

SASPU INTERNATIONAL

A SOUTH AFRICAN STUDENTS PRESS UNION PUBLICATION

VOLUME 7 NUMBER 2

APRIL/MAY 1986

PRICE 30c

Apartheid loses control as civil war continues

SOUTH AFRICA'S state of emergency continues.

Despite the official lifting of the Emergency in March, many townships, rural areas and bantustans are still in a state of civil war.

Mass democratic action against the government and employers continues to escalate.

In response the government has stepped up its armed activities in an attempt to bring the black population under control.

The bantustans, Lebowa, KwaZulu, Ciskei, and Transkei and Bophuthatwana have been doing all of the job for them.

The government and employers on the one side and the democratic majority on the other — are locked in a battle of life or no compromise.

But people faced with casspirs, teargas, bullets and recently hand-grenades are still using non-violent weapons such as rent and consumer boycotts and stayaways to pressurise the authorities to meet their demands.

Workers organised in democratic trade unions affiliated to the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) are planning mass work stoppages and commemorations on May 1, the one hundredth anniversary of May Day.

It will be the first national stayaway in over twenty years — and probably the biggest in South African history.

Workers are demanding the right to organise, the right to work, student rights, the right to free political activity, the unbanning of all banned organisations and the right to free movement and decent housing.

The May Day mass action has the support of the United Democratic Front (UDF), the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) and hundreds of progressive organisations.

On the education front, militant activity is planned. The NECC conference restated demands which have been repeatedly put to the government but never met.

Over 1200 representatives voiced their determination to take over the schools and build "people's education".

The demand for the right to organise SRCs, for democratic education, free schooling and books, better schools and much else has been met with repression and closing down of schools. But this will never silence the demands.

The NECC declared June 16 National Youth Day and has called for a three day national stayaway on June 16, 17 and 18 to mark the tenth anniversary of the 1976 Uprising.

COSATU has thrown its weight behind the stayaway.

Mass action in the form of rent, consumer and other boycotts are sweeping across the country. And mass stayaways are being staged as thousands attend funerals of every victim of repression.

The government hoped to regain control by sending in the army and the police, during the State of Emergency and after.



Winnie Mandela, wife of jailed ANC leader Nelson Mandela pays tribute to victims at a Braamfontein funeral. After a series of legal wranglings and more than 20 years of banishment and imprisonment she is now back. But her silencing has only strengthened her resolve to fight for freedom in SA. She has featured prominently at mass rallies and funerals throughout the country.



Nchabaleng - died in detention

Nchabaleng combatant and patriot

SLAIN Northern Transvaal UDF president Peter Nchabaleng had a long history of involvement in the liberation struggle.

His life embodied three aspects of the struggle — the rural, national and working class struggles.

In the fifties he was an active member of the Pretoria branch executives of the African National Congress (ANC) and South African Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu).

The imposition of the tribal authorities at that time sparked off widespread uprisings in Sekhukhuland. Nchabaleng became a leader of the peasant movement which spearheaded the resistance.

He also served on Sebatakgomo — formed as a defence and aid group for people arrested and charged during the uprisings. He worked as an interpreter for the accused's lawyer at the time — Joe Slovo — now ANC national executive member. Sebatakgomo — a war cry — developed into a rural political movement in the area.

In 1962 Nchabaleng was charged with furthering the aims of the ANC and for sabotage. He was sentenced and served 8 years on Robben Island.

Immediately after his imprisonment, his family was deported from Pretoria to Apel in Sekhukhuland. And on his release he too was banished there and banned.

He was again arrested in 1974 and given a suspended sentence for breaking his banning order.

Less than two years later he was charged with harbouring and recruiting people for military training along with Joe Gqabi. They were both acquitted. Gqabi was later assassinated while an ANC representative in Zimbabwe.

On being acquitted in 1978, Nchabaleng was banned for 5 years. Soon after the expiry of his banning order, he became an active member of the UDF Northern Transvaal Coordinating Committee and in February 1986, was elected the first president of the Northern Transvaal region of the UDF.

His leadership was not only at a regional level, but also locally and right in his own village. He was a member of the Sekhukhuland Parents Crisis Committee and a member of the village committee. Here he is said to have played the role of a people's councillor and people always approached him for help and advice.

He has been called a combatant for life, a patriot until the end.

UDF president dies in detention

THE DEATH of Northern Transvaal UDF president Peter Nchabaleng is part of a systematic campaign being waged by the apartheid government through its bantustans.

This was said in a UDF statement released at a press conference on Nchabaleng's death and the crisis in the Northern Transvaal.

UDF, Cosatu, Detainees Parents Support Committee and the South African Council of Churches at representatives at the press conference strongly condemned the death in police custody.

They said Nchabaleng was in perfect health at the time of his detention. One chief detained at the same time had seen Nchabaleng being tortured and a priest had seen the body lying in the charge office at the Schoonoord police station.

The death came after bomb and hand-grenade attacks on the homes



From left to right: Cosatu's Mufemali, Naidoo; UDF's Mshlana, Mlou, Valli, Mokaba; and Nchabaleng's son Etseck at press conference

of UDF officials, Joyce Mabudafasi and Peter Mokaba, and widespread detentions, bombings and shootings of people throughout the area.

The UDF rejected "contempt" attempts to link Nchabaleng's detention with alleged burning of bodies. They said this was an attempt to justify his detention. The claim that he died of a heart attack was an attempt to conceal the real cause of death.

They praised him as a great patriot and leader of the present rural uprising.

Paying tribute to Nchabaleng, Cosatu said "his long involvement in the workers struggle through his active participation in the South African Congress of Trade Unions (Sactu) makes his death a big blow to the workers' movement".

"To his family, friends and com-

rades we say — let us carry forward the spirit of Nchabaleng. Let us strengthen the democratic movement, by building organs of people's power in the factories, mines, schools, villages and townships where we live and let the ideas of Comrade Nchabaleng bear fruit."

"Gone are the days when our people from the countryside were servile and unquestioning of this system of injustice. The replacement of tribal authorities by democratic committees had given people there a taste of democracy and a sense of their own strength", said the UDF.

The bantustans were intended to be reservoirs of cheap labour and dumping grounds of surplus people posing no danger to the Apartheid system. "The active participation of these people in the liberation struggle marks the beginning of the end for apartheid".

Those serving in Bantustan structures were called on to state "whether they would continue acting as pawns for apartheid or would join the people".