

# RESISTANCE CONTINUES

*JOHN LANGA, A COMBATANT OF MK, WAS ACTIVE*

*DURING THE RECENT UPRISINGS IN*

*CHESTERVILLE HE SPOKE TO DAWN.*

The persecution and harassment of innocent, particularly African people has become a common-place scene in South Africa. Our history is full of such incidents. The latest cases of Durban and other ghettos commissioned under the Port Natal Administration Board (PNAB) are witness to this fact.

Prior to the institution of Chesterville location, the area was an African settlement known as Mkhumbane. The African people were given permission to buy small plots where they would of their own accord erect houses. Most of the houses, ranging from mud to tin-shacks, were regarded by our people as habitable homes as long as they had the right to stay.

## PROMISES

Later on it occurred to the racist authorities that the place could be transformed into something called Chesterville. The government offered dazzling promises on revamping the way of life in the area, apparently in the interest of the community. The new scheme included such basic amenities as electricity, water supplies and modern toilet systems. With such promises in the offing, the community was induced to accept the new offer with vivacious curiosity. The government plans which were on paper were transformed into a concrete reality. The community was then given the permission to choose any house to live in for all they cared. The apparent act of good will took a sour turn when the racist authorities began demolishing the houses of the families whose interest they purported to serve. Some of the houses were bulldozed into a rubble while their rightful owners were away at work. Having used force to drive our people into the new houses, the government made another offer. It promised to lease the houses on a permanent basis on condition that the tenants were committed faithfully to paying rent for a period of fifteen years. That was during the years 1966-68.

Fifteen years later on, the government failed to deliver the goods as it had revoked the previous agreements summarily. Consequently the heads of the community met to seek a viable solution to the new problem. The ruling authorities, however, stalled their proposals and continued to drive families out of their homes, claiming all the while that they had forfeited the right to stay. The locality was inhabited by the African people from 1940 to date. Throughout this period the rent has been on an ascending scale and not commensurate with the means of the people. Worse still these very houses were not spacious enough to be called habitable. As a result grown-up boys had to erect some hovels outside the allotted yards — mostly tin shacks known as imijondolo.

The PNAB however decreed that the new shacks be demolished as plans were under-way to extend the houses to the requirements stated. A big gathering of the commu-



nity was called. The meeting strongly opposed the evil plans of the authorities. The decision to demolish the shacks however was implemented by the racist authorities in disregard of the feelings of the community. Then the rent was on the increase. Bus fares and food prices also sky-rocketed to unprecedented proportions, while salaries remained the same.

### JORAC

As a result the community decided to form a body of representatives that was delegated to present its grievances to the PNAB. This body came to be known as the Joint Rent Action Committee (JORAC), to which Mr Harrison Msizi Dube was elected chairman. The committee was meant to represent all the localities under the authority of the PNAB. These localities included Lamontville, Chesterville, Tongaat, Klaarwater, Hambanathi, Sobantu, etc. They were all faced with a common problem. Thereafter, the entire community resolved not to pay rent from the day on which the increase was to be effected. They also resolved to stage a bus boycott. The rent and bus boycott payed dividends as the bus companies and the authorities suffered severe financial and material losses.

It was against this backdrop that the racists and their cohorts plotted the assassination of the reputable community leader, Harrison Dube. The entire upsurge of the community was blamed on that martyr. The villain who carried out the dastardly murder was Moonlight Gaza.

Then the fascist police stage-managed an investigation 'into the matter' which resulted in the arrests of several 'suspects and collaborators'. Ironically Gaza was amongst them. The 'culprits' were faced with the wrath of the community. Their homes were stoned and set ablaze. Buses, bottle stores, administration offices, cars, houses of



police and traitors were set on fire as part of "instant justice".

At the funeral of the martyr one traitor was done away with. He was spotted by the masses jotting down the names of all the speakers at the funeral. Consequently, he was pounded with stones and hacked to death with picks and other instruments. Another co-traitor was seriously injured but survived by the skin on his teeth.

The boycotts then gained momentum. The fascist police were brought in to quell the strikes. They met the wrath of the people — their cars were stoned and set ablaze with petrol bombs. The frenzied police used clubs, teargas and bullets against women, young and old, youths and babies. Two six-month-old babies suffocated to death from the fumes of teargas.

### ATTACKS

The racist Minister of Law and Order, Louis le Grange, defended his police claiming that the murders were committed in self-defence. The police were subjected to frequent attacks particularly at night. Scores of community members were as a result arrested. Their trials which were to begin on the 12th and 16th of September were more than once postponed. Those detained were remanded in custody. "Izimpimpi" (sell-outs) were liquidated. The Boers went on a rampage, invaded the locality with armoured personnel carriers and other war vehicles. Several innocent people were shot at and two, Nhlanhla Bhengu and Zinti Mazibuko, had their legs amputated. The racist police and their dogs were unleashed on our people. Clubs and teargas were used against the people.

Despite the fact that the black community has no weapons they had succeeded in inflicting casualties on the enemy. Armed policemen were stabbed to death. One "mpimpi" had his car set ablaze and he was incinerated inside. Other sell-outs also

lost various personal items like cars, television sets, furniture and other domestic property.

The death of Mr Harrison Msizi Dube only served to strengthen our people's resolve to fight on. This son of Africa was replaced by Rev. Xundu, who followed in the martyr's footsteps. The people's spirit of resistance continues.



*Dube's funeral: his assassination intensified opposition to rent increase.*