath of the 1939-1945 war, and especially during the 60's and 70's.

It is axiomatic that the same events affect people in different class positions in quite different ways. In the sense of this same truism, it stands to reason that the South African reality with its hierarchies and divisions of class, colour, language, and polity should, by and large, find these experiential realities perceived, conceived and expressed differently in/by the different constituent communities of the body politic. Hence our pro-tem use of an otherwise highly suspect distinction between black and white South African poets.

That a certain set of experiences, and the resultant outlook and sensibility, can lead to an artistic movement can be broadly attested to by the following.

First, more or less concurrent with the Industrial Revolution in England and the growth of nationalism (or bourgeois democracy) in most of the rest of Europe, we have the development of what is generally known as Romanticism. To limit ourselves to British poets, it is legitimate to regard writers like Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley and Keats as Romantics. Their shared interest in nature, in the past and the future, in democracy and the common man, their awareness of substantial change and the need to support its progressive and to fight its negative features, their themes and the voice they find for their concerns, all these make them different from their poetic precursors and their contemporary traditionalists.

Again, the realism of novelists like Dreiser, Upton Sinclair, Sinclair Lewis, John Dos Passos and Steinbeck, an attitude and a style that differed sharply from what was made normative by writers like Henry James, could express social concern and social criticism because of how the writers saw and experienced, personally and politically, what American society offered between about 1918 and 1940, in New York, Chicago and California, to those less privileged than the Jamesian New Englander whose heart and mind were often in Europe.

Third, the generation of Afro-American poets and fictionalists who constitute what is generally known as the Harlem Renaissance do have in common a whole

range of rhythms and topics, of idiom and reference that may have been denied their white contemporaries and that their black precursors often denied themselves. That that group is as various as to include Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, James Weldon Johnson, and Jean Toomer does not lessen its impact as a contributor, a co-tributary, to the stream of American letters, nor invalidate its being identified as a specific sub-stream, a tidal movement.

And almost as a continuation of the Harlem Movement, but in a different context, the poets Leon Damas, Aimé Césaire, Léopold Sédar Senghor, Birago Diop and David Diop, whether they were born in Africa or in the Caribbean, whether brought up at home and further educated in France or largely reared in France, all felt so much the bond of their colonial condition that they together constitute an important portion of the poetry of the movement known as Negritude.

Finally, for our purposes, though the list is hardly exhausted, two more recent, mainly poetic, schools: (i) the "Black Is Beautiful," "Black Power" and "Freedom Calls For Militant Vigilance" school of expression that changed the names and the styles of poets, or determined the voices of poets in America, includes Don L. Lee and Leroi Jones/Amiri Baraka, as well as the early Nikki Giovanni and some of the modulations of middle Gwendolyn Brooks; and it is, of course, difficult to see even the most wildly imaginable shift of consciousness consistently produce this kind of poetry in the Euro-American mainstream or without the political activities that brought the shift from civil disobedience to vigil and self-defence; (ii) the African Lusophone poetry of Mozambique, Cape Verde, Angola and the other Portuguese colonies in Africa produced in Rebelo, dos Santos, Noémia de Sousa, Craveirinha and Agostinho Neto — as well as Costa Andrade — (whose membership of organisations like FRELIMO or MPLA is definite in the case of three of our six named above) was one aspect of a broader fight against the Portuguese colonial presence. The anti-colonialist, anti-exploitative utterance is here the one that makes for a unified stream of African poetry in Portuguese from about 1950 to 1975.

We shall, soon, be considering, again in very general terms, the positive values to be derived from grouping writers who "belong together", and shall, also, give attention to the need to discriminate the individuals in "a school" from one another, or phases in an individual from each other. We conclude this one here with only the addition of a short, tentative bibliography to guide those who are new to South African verse by black poets.

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PROFILE: DENNIS GOLDBERG

In June 1964 Denis Goldberg was sentenced to life imprisonment, to incarceration in a South African prison for the rest of his natural life.

