

RESPONSE TO A CRISIS

**JAMES MAKHAYA, a combatant of MK, discusses the
November white referendum**

The history of the Nationalist Party is pock-marked with the continuous manoeuvres to consolidate their power and maintain white supremacy — the rule of the few over the black majority.

Whenever their position is seriously threatened they adopt stern measures. Often, as history shows, resorting to open violence and naked repression. But the racist regime does not use only violence. It also deploys its strategies in every other field, stretching from blatant bribery to political blackmail, from naked military aggression to parliamentary 'reforms'.

The recent referendum on the 'new constitution' is merely another tactic used by the present Botha—Malan clique to dam back the rising waters of change. In 1960 the dreams were being threatened by the growing mass political actions. It was in October, 1960, when he called the whites to choose between forming a white republic and remaining under British rule. Verwoerd succeeded in drawing the whites together to form his racist republic where he and his cronies grabbed more power, enabling them to build their reactionary dream — a racist republic. Exercising their power, the Nationalist Party banned the African National Congress and then proceeded to pass more draconian legislation further oppressing the black majority.

Now, in 1983, Botha and Malan see the storm rising. Apartheid is in a state of crisis — faced with more united mass action, stronger military blows by Umkhonto we Sizwe and disunity in the white community. Thus they have resorted to the referendum tactic once more. This time it is not only to unite the whites, although only the whites will vote, but to bribe the Coloureds and Indians into helping the apartheid regime hold out against inevitable change. The crisis the racist regime is facing cuts deep into the very existence of the minority regime — divisions in parliament are sharpening; white voters are apathetic and disunited; economic pressure due largely to constant industrial unrest has forced the regime to make a loan from the IMF; and massive military spending has helped to deteriorate the situation further. Ironically the apartheid leaders have now turned to the whites requesting their agreement allowing the Coloureds and Indians to join in apartheid rule as more qualified servant-protectors of the monopolists and their profits. Yet at the same time refusing point blank to recognise the right of the black majority to decide their own future.

LANDSLIDE VICTORY?

The final percentage poll at the November referendum was 76 percent, 65 percent voted yes (in favour), 33 percent voted no (against) and a tiny percentage destroyed their vote or in other words spoilt their ballot.

Botha smiled and patted himself on the back. He and his henchmen claimed a landslide victory. But is it such a fantastic favourable turnout?