

FIVE YEARS FROM SOWETO

Below we publish a review of speeches delivered at a Fifth Anniversary of June 16 commemorative meeting held in one MK military camp somewhere in the thickets of Africa. The two day long occasion was punctuated by stirring revolutionary songs and war-chants. It was evidently an occasion of rededication and the participants not only vowed to avenge the blood of the June 16 martyrs, but also to uncompromisingly pursue the goal of freedom in our life-time to the bitter end.

The events of June 16 1976 have gone down as a milepost in the recent history of our struggle. They demonstrated complete disenchantment of the people with the Apartheid status quo, and in their wake, galvanised the rising militancy of the oppressed into an avalanche that is fast gathering energy. The five years that have elapsed since this world-shaking episode have brought to the fore the contradictions between oppressor and oppressed in the sharpest form. On the other hand this period witnessed the registration of unprecedented success in the area of political organisation and community character- Above all,

the generation of June 16 militants who



once engaged the fascist police bare-handed in running battles, only bearing modern arms, but have used them in several lightning strikes against the boer-fascist oppressor.

True to the words of the MK manifesto, they are resolved not to submit, but to hit back and to pursue the goal of popular liberation to its logical conclusion. This unflagging determination is eddying from the crucible of the Soweto Massacres and we vow to kindle it into an inferno that will devour the pillars of boer-fascist tyranny. This vow was echoed throughout the two day commemorative meeting that was marked by a high tempo of vengeful anger.

The speakers - the Umkhonto combatants themselves - took us back to the events preceeding June 16 1976 and in so doing brought to light historical processes that led to "Bloody Wednesday" and correctly concluded that the events of 1976 have brought forth the present political ferment, characterised by broader participation of the oppressed majority. These are the fruits of the lessons of Soweto. In this connection one speaker, **COMRADE ELDRIDGE KATSE** stressed: "Today the lesson that we draw from the 1976 uprisings is that the students and the Youth in general, are a militant component of our national liberation struggle. And to successfully play their role, the youth need the experience and leadership of their parents..." This emphasises the need for the youth to be organised into active fighters and rally behind the authentic vanguard, the ANC, under its tried and tested leadership.

The meeting also noted the ill-intended and fallacious propaganda of the reactionary camp which sought to refute and completely disregard the indispensable role of our vanguard movement prior to, during and after the uprisings. The tremendous efforts of heroic African National Congress militants working from underground e.g. Mdluli, Ndzanga, etc., and the countless pamphlet bombs and broadcasts were but some of the examples quoted. In a hammering conclusion **COMRADE VICTOR TSHABALALA** stated, "Comrades, the national liberation movement of our country headed by the ANC has never left the fate of our people to be decided by the boers. It is no secret that underground workers of our movement had already started to reach our people in the late 60s through leaflets, journals, broadcasts which acted as collective educators, organiser and agitator of our people calling them to rise up and fight the fascist tyranny to the finish." In the same tone **COMRADE DAVID KGABANG** further pointed out, "... This proves once more that despite all difficulties our movement faced, it

made all means in its power to reach and lead the people. We are better witnesses and part of the swelling ranks of the MK since June 16... We are even better witnesses and part of the armed operations carried out by the gallant fighters of MK since this day five years ago. We are also better witnesses and part of the massive mass mobilisation of the entire people of South Africa, under the powerful guidance of our movement..."

The impact of the uprisings crowned as it were by the rising militancy internally, also left an indelible imprint in the international arena therefore elevating our own struggle to yet greater heights in these five years. Comrade David Kgabang appreciating these developments pointed out once more; "In conferences all over the world, Apartheid South Africa appears on the agenda, with condemnations and denunciations from all quarters in support of our cause... and our movement. Our struggle is and will never be isolated from the general struggles of oppressed peoples in the world. The Thatcher and Reagan lunatics' support of the apartheid regime will not help."

THE WAY FORWARD

The June 16 events were a response to a deepening crisis that slices through the social life of the black majority. As **COMRADE AMOS MOKOENA** noted, "All indications point out that more Sowetos are (likely to erupt - Ed.) until the economic and social relations upon which the apartheid system is based are toppled by forceful seizure of political power." The current efforts of white minority rule at entrenching and consolidating its positions as against the rising tide of mass anger and disenchantment with their role of serfs to the whites further gives weight to this correct argument.

In the light of the stubbornness and unbending arrogance of the fascist boer authorities, greater demands are imposed on our freedom struggle. The demand is for our people to build upon the achievements of the past five years. To march forward in organised formations to assail the castle of Afrikanerdom and uproot the obnoxious apartheid system.

Let us strive to spread the spirit of June 16 to the countryside, there to fight for unity against the pig-sty reserves - the Bantustans. The Youth of our country should more than ever before launch nationwide campaigns aimed at forging unity in action of the national forces. They must rally the militants of our country in even greater numbers into the ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe. And as Comrade President O.R. Tambo states:

"... to become part of the disciplined vanguard forces of our revolution. These young people, both black and white who have been and are being drawn into the enemy forces of repression - the army and police - must realise that to d e d i c a t e their young lives to a lost and hopeless cause is to refuse to contribute in bringing into being a country which they can truly call theirs, a country in which they can mature and pass away in peace and happiness. We call on these to guarantee their future by coming over to the side of freedom, equality and democracy."

INHERITORS OF RICH TRADITIONS

- JOYCE MEKONG

Our struggle for freedom from the colonial fascist regime of P r e t o r i a has reached a decisive stage. Spurred on by our past achievements our entire people have taken their positions in the trenches of our revolution. The overriding task now is to steadfastly hold on to these positions, yielding no ground to the racist oppressors, and, advancing together as one man, deliver crushing blows at the common enemy. The time has come when our all-embracing slogan "ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE" must be translated into reality.

For this reason our organiser, educator and leader, the African National Congress, has made a special call to the fighting youth of our country - working youth, the youth in the rural areas, students, young women and young Christians - to let loose their torrents of boundless, controlled and purposeful wrath for victory. To live up to this great challenge, as we must and definitely will, means that as we courageously fight side by side with our parents we must at the same time ensure the total mobilisation of all the sections of this army of young fighters. This requires, among other things, an understanding of the problems facing each section in t h e