When he was sentenced, at the end of the Rivonia Trial, Denis was 31. Now he is 48. Like his comrades on Robben Island, Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Raymond Mhlaba and other "lifers" Denis has already served 17 years. Since 1971 his wife Esme has not been allowed to visit him despite repeated applications. His mother Annie, who died in 1975 was given permission to visit her son once (after she moved to England) in 1974. And in 1980 his father Sam who had been his constant link with life outside, died in Johannesburg.

Both Annie and Sam Goldberg were life-long political activists, members of the Communist Party and participants in the national liberation struggle in South Africa since the 1930's when they first came to the country, Annie originally from London, Sam from Lithuania. Denis grew up in Cape Town in an atmosphere of

heightened political consciousness, discussion and activity.

At Observatory Boys School his athletic abilities developed as did his gift for the practical and scientific. He qualified as a civil engineer at the University of Cape Town and met and married Esme Bodenstein, a champion swimmer and his match in every way. They both joined the Modern Youth Society which attracted young people of all national groups who wanted a change of government based on "one person, one vote". In 1955 Denis was among the founding members of the Congress of Democrats (COD) and was elected Treasurer. At the time COD worked for mass support for the Congress of the People and Denis attended the historic Kliptown Conference in 1955 as a delegate from the Western Cape, arriving despite police blockades, lorry breakdown and impediments all the way of the journey.

For those young years Denis was practical and intrepid. He always believed and made others believe that obstacles were there

to be overcome and his enthusiastic optimism infected those who worked with him. That optimism is with him still and sustains him through all the horrors of South African prison existence.

In his book "A Healthy Grave" James Kantor describes his first meeting with Denis in Pretoria Maximum Security Prison.

"When we were taken out for exercise I noticed that there was another detainee. The newcomer was a stocky well-built man ... and walked in a peculiar way ... I heard a metallic noise and with horror realized the reason for his peculiar gait. A length of thick, linked chain ran between his ankles ... The chain was some four feet in length and weighed over ten pounds. Although I had never seen him before he smiled at me"

Again when Denis was brought to court in chains his spirit was high, undaunted waving, smiling and shouting messages to his comrades. For his attempts at escaping he had suffered long spells in solitary confinement, with "meals" a euphemism for punishment by the withdrawal of food.

His letters from his wife have for years on end been undelivered. Yet an unflagging spirit informs his letters to his family and to those of his friends whom he is still allowed to write to. While in prison he has taken 3 degrees with UNISA and keeps up with current trends in every field.

On August 3, 1977 "Denis Goldberg and Seven Others" brought an action against the Minister of Prisons, General Willem du Preez and Brigadier Ferdinand Gericke for denying them their rights as set out in the Prison Act.

The men had the utmost difficulty in bringing the action. Hiding behind the shield of "state security" the prison authorities placed every conceivable obstacle in their way and constantly threatened them with punishment.

In this case Denis Goldberg's affidavit will remain an important testimony to the conditions under which political prisoners in South Africa struggle. After describing their complaints in detail he states:

"Since 1964 I have raised the matters complained of with various Ministers of Justice, Commissioners of Prisons and the Commanding Officers, and have even written to the Prime Minister. I have made representations to judges and also to the

Commission on Penal Reform which rejected the memorandum signed by several of the applicants on the main ground that it was concerned with "Penal Reform" and not "Prison Reform." (Such an application was also drawn up by Comrade Bram Fischer before his untimely death). In his legal dealings Goldberg reported that he had been refused permission to hand any documents over to his attorney, Mr Tucker. All information and lengthy statements had to be read aloud to the attorney and consultations had been prolonged and hampered at every stage. As could be predicted the application failed in court.

Denis' dedication to the liberation movement and his sense of personal discipline are salient characteristics and responsible for his having joined Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1961. He and his mother were detained after the Sharpeville massacre in March of that year and on his release from prison he saw no other alternative than to join the military wing of the ANC. In 1963 he went underground in order to serve on the High Command of MK. When the security police raided the cottage of the Rivonia house Denis was there with the leaders. When he was sentenced to life imprisonment in June 1964, Denis shouted to his wife in court: "Life, life to live".

