

When the SA government hanged ANC guerilla Solomon Mahlangu in 1978, they clearly meant it to be a lesson to the post-1976 youth and students. Yet today, Solomon Mahlangu's name has been connected to another kind of lesson an experiment in alternative education at Mazimbu, and ANC settlement in Tanzania.

The Solomon Mahlangu Freedom College (Somasco), was set up as part of Mazimbu in 1978 "as an educational institution to keep alive and fresh the memory of a heroic young man in the minds of South African youth", says ANC secretary for education, Henry Makgothi. Somasco was intended to "further the struggle on

the educational front of the South African people and to prepare them to make a better contribution to the struggle", he says.

The decision to start Somasco came in the wake of the 1976 uprisings when many of the students who fled SA looked to the ANC to provide education. At first, some were found scholarships in Nigeria, Guinea, Cuba and other countries. But ANC leaders subsequently thought it would be better to gather all students together in an environment where they could keep a strong sense of South African identity, learn more about the liberation

struggle and keep in touch with events at home.

Classes started in 1979 in small old farm buildings, and building began on a modern campus. Today, Somasco has large classrooms, four fully-equipped science laboratories, a big new library and comfortable dormitories. There are more than 600 students.

From its humble start, Somasco has grown to be two schools and a part of a far wider group of projects. The entire Mazimbu complex now includes a children's nursery, the Charlotte Maxeke children's centre, the Kate Molale Maternity centre, a hospital, a creche, and the

A PEOPLE'S EDUCATION

SOLOMON MAHLANGU

