

OBITUARY

Eli Weinberg (1908-81)

The African National Congress, Umkhonto we Sizwe and our oppressed but fighting people suffered a great loss on the 18th of July, 1981 when our father and leader, Comrade Eli Weinberg ceased to exist. He left us only a few days before we could celebrate together with him the 60th birthday Anniversary of the South African Communist Party in which he was a member of the Central Committee. At the time of his death, Comrade Weinberg (74) was also a member of SACTU's National Executive Committee and a leading member of the African National Congress.

In 1953 he was banned because of his activities as one of our exploited workers' leading trade unionists. After being deprived of his employment as a trade unionist by the racists, Eli Weinberg tactically retreated to photography, one of his oldest interests, but was still a trade unionist working underground under difficult conditions being surveilled day in and day out by the fascist police.

In 1960 when the fascist government of Verwoerd declared a state of emergency, Eli Weinberg and his family were detained. In 1964 Eli, together with the late Bram Fischer, also an underground member of the South African Communist Party were arrested and the former was sentenced to five years imprisonment for being a member of the Central Committee of the underground SACP. After serving his sentence in the fascist dungeons, Eli was served with banning orders. He left South Africa in 1976 after receiving instructions from the African National Congress and was based in Dar-Es-Salaam where he eventually died.

Our revolutionary photographer's death also came a few months after his book titled "Portrait of a People" was published. This book portrays the spirit of a true internationalist proletarian, a defender of the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

To us Comrade Eli Weinberg was not a white man but an African father and leader who fought and struggled together with our oppressed people. As a photographer Eli took most of the pictures for the Guardian newspaper and its successor

New Age. Almost all of the pictures are of our people's political actions, that is, the participants of the Defiance Campaign and the Congress of the People, rejection of Bantu Education, Treason Trial, bus boycotts, stay-at-homes, life in the Bantustans and generally on strikes and our people's peaceful demonstrations. On the book itself Comrade Weinberg had this to say:

"... 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 enthusiastic support of the majority of South Africans..."

Therefore, we the people of South Africa, guided by our tried and tested vanguard movement - the African National Congress and its allies - shall not mourn the death of Comrade Weinberg but shall redouble our strength and military operations on the Pretoria fascist regime's military and economic installations until we achieve his (Eli's) loftiest ideal, the liberation of o u r M o t h e r l a n d .

Born in 1908 in Latvia, Eli became a trade unionist at the age of 16 and came to South Africa in 1929. But by the time he went into exile from South Africa in 1976, he had not yet been given South African citizenship. This might be the true epitaph of a fighting communist, trade unionist and South African revolutionary. In this Year of the fighting Youth and 20th Anniversary of our revolutionary People's Army, we the youth of South Africa say in unison: "HEROES OF O U R REVOLUTION NEVER DIE." We have no doubt that the immortal spirit of Eli Weinberg will live for ever in the hearts and minds of our fighting people, black and white, and we shall never relax until our inevitable victory is achieved. From here on marching with one pace we say:

LALA NGOXOLO
BABA WETHU!