Anyone who came into contact with Bram Fischer was immediately encompassed by his warmth and compassion and his evident humanity. When Bram was ill his comrades began to bang on the cell walls in unison demanding that someone stay with Bram overnight in his cell. The person deputed to do so was Denis, the practical, considerate and sensitive fellow prisoner who would know what to do for Bram who was at that time already suffering from cancer. Just as Bram was an inspiration to those who witnessed his courage, so has Denis inspired in the younger prisoners who came to Pretoria, an admiration and strength of purpose.

It is almost two decades since Denis Goldberg has been confined by prison walls. News of the tide of events in Africa reaches him as it does his fellow prisoners, and we have every reason to envisage a day when Denis and all others serving life sentences in South Africa will shout "Inkululeko" and welcome freedom's morning.

ANC IN PICTURES

Gouwenius, P. Power To the People! South Africa in Struggle: A Pictorial History, Zed Press (London) 1981;

Weinberg, E., Portrait of a People: A personal photographic record of the South African liberation struggle, International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa, London 1981.

The book by Peder Gouwenius, a graphic artist from Sweden, uses strip cartoons to tell the story of the struggle of the South African people for over three hundred years. This is a different type of a "comic" without superman. It is an interesting story, done in an interesting way, a bit too bulky (140 pages) and therefore difficult to follow though the language and style is simple.

There are problems with this book especially in depicting the history of the ANC. The ANC is said to be "an ordinary reform movement, promoting neither communism nor revolution" (p109) and the Communist Party "faced a time of troubles due to their excessive loyalty to theories and strategies formulated in the Soviet Union, far from the realities of South Africa" (p54). Gumede who was never a communist is described as follows: "Unfortunate: a hot head — a communist". (p55) and about the Alexandra bus boycott of 1957 we read "yes, the present leadership is no good, run by a handful of white communists.." (p112).

One wonders whether the space given to the PAC and comments on it are worth it considering the historically brief period of existence of that movement and the fact that it was politically never effective except for the Sharpeville and Langa incidents in 1960 — even then the majority of the people killed there were ANC people

because they thought it was a Congress call ... PAC called itself "Congress"! We cannot agree with the impression created in the portrayal of the Defiance Campaign — it seems people just wanted to go to jail and throughout the Africans were hopeless: "There is nothing we can do" (p136).

The mission of the external mission of the ANC is totally misunderstood: "Many left and walked over the borders to a life as refugees — The ANC told some leaders like Oliver Tambo to leave to function as "ambassadors". The photograph of Nelson Mandela at the end of the book is impressive but it would have been more impressive had Mandela been portrayed in the context of the emerging and developing underground ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe. By the way the differences in the ANC never took a form of a "generation gap" — although superficially they might have given that impression — it was a question of which political line to take and what is more this was made possible by the ANC itself: the ANC as a "parliament of the people" created conditions for those differences to exist and it solved the problems within the structures of the ANC.

Product of Life Itself

The second book by Eli Weinberg is somewhat different in that its not a product of a creative imagination but of life itself — the photographs were produced from real life; from the struggles of our people that is before they went to the laboratory. Eli says in the introduction:

"I hope my photographs will show that a deep-rooted resistance movement against apartheid has always existed and continues to exist in South Africa; that this movement has well-considered directions and

objectives; and that at every stage of its development it has had, and continues to have, the loyal and enthusiastic support of the majority of South Africans.” (p5)

But it suffers from the weakness of all “personal photographic records” in that what we see is what Eli Weinberg saw and added to that is the fact that he was banned from the trade unions, restricted, imprisoned and house arrested. To add insult to injury:

“In my precipitate flight from South Africa I was unable to take with me my collection of negatives built up over the years. When I subsequently tried to recover them, there occurred one of those tragedies

which are the inevitable by-product of an active political life. In a sad set of circumstances the bulk of my collection was lost or destroyed and I managed to recover only a small percentage of the total. Of this, the photographs in this book are a selection”.

These two books do — in the opinion of this reviewer — give us in a simple manner the picture of South African resistance. The authors who did not depend much on the type writer and the pen turned their talents into weapons. We recommend them to the readers of Sechaba.

F.M.



PORTRAIT OF A PEOPLE

A personal photographic record of the South African liberation struggle

by **ELI WEINBERG**